



**October 2007**

## **Ask a Travel Manager**

Travel Managers and allied members will be able to ask burning questions they have on any travel related subject. This will be a great lunch program. Both seasoned travel managers and new travel managers can gain from the wisdom and experience of our illustrious panel. Our panel features representatives from various industries including Technology, Apparel, Govt contracting, Entertainment and State Agencies. Don't miss this opportunity to learn and share experiences/knowledge with other travel managers.

### **Guest Speakers**

Dan Riley  
Sr. Global Travel Manager  
Computer Sciences Corporation

Mary Ann Greenelsh  
Manager/Travel & Support Services  
The Aerospace Corporation

Bryan Holmes  
Manager, Corporate Services  
Broadcom Corporation

Sean Parham  
Corporate Travel Manager  
Guess, Inc.

Belinda Borden  
Manager  
UCLA Travel Center

## **Venue**

**October 10, 2007**

**Manhattan Beach Marriott  
1400 Parkview Ave.  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266**

Manhattan Beach hotel has a resort feel, making it easy for guests to unwind and relax. A fresh, casual, coastal retreat, The Manhattan Beach Marriott sits on 26 beautifully landscaped acres just 3 miles south of the Los Angeles International Airport. Minutes from Southern California's premier beaches, our 385 spacious guest rooms feature the luxurious Marriott Revive bedding collection.





## Photo Gallery





## **New Members**

### **Adele Beeman**

Manager  
Wally Park

### **Philippe Bresciani**

Owner  
Corte d'azur Limousines

### **Pamela Hirneisen**

Director of Sales & Marketing  
Courtyard by Marriott Los Angeles Westside

### **Fatima Madha**

Regional Sales Executive  
Concur

### **Emi Suruki**

Sales Manager  
Sunset Marquis

### **Erik Dahlerbruch**

Dir. Of Corp. Sales & Marketing  
Westmont Hospitality Group



## Releases

*(LABTA Editors Note: Having been a victim of identity theft, I thought I had an idea of how to protect myself from future recurrences. I was wrong. I hope this article helps to further educate everyone on the values of protecting your identity)*

### Identity Crisis by Heather Eng

Frequent travelers can be targets for identity theft — protect yourself.

Margaret Reid's trip to Portsmouth, Va., in 2001 was like so many trips the Houston based business owner had made over the years. She checked into the Renaissance Portsmouth Hotel and Waterfront Conference Center for several days and made herself comfortable. On her last day there, as she rushed to catch her flight, Reid neglected to pack the completed Discover Card application she had placed on her bed. One month later, she received an unexpected phone call: The credit card company informed her that someone was trying to open accounts in her name.

That call kicked off Reid's three-year struggle to reclaim her identity. She stopped working for one month so she could devote herself to tracking down and closing the fraudulent accounts opened with her information. She hired a private investigator to find the thief's identity. For almost two years, Reid traveled back and forth from Houston to Portsmouth, fighting with law enforcement to have her case heard, until her identity thief was finally behind bars.

The perpetrator: a maid from the Renaissance Portsmouth Hotel.

It seems wrong to describe Reid as lucky. Six years later, her wounds from reclaiming her identity are still raw.

"I was violated by [the thief], I was violated by the system," she said. "It's as close to rape as you can get."

But Reid knows she's in the small minority of identity theft victims who find closure in their cases.

The Federal Trade Commission reports that approximately nine million Americans have their identities stolen each year, though other reports peg the number higher. A recent Gartner study found that 15 million people had their identities stolen in 2006 which works out to one new victim every two seconds, according to the Identity Theft Resource Center. The crime takes many forms, from someone stealing your credit card and running up charges, to a criminal using your personal information to impersonate you.

Despite the prevalence of identity theft, most cases go unsolved and experts say it's one of the toughest crimes to prosecute. Most victims don't know how or when their identities were stolen, according to Beth Givens, founder and director of the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse. And once they have someone's information, identity thieves move quickly. They open credit card and bank accounts under false names and addresses, or sell victims' personal information to organized crime rings. Jurisdictional problems also complicate matters: a victim is often in one place, while the thief is in a different state — or country. And many law enforcement agencies simply lack the resources, training and time needed to solve identity theft crimes. This is why millions of Americans are scammed out of countless dollars and priceless hours each year.

"The question isn't if [it will happen], it's when," said Linda Foley, founder of the Identity Theft Resource Center. "Identity theft is a crime of opportunity. A thief is going to take advantage of an opportunity."

That opportunity could appear anytime. It could be when you least expect it, like when you're on the road for yet another business trip.

cont.....



At some point during your travels, you've probably used an ATM in a high-traffic area without checking to see if anyone was looking over your shoulder; or dashed out of your hotel room, late for a meeting, leaving a stack of bills and bank statements lying on the bed; or left your laptop charging on your hotel desk, instead of locked in the safe.

As innocent — and commonplace — as those actions are, they're behaviors that make travelers susceptible to identity theft. Technology has certainly given identity thieves new means to steal personal information: Hackers can hop onto unencrypted wireless networks and intercept account and password information from people around them. Or, in another common practice, thieves can use "skimming" devices that steal credit and ATM card numbers when they're run through a machine.

But when it comes to travel, experts believe that most identity thieves rely on low-tech tactics to get the job done.

"The old-school methods are the easiest [for criminals]," said Terri Cullen, author of *The Wall Street Journal Complete Identity Theft Guidebook*. "The most common type of identity theft is someone lifting your wallet, or stealing your driver's license or credit card. That's how the majority of identity thefts happen when it comes to travel."

Jorge Rey could attest to that. One year ago, the Florida-based information security and IT audit manager likely had his identity stolen through "shoulder surfing" a low-tech identity stealing tactic in which a thief obtains personal information by eavesdropping on conversations or watching as people enter their account information at ATMs or online.

In a crowded airport waiting area, during a layover on a business trip to Canada, Rey used his laptop to log into his bank account. The next day, the bank called to inform him that someone had placed four new payees on his account and tried to write them \$5,000 in checks. Luckily, Rey was able to close the account immediately and did not lose money. He never found out his thief's identity, but he's certain his information was stolen during that layover.

"Someone definitely looked at my user ID and password," Rey said. "Maybe they recorded it with a cell phone, maybe they memorized it."

So if identity theft can strike even the most seasoned, tech-savvy business travelers, how can you protect yourself?

Although no precaution offers 100 percent security, there are ways to safeguard your identity. First tip: Pack lightly — specifically, your wallet and briefcase.

"Whether you're traveling for business or leisure, leave your most sensitive items at home," said Cullen.

There's little reason to tote your checkbook while traveling. Ditto for Social Security cards. Leave them behind unless you absolutely need them — and it's unlikely that you will.

"Your Social Security number, in the hands of a crook, can lead to new account fraud [a thief opening bank and credit card accounts in your name]," said Givens.

Ditch the debit cards, too; it's better to have a credit card stolen than a debit card. The Fair Credit Billing Act limits consumers' liability for unauthorized credit card charges to \$50. Federal law safeguards against unauthorized debit card use as well: If you report unauthorized withdrawals within two business days, you'll only be liable for up to \$50. However, after 60 days from your last statement, you could be liable for up to \$500. After that, you could be responsible for the entire amount. By that point, the thief may have wiped out your entire account.

Cullen recommends designating one credit card for use on the road; it's easier to detect fraudulent use when your business and personal charges aren't mixed together.



Another tip: No hotel is secure — no matter how many stars it has. Givens recommends always using the hotel safe and shredding documents that include personal information.

On the tech front, password-protect or double password-protect your laptop and PDA. Better yet, Givens and Foley suggest, encrypt files containing sensitive information (your company's IT team can probably do this for you). Don't use banking sites when you're not sure if you're connected to a secure network. And never enter sensitive information unless you're on a secure web site that starts with https and has a locked icon in the bottom right-hand corner of the browser.

There's also no replacement for old-fashioned vigilance. Be aware of your surroundings and belongings, while you're in transit, in the hotel, in meetings.

Finally, monitor your finances. Check your bank account balances and credit card charges when you're on the road; Cullen notes that people often let that slide while they're traveling. And check your credit history annually. Federal law gives consumers the right to request one free credit report each year from Experian, Equifax and TransUnion, the three credit-reporting agencies.

If your identity has been stolen, the FTC recommends four immediate steps: Place a fraud alert on your credit reports and review those reports; close any accounts that have been tampered with or opened in your name; file a complaint with the FTC; and file a police report. Though the amounts of money lost and the time victims spend reclaiming their identities varies, most victims say the psychological stress of the crime is intense and long-lasting. Many must monitor their credit reports for years and are on constant lookout for new accounts opened, purchases made, and, in some dire cases, crimes committed in their names.

Privacy rights advocates and identity theft victims believe that it will take more than just personal vigilance to make the crime less common. "The Social Security number has strayed far from its original mission of providing benefits," said Cullen. "There needs to be a crackdown on how Social Security numbers are used as identifiers."

Recently, the House Ways and Means Committee unanimously approved a bill that would ban the use of Social Security numbers on numerous documents, including employee ID cards and checks. It would also require the federal government to overhaul its systems to create other identifiers.

Foley believes the bill is a start. She'd also like to see federal laws regarding proper document disposal and better background checks for workers who deal with sensitive consumer information. She added, "The only way we're going to have any effect on the problem of identity theft is if we work collaboratively as consumers, as businesses, as law enforcement, to [create] legislation and awareness at all levels."

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## 10 Reasons We Still Love to Fly

Long delays, lost luggage, security hassles, rancorous flight attendants, scary little snacks you wouldn't feed to a guinea pig -- flying has become such a chore. But before you swear it off altogether, you might want to consider a few things about air travel and the airline industry that actually seem to be working, and working well. Indeed, here are 10 reasons why we still love to fly.

### No More Saturday-Night Stopovers

There was a time when travelers were gouged for the price of an air ticket if their plans didn't include one Saturday night away from home. Airlines figured that anyone flying during the week who wanted to be back home on the weekend was a businessperson traveling on an plush expense account, and they'd be willing to pay more for the privilege of getting home earlier. Low-cost carriers eliminated the Saturday requirement in order to compete with the big boys, who subsequently dropped their Saturday requirement to compete with the little guys.

### Planes Are Safer Than Ever

They may not be friendlier, but the skies are certainly safer than ever. New technology such as "TCAS," the Traffic Alert and Collision-Avoidance System," keeps planes from slamming into each other; Terrain Warning Systems alert pilots when they're about to fly into things like mountains; and improved onboard technology and enhanced pilot training have all made a dramatic difference in air safety. Additionally, regulatory agencies like the U.S.'s National Transportation and Safety Board play an important role as industry watch dogs.

### Less Turbulence

The past decade has witnessed the emergence of new, cutting-edge aircraft, including the Boeing 777. One of the great features of the 777 is that it can fly higher than any plane in the sky, and high-altitude flying means less turbulence. The technology in the 777 is a forerunner to the industry's two new giants -- the Airbus A380 and the Boeing 787 Dreamliner. Like the 777, both planes employ wind-gust suppression technologies designed to minimize turbulence or avoid it altogether. With the A380 and 787 promising to dominate the industry in the coming years, 21st-century flying should be smooth sailing all the way (we hope).

### Seatback Entertainment Systems

Personal seatback TV monitors have been a perk in first class and business class for years, but low-cost carrier JetBlue introduced them into coach class six years ago, creating something of a revolution in air travel entertainment. Even people who don't normally watch television were thrilled -- finally, something to do on that six-hour cross-country flight! Now all the major carriers, both domestic and international, have installed entertainment systems throughout their planes, providing TV shows, news, movies on demand (sometimes for a small fee), music and games to soothe and amuse captive guests.

### More Non-Stop Flights

Before the airline industry was deregulated in 1978, airline routes were controlled by the U.S. Government, and most planes flew non-stop from point A to point B. After deregulation, airlines could serve whatever destinations they chose. The most efficient way to do this was to fly passengers into a hub and then transfer them to another flight. This hub-and-spoke system allowed the airlines to offer low prices and lots of flights, but non-stop flights became hard to find. In recent years, the emergence of small regional airlines serving limited markets has increased the number of direct nonstop flights.

### Miles, Miles, Miles

How we love our free flights and upgrades. In their attempts to mollify angry passengers, airlines have begun reducing the miles you need for award tickets. (American and United this week both cut miles needed for short-haul awards in half -- from 25,000 to 15,000.) Two-for-one mileage awards and other promotions are increasingly common, and it seems like the airlines are constantly announcing new ways to cash in. We know miles aren't nearly as free of strings as the airlines pretend they are (good luck trading them in for free tickets to popular destinations like Hawaii), but we still love the happy little buzz of getting something for nothing.



### **Online Services**

As airline workers become increasingly ineffectual at answering simple questions or supplying adequate information, Web technologies have happily stepped into the breach, providing accurate and timely information without getting huffy and marking your ticket to ensure you get extra special attention from security screeners. Among other things, airline Web sites offer online seat selection, information about the aircraft, the ability to print out your own boarding pass, and e-mail alerts and text messages to notify passengers of delays, gate changes, and cancellations.

### **Airport Check-In Kiosks**

Why didn't someone think of it a long time ago? Electronic check-in kiosks allow you, with a single swipe of your credit card (for ID purposes), to bypass the ticket counter entirely and check yourself in for a flight, change a seat assignment, register for standby seats on an earlier flight, request complimentary upgrades, and get a boarding pass. Some airline kiosks also allow you to check your baggage too.

### **No More Food**

We bitch and moan about the lack of meals on planes, but does anyone really miss that slop? And why did we always feel compelled to eat whatever was plunked down on the tray in front of us anyway? We're far better off without the gelatinous mystery substances that passed for meals. Pack a couple of healthy snack bars -- and remember there's a reason why the captain and co-pilot are not permitted to eat the same entrée when flying.

### **Flying Is Still The Fastest, Cheapest Way To Go**

The scenic route is wonderful, and we love leisurely cruises, long train journeys, and the thrill of a road trip, but when we really have to get somewhere quickly, flying isn't just the ideal way to go, it's the only way to go. And the fact that we usually manage to get where we're going in roughly the amount of hours advertised (and always in one piece) continues to astonish and amaze.

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