



Recession Is Not The Time To Cut Back On Personal Contact

By Reed Forrester

With the economy still in the doldrums, it's tempting to regard air travel as a dispensable business expense. Why pay for airfares and hotel rooms if you can schedule a conference call or even a video conference, instead of getting on a plane for a face-to-face meeting?

There's no question that you'll save money, but at what cost? In our experience there's nothing you can accomplish over the phone that you can't do much better in person. We all sense that instinctively. Face-to-face contact is where confidence is born. When you greet a customer or venture partner, it's in your eyes, in the shake of your hand, in your voice. It's in the camaraderie of an end-of-day dinner.

Being there is just as important for the small to mid-sized enterprise as for the Fortune 500 company. However, the smaller company is less likely to meet its travel needs in structured ways that will save it money. A survey by the American Small Business Travelers Alliance (ASBTA) found that at mid-

decade almost 70 percent of small business travelers did not belong to a business travel club. The ASBTA attributed the findings to small businesses' lack of awareness of a changing travel industry.

What kind of affiliations can a smaller business create to make its travel more cost-effective? Teaming up with a network airline is a possibility that can confer substantial benefits. American Airlines finds that this kind of relationship has proved useful and economic for many small to mid-sized businesses.

Here are some of the kinds of products airlines today offer that serve these enterprises' needs:

- Programs that enable companies to earn points towards awards such as round-trip tickets worldwide in first class, business and economy class, next-cabin upgrade, VIP lounge memberships and one-day passes, frequent-flyer club status, and company corporate credit card solutions to help companies save with earned rebates for travel spending and rewards for other spending.

- Products that provide savings with fixed-rate, unrestricted

air travel, topped with VIP privileges. Miles can be prepaid at a fixed rate, so they are ready when the member needs to travel.

- Incentive certificates and gift cards, which make it easy for businesses to place the motivating power of travel rewards behind incentive and market promotions. They are ideal for creating customer loyalty or rewarding employee successes.

- Group and meeting travel programs that offer special discounted fares for groups of a given size.

- VIP airport lounges, which serve members domestically and internationally, depending on the airline. Personnel in these lounges normally provide personalized assistance with reservations, seat selection, and boarding passes; and the lounges offer a calm oasis where members relax or attend to business.

So, while the small to mid-sized business executive may instinctively feel, "My company is much too small to have a business arrangement with a national airline," they may find it highly beneficial to explore such a partnership.

Reed Forrester is a Business Development Manager for American Airlines.

Construction Contracts And I-9 Form Revisions

Courtesy of Portnoy, Messinger, Pearl & Associates, Inc.

As a result of the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, many construction contractors and subcontractors have received sizable contracts. Although the contract is good news, it does require these contractors to comply with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs' (OFCCP) 16 EEO and Affirmative Action requirements.

Most construction companies have never heard of or had to comply the OFCCP regulations before, but they will certainly be prime contenders for the OFCCP audits and fines.

Additionally, the Department of Labor said that the construction contractors would also be subject to wage and hour and OSHA audits. Expect to see more of this in the next few months and in the 2010 Fiscal Year.

Without meticulous record to defend themselves, OFCCP will take a big bite out of contractors' checkbook, as was reflected in the all time high \$67,510,982 collected in financial remedies by OFCCP for FY 2008.

Construction contractors who have received ARRA funds should familiarize themselves with the 16 specifications EEO/OFCCP must establish in order to be compliant. For a free list of 16 specifications or questions on how you can be prepared for a possible OFCCP audit, contact gconti@pmpmr.com

Meanwhile, the United States Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced on August 27 that the Form I-9 has been approved through August 31, 2012. The updated form contains a new revision date of August 7, 2009. Confused? Join the crowd.

However, employers may use either the Form I-9 with the revision date of August 7, 2009 or February 2, 2009. The revision date can be found on the lower right hand corner of the form.

Employers should check to be sure that the correct version of the form is currently being used as well as complying with the updated (in February 2009) list of acceptable documentation. The updated form can be download from the USCIS web site.

Eric Rubenstein Named "Fifty Around 50" Award Winner

Ruskin Moscou Faltischek, P.C. announced that partner Eric C. Rubenstein, co-chair of the firm's Real Estate Department, was selected by *Long Island Business News* as a member of its inaugural "Fifty Around 50" Class of 2009. The award recognizes and honors individuals for their leadership in business, support of professional and not-for-profit organizations and a commitment to the needs of the local community.

Rubenstein, a resident of Port Washington, began his career in New York City as a commercial litigator with an emphasis on real estate. Presently, he manages a diverse real estate transactional practice with specific emphasis on sophisticated mortgage financing, commercial leasing, acquisitions and sales.

In 2008, he was elected Secretary of the Long Island Real Estate Group. He also serves on the board of the Long Island Business Development Council and is a member of the Real Property Law Committee of the Nassau County Bar Association. Rubenstein has been frequently published in the highly prestigious *New York Law Journal*.

Rubenstein has been active in numerous non-profit organizations, serving on the Town of North Hempstead Business and Tourism Development Corporation and its Waterfront Advisory Commission, and committees for the Community Development Corporation and Friends of the Arts, among others.

For three years, Rubenstein served on the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of Landmark on Main Street, Inc., a community non-profit organization that converted an elementary school in Port Washington into subsidized senior housing, day care and after-school facilities and a theater.

