



Association of Canadian Travel Agencies
Association canadienne des agences de voyages

2019 ACTA in ACTION

Highlights of ACTA Activity on Behalf of Members

As a Member of ACTA, you are part of a national trade association of more than 12,000 Travel Agents who represent over 80% of the travel business in Canada. On your behalf, we focus our activities on four key pillars: Advocate, Educate, Promote and Connect, to represent your interests and provide you with key resources to elevate your standing as a travel professional with governments, industry and public stakeholders.

ADVOCATE – *Our focus is on achieving results on matters that impact you, your business and your clients. We aggressively work on your behalf on the issues you have identified as most relevant to you as a travel professional.*

IATA – We spend a great deal of time on IATA related initiatives and/or initiatives every year. While not all ACTA Members are IATA appointed, many agencies still make bookings through other distribution channels, so it is essential that ACTA is at the meeting table with IATA's members, the airlines, thus ensuring that the issues of the Agency community are heard and recognized.

IATA meetings in 2019 include discussions around Debit Memos, NewGen ISS, Transparency in Payments, Local Financial Criteria, PCI Compliance, ACTA's request for a Conditions of Carriage "URL Hub" and the Passenger Agency Programme. Highlights on some of these topics include:

Agency Debit Memos

- ACTA, in collaboration with IATA, hosted Canada's first in-person workshop in October to provide travel agencies with best practices to help reduce ADMs.
- After more than a year of lobbying, IATA's Global Net Remit (NR5), a special filing systems for contracts, is now available in all IATA BSP countries. With Commission Calculation being the #1 cause of debit memos in Canada, ACTA is strongly encouraging all Canadian airlines to take advantage of this program so Member can begin to see improvements in the whole ADM process.

NewGen ISS

- ACTA is pleased that after a year of lobbying and working with IATA, a comparison document on the TIDS and new IATA Accreditation Models is available, which will relieve confusion Members were experiencing with the various IATA accreditation models and IATA's TIDS program.

Meeting IATA Resolutions and NEW Canada Air Passenger Protection Regulations (APPR)

- As part of these regulations, Travel Agencies now must collect customer contact information, which is required by the airlines. Airlines must comply with the new federal APPR and as an agent of the airline, travel agencies must also collect customer contact information. At the same time, if a Travel Agency is IATA appointed, they are mandated to collect this information under Resolution 830d.
- There are two new regulations that also require agencies to provide customers with a standard notice about the new regulations. The other notice is about the airline's condition of carriage, which is very complex for an agency to do. ACTA is lobbying IATA to create a "URL HUB" that will house an airline's condition of carriage. This is similar to what IATA did to accommodate airlines' Privacy Policy for Europe's GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). This matter is of particular concern for corporate customers and IATA has agreed to investigate ACTA's request.

Fraud

- ACTA jointly leads the Canadian Travel Fraud Prevention Group, together with IATA and are pursuing tools that ACTA can share to help agencies take preventative action against fraud. One such tool (3DS 2.0), will permit a fraud liability transfer from the merchant (travel agency or supplier) back to the card issuer.

Supplier Issues Committee – In 2019, ACTA created a national working group to address various supplier issues that are a priority for membership. Some priority issues identified are already being addressed such as Agency Debit Memos. Other priorities include:

- Discounting (Costco's marketing of travel is a form of discounting and ACTA participated in a panel discussion on this topic in the spring 2019, and Friends and Family discounting),
- Transparency in Pricing (NCFs, upfront baggage fees, and resort fees are examples),
- Selling Direct, and
- Supplier / Travel Agent Customer Service Processes (including long wait times with tour operators)

Provincial Regulators – We share information with Members on our lobbying efforts with provincial regulators knowing that developments in one jurisdiction could quickly spread across the country.

Ontario

- In 2019 ACTA, in collaboration with CATO, hired a lobbyist to assist in results orientated efforts to amend the existing Travel Industry Act. ACTA's key message is that the Ontario Travel Compensation Fund should not be funded by Travel Agencies and that the Travel Industry Act should be modernized to reduce financial and regulatory burdens. A targeted grassroots letter writing campaign in November has met with enthusiastic travel trade and industry support.

Quebec

- Members in Quebec have raised concern about the financial burden of the Bond requirement under the Quebec Travel Act. ACTA will be taking this on as a strategic priority for 2020.

British Columbia

- The ACTA BC subcommittee continues to be engaged in compiling areas that require regulatory changes. 2020 will require more involvement as the fee levels are reviewed and set for the following three years.

Alberta

- Independent agents of a host agency continue to experience challenges with some members having their insurance license being held in a "holding pattern", while the Alberta Insurance Council (AIC) requests more information. ACTA took these issues to the Alberta government early in the year however progress stalled due to a change of government. ACTA and members of the ACTA Alberta Insurance Sub-Committee were successful in meeting with the newly formed majority government in September to bring this issue to their attention. The meeting was extremely positive. ACTA is staying close to this file and will be following up with the Alberta government to discuss next steps in removing the regulatory obstacles that our members face.

Federal Government Relations – ACTA continues to raise ACTA's profile and the value of travel agencies with the federal government in the past year, with active participation in the implementation of the Air Passenger Protection Regulations, consultations on Basic Fare Requirements and more recently Transport Canada's request to provide feedback on the Air Canada acquisition of Transat A.T. Inc.

Air Passenger Protection Regulations

- In July 2019, Phase 1 of the Air Passenger Protection Regulations came into effect. Phase 2 is scheduled for December. ACTA continues to assist members of the implications and reduce the related confusion of these new regulations.

ACTA is hosting its inaugural **Travel Industry Leadership Summit** in November to bring ACTA's key members together on innovation and supporting ACTA's advocacy efforts that effect the industry overall.

EDUCATE – *One of the primary benefits of your ACTA membership is the opportunity to elevate your professionalism through certification, accreditation, and a wide range of learning opportunities. These include:*

ACTA's Learning Campus took on a fresh look over the last year, providing a more up to date, clean and crisp look with more educational offerings and resources.

In 2019, ACTA had 3221 users enrolled in our programs with 15,876 learning modules completed. The number of webinar offerings grew in that we completed 32 webinars in the course of the year, doubling our webinars from last year. We saw greater numbers in registrations with 1745 participants. Webinars are provided and completed in both French and English and can be viewed via our Webinars on Demand tab on our ACTA Campus.

Our top three webinars:

1. Your travel agency's legal obligation when it comes to the safety of your travelers
2. Making Social Media Work for You – 45 minutes of better results.
3. Introduction to Special Needs Group – Accessible Travel.

ACTA will continue to work to provide and capture all facets of training and education in the industry.

ACTA also introduced Podcasts to our list of educational offerings to members, which have also proven to be well received by our members.

ACTA's Education and Certification Pillar continues to provide information toolkits on webinar topics, destinations and issues you face every day in your business. Education opportunities provide members with convenient access both live and on demand to accreditation and certification content, for our CTC and CTM professional designations. BC and SK mandatory Travel Health Insurance Licensed exams. This year we have seen more and more Agents seeking their professional designations as they have seen the value of being a certified agent in the industry and the market. Enrollment and certification has doubled for CTC and CTM.

National Travel MarketPlace

- ACTA experienced another great year of success with our two National Travel MarketPlace Conferences, held in Toronto and in Vancouver. An outstanding 650+ retail Travel Agents attended these Conferences, a measure of their success. As these events provide solid education to various experience levels, ACTA will continue to support and evolve these Conferences. Dates for 2020 are March 9-10 YVR and June 17-18 YYZ. Be sure to register early to receive the ACTA savings and get in on the buzz!

Recognition and Support of Industry Achievements

- The ACTA Air Canada Awards showcase the accomplishments and dedication of ACTA members across a broad range of categories.
- ACTA is an active supporter of the Baxter Student Ambassador Awards, where winners are selected from talented graduates of travel educational programs across the country.

College Outreach – ACTA's commitment to Travel Agent education extend to the next generation of professional travel agents. Informative visits were made during the school year to travel programs at Fanshawe, Mohawk, Conestoga College and Algonquin Colleges to promote retail travel as a career. We continue to look for opportunities to work with Colleges to continue to spread the word on what a great career retail travel is and that it is still very much alive and thriving.

PROMOTE – *ACTA continues to increase our engagement and Interaction with Travel Agencies, Travel Agents and Independent Contractors via social media to inspire them to follow and interact with ACTA through these platforms. Members can grow their exposure to consumers via this compelling, interactive and shareable content that reinforces the use of a professional Travel Advisor.*

Public Relations – ACTA contributes as an expert resource for electronic, print and digital media at the national and local level on topics that directly affect consumers and allow us to promote the value of a Travel Agent to consumers.

- Media releases and interviews with national media (CTV, CBC, Global) and community newspapers on topics that include the impact of the grounding of Max 8 aircraft, industry pressures of consolidations and bankruptcies, Phase 1 and upcoming Phase 2 Passenger Protection Regulations, as well as response to questions of safety of travelers in the wake of hurricanes, floods, natural disasters and terror threats.

Trade Relations – In 2019, ACTA embarked on a Social Media Campaign in collaboration with the well-respected digital marketing company, Travel Agency Tribes. This national campaign evolved into Quebec with the talents of Engage Media in French language. Member engagement continues to be high with webinars, presentations and positive industry feedback. ACTA members were able to enhance their own social media efforts by utilizing ACTA's inspirational posts and targeted product specific posts on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. ACTA continues to address the high value on ACTA promoting the value of engaging a professional Travel Agent with the public.

- In late 2019, ACTA will launch a consumer faced website “Book with a travel agent” where consumers will find resources such as links to government sites, reinforcement as to the reasons to use a professional travel agent as well as ACTA's member directory.

Consumer Shows - ACTA features the value of Travel Agents at consumer shows across the country, as well as on our website and directories

- Consumer shows this year included multiple Travel Agent Day initiatives, Uniglobe Carefree show (YXE), Salon International Tourisme Voyages (SITV Montreal).

Based on strong member feedback, the PROMOTE pillar will continue to be a key focus of ACTA in 2020.

CONNECT – *ACTA provides opportunities to connect members to information, business tools and programs needed to be more effective, and network with peers to share ideas, best practices and experiences.*

Business Tools and Programs

- Updated business tools for 2019 include complimentary merchant program review, PCI DSS Compliance tool kit, Employee and IC health and commercial insurance, tips and best practices on Fraud, and information on selling travel health insurance to Alberta residents.
- The continued enhancement of **ACTA Membership Card Program** through **memberperks** provides over 3,000 exclusive perks and benefits from brand names featured through national, online and local vendors. ACTA's travel supplier offers are now also featured within memberperks. This program saves ACTA members on average \$25,000 per month!
- In November, hosted our first Travel Industry Leadership Summit. The agenda featured several inspiring speeches and panel discussions and as well as an Advocacy luncheon and ACTA's advocacy role as a Travel Industry leader.

Industry Events – ACTA encourages all ACTA members (Travel Agency owners, employees and Independent Travel Agents) to enhance your knowledge base about the travel industry, partners and suppliers as well as connecting with your peers at ACTA events.

- ACTA hosted successful premium networking events across the country including conferences, education events, recognition events, Ontario golf tournament, BC harbor cruise, progressive dining evenings, and numerous airport tours.
- ACTA participates at many ACTA member training events and industry conferences.