



Association of Canadian Travel Agencies  
Association canadienne des agences de voyages

## ACTA in ACTION

Highlights of ACTA's 2018 activity on behalf of our 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** – *We have aggressively worked on your behalf on the issues you have identified as most relevant to you as a travel professional. Our focus is on achieving results on matters that impact you, your business and your clients.*

**IATA** – A significant segment of our Advocacy has centered on IATA related initiatives and/or issues. While not all members are IATA appointed agencies, many agencies still make air bookings through other distribution channels and consequently, it is essential that ACTA is at the meeting table with IATA's members, the airlines, ensuring that the issues of the agency community are heard and recognized.

### **Agency Debit Memos (ADMs)**

- We have been working closely with the IATA ADM User Group. Initiatives are underway that will improve the ADM situation in Canada.
- ACTA, in collaboration with Air Canada, is currently working on hosting a webinar that will provide travel agencies with best practices to help reduce ADMs.
- Net Remit 5 (a method of supplementary commission and considered a special filing system for contracts) has been introduced and is currently being tested in Canada. Completion is due by the end of 2018 with the expectation to help travel agencies reduce ADMs.

### **PCI DSS Compliance**

- The March 1, 2018 implementation of PCI compliance required immediate and extensive interventions by ACTA on behalf of Members to help them understand and meet their requirements to meet the new global credit card security requirements. In addition to frequent information updates to our Members, we sourced an online tool to assist Members in becoming compliant to avoid penalties for non-compliance.

### **NewGen ISS**

- The phased Canadian roll-out of Next Generation IATA Settlement System (NewGen ISS) began in March and immediately caused problems for some Members. We provided a report to IATA based on Member feedback and insisted on improvements in their customer service, citing lack of communication, timing of training and accessibility to IATA personnel. ACTA's report also clearly pointed out the administrative and financial burden IATA's initiatives were placing on Canadian Travel Agencies who are not a risk to airlines given the high usage of credit cards. We have

faithfully communicated to Members about our discussions with IATA as well as provided Members with valuable information about accreditation models that could help save time and money.

### **Local Financial Criteria (LFCs)**

- ACTA has aggressively lobbied for alternatives to the costly Review Engagement process, and that audited financial statements should not be the required financial measurement for Canadian Travel Agencies as it is in other countries. ACTA **succeeded** in keeping audited financial statements out of the reporting requirements for Canada and Travel Agents now have options to Review Engagements achieved through the implementation of NewGen ISS. The proposed new LFC was approved locally in July, with the expectation that it will be approved at the airline conference being held this fall.

### **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.

**NFC's and Supplier Issues** – ACTA's strong position is that fees and surcharges that are not taxes should be in the base fare and all ancillary fees should be commissionable.

### **NFC's**

- Over the summer months, ACTA addressed concerns from Members with suppliers regarding imposed fuel surcharges and currency fees by Airlines, and the abuse of "Friends and Family" discounts by tour operators. ACTA continuously lobbies our position with suppliers and emphasizes the value travel agencies bring to the distribution channel.

**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**

- The election of a new provincial government in June 2018 interrupted work in progress on a new Travel Industry Act. Discussions on next steps concerning draft regulation and lobbying efforts resumed in October. 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.

### **Quebec**

- We are monitoring and updating Members on the impact of new travel regulations that took effect in August.

### **British Columbia**

- The ACTA BC subcommittee is heavily engaged in compiling scenarios that require regulatory changes.

**Federal Government Relations** – We have raised ACTA's profile and the value of travel agencies with the federal government in the past year, with Ministerial meetings and active participation in the development of an Air Passenger Bill of Rights.

### **Air Passenger Bill of Rights**

- In August, ACTA submitted recommendations for proposed air passenger protection legislation. We conducted extensive research and consultations with stakeholders and the CTA Review Committee to prepare our recommendations, which favour a balanced approach across Canada for passenger rights and ensure that there are no unintended consequences to the agency community.

**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 Learning Campus** – Providing ACTA Members with Just in Time learning in our fast-paced industry. In 2018, an additional 2913 users enrolled and a total of 15,371 modules were completed.

- Monthly webinars available in English and French – 16 webinars were hosted with 1415 participants.
  - Topics like PCI compliance, Fraud Prevention, and Independent contractors are attracting capacity participation because of the relevance and timeliness of the information.
- Information toolkits on webinar topics, destinations and issues you face every day in your business. Convenient access (both live and on demand) to accreditation and certification content and BC and SK mandatory Travel Health Insurance licensing exams.

### **National Travel MarketPlace**

- By popular demand, two National Travel MarketPlace conferences were held this year, one in Toronto and a new one in Vancouver with over 550 retail travel agents present. Dates are already set for these locations in 2019.

### **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

- Visits were made during the school year to travel programs at Mohawk, Sheridan, MacEwan, and Algonquin Colleges promoting the retail travel industry as a career.

**PROMOTE** – *Our 2018 Membership Survey revealed that ACTA members place a high value (9.1 out of 10) on ACTA promoting the value of engaging a professional travel agent with the public.*

**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 Understanding Travel Health Insurance, Canadian Travel Trends, March break and holiday travel planning, the pending Air Passenger Bill of Rights, National Travel Agent Day as well as response to questions of safety of travelers in the wake of hurricanes, floods, natural disasters and terror threats.

**Trade Relations** – ACTA is actively working on engaging ACTA Members and increasing awareness through social media channels.

- In fall 2018, ACTA is launching a social media campaign to grow our trade following on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. We will be increasing 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, and to grow our exposure to consumers via the aforementioned travel professionals by creating compelling, interactive and shareable content that reinforces the use of a professional travel advisor.

**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 include Kelowna Airport Show, Ottawa Travel and Leisure, multiple Travel Agent Day initiatives, Merit Travel show, Uniglobe Carefree show (YEX), Salon International Tourisme Voyages.

Based on strong member feedback, this pillar will be a key focus of ACTA in 2019.

**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**

- New and updated business tools for 2018 include tips and best practices on the topics of Fraud, PCI DSS Compliance, employment of Independent Contractors, and information on selling travel health insurance to Alberta residents.
- The ACTA Membership Card Program was expanded to include memberperks, providing more than 3,000 exclusive perks and benefits from brand names and local vendors. We have connected you to savings for your business and your staff.

**Industry Events** – Build your knowledge base about the travel industry, partners and suppliers and connect with your peers.

- Premium networking events were scheduled across the country including conferences, education events, recognition events, golf tournaments, culinary tours, and airport tours.