

Family-Friendly Incentive Travel

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True or False: For travel rewards, people prefer an adults-only guest policy.

Answer: Fact. Most program participants prefer a guest policy that includes children. Including people with no kids of their own.

Maritz Travel is seeing a growing shift towards more family-friendly incentive travel programs. Why? Consider today's workforce. In the U.S., 70 percent of children live in dual-income households. If one spouse earns an incentive travel award, many times the other spouse must take vacation days in order to attend. Often, this trip replaces the family vacation.

In addition, new technologies have afforded us more mobility. According to a study by the American Sociological Review, nearly half of American workers regularly bring work home. Busy parents are discovering that more work hours at home doesn't equal quality time with their kids.

Given today's reality, participants have turned to their incentive programs to gain back time with their families. Specifically, according to a Maritz national study, participants stated:

- "I want more family friendly rewards. Reward me with quality time back to my family."
- "Family members, such as kids should be allowed to attend. Winning trips causes stress for associates with kids, because it means less time with them."

The study also found that nearly *four out of five incentive travel participants without children* believe that kids should be allowed to participate.

The benefits of family-friendly programs are obvious from the participants' perspectives, but what's in it for companies? We believe better business results. Organizations that create programs that are more personally meaningful to their participants can achieve significantly improved results, simply by rethinking qualification and trip reward structure. For example, clients that offer family travel-oriented options may structure their program to include:

- Multiple travel choices, including adult-only and family options, as well as differing travel dates
- An enhanced qualification structure, increasing performance targets so participants can earn additional guest slots
- On-site reward and recognition activities designed to best suit the needs of the family

Producing a more family-oriented experience is easier than most planners and program sponsors might imagine because vendors recognize this trend, too. A number of hotel chains have established children programs that can be integrated into corporate programs. Starwood, Hyatt, Four Seasons and Marriott, and others all offer quality options that can be worked into your program.

It is a new day for creating and motivating the people that drive business success. Connecting with not only your employees, channel partners and customers but also those important to them, creates a wonderful opportunity to improve performance. Equally important is the ability to create meaningful engagement by enhancing the personal connections among your business, the participant and their family.



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