



Client Situation

The theme park division of a leading media and entertainment company had made a significant investment in its web properties to improve its sales and marketing efforts. Senior management was disappointed with the ROI to date and was concerned that the current internet marketing efforts were confusing potential customers and, more important, were causing conflict with the travel agent sales channel.

Alliance was asked to examine the current internet strategy and to make specific recommendations to improve its overall effectiveness.

Alliance Approach

Working alongside sales, marketing and IT client managers, Alliance consultants geared the team's efforts to answer the following questions:

- What functions did potential customers want and expect the company's various internet sites to perform? How did these wants and needs vary by customer segment?
- For which functions or tasks did the internet provide a significant advantage relative to off-line alternatives? Which specific areas should receive further investment?
- How should internet marketing efforts be best integrated with the broader sales and marketing strategy (e.g., traditional media, sales channels)? How could sales effectiveness be optimized across all channels?

The team analyzed web traffic patterns and conducted primary survey and focus group research to understand customer needs and usage. In addition, the team built sophisticated financial models to understand relative cost advantage and examine various strategic scenarios (e.g., role and commission level of travel agents). The team's topline recommendations included:

- Structuring the internet marketing efforts around customers' "desired experiences" instead of by demographic segment or by stage in the purchase cycle. The team developed a needs hierarchy that captured what potential customers were seeking.
- Focusing on purchase intent and conversion. Potential customers were using the website to validate that the theme park would deliver on a



specific vacation “promise” (e.g., family togetherness) – due to complex pricing and package options, only highly sophisticated users were booking vacations through the website.

- Aligning financial incentives with sales channel partners. By joining forces and having an integrated approach, all parties could benefit.

Results and Impact

As a result of the team’s recommendations, the client’s internet marketing programs were repurposed and restructured. On-going monitoring of customer feedback indicated that overall satisfaction and bookings had increased significantly.