

# The Business of Travelling with Your Family

• “Strike the proper balance between business and pleasure.”

BUSINESS PROFILE

## Cambridge Hotel & Conference Centre



# Travellers Notebook

- MEETING & INCENTIVE TRAVEL GUIDE -

... COVER STORY ...

## Sharing in Risk & Gain...

• Careful not to exaggerate your guest room block requirement as the ATTRITION man will be watching...

... VITTORIA A. WIKSTON, CMA ...

**I**ntroduced almost a decade ago, the Hotel Industry introduced an attrition clause (aka performance clause) to their contracts as a form of protection from the following:



der to secure better rates, complimentary concessions and preferred availability.

▪ Groups/Organizations that inflate their guestroom block needs in order to secure better rates, complimentary concessions and preferred availability.

How does an attrition clause work? Here's an actual contract clause used by traditional properties:

### Attrition Obligation

For your convenience a room review will be permitted 45 days prior to your group's arrival; at which time a total of 25% of your room block can be released without penalty. After this review date, an additional 10% of your revised room block can be dropped without penalty up to 48 hours prior to arrival. However, all rooms are guaranteed within 48 hours prior to your group's arrival and are subject to full payment.

Please note—the hotel will not alter the room block; it is the responsible of the client to exercise their room review considerations.

So exactly what does this translate too? See top right for an example.

Based on this example the Event Planner/Company is obligated to pay for 54 rooms per night;

regardless if they're needed or not. Does this seem fair? Well, it all depends which party you ask. The Hotel will say—absolutely; while the client might disagree completely. Let's look at both sides:

**Hotel:** one has to remember that their inventory is non-renewable. If a room is not sold for a particular day, it can never be sold again and is lost revenue. The Sales Department is pressured and mandated to maximize potential revenues for each day and having an attrition clause to fall back on, as protection, is a step in the right direction. Dropping 26 rooms within 45 days prior to arrival may not give the property the opportunity to resell the released rooms. If they are lucky enough to find another buyer, traditionally, the rooms are sold at a discounted rate to ensure sell-out. One might not think 26 rooms is a big deal; but, remember, this allowance is given to all their room blocks. So, if a property has an inventory of 160 rooms; with an attrition allowance as mentioned above, that's 52 rooms that need to be resold within 45 days PER DAY! No doubt, the task of reselling has just become harder or next to impossible. It's easy for clients to say, “well, that's just the business that they're in”. The truth is that there are people working within the hotel property who are relying on this pre-committed business. There's no need for me to explain the reasons for earning a pay-check. NOW—can you image if the Hotel didn't have an attrition clause? It would mean potential revenue failure day in and day out.

Okay; let's now switch gears:

**The Client:** without doubt, one needs to understand that the client wants to minimize and/or eliminate all potential financial risk to their events. Especially for those

<b>Original Room Block</b>	80	Rooms Per Night
LESS Room Review Drop (25%) - 45 days out	20	Rooms Per Night
<b>REVISED Room Block</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>Rooms Per Night</b>

LESS Final Drop (10% on revised block) -48 hours prior	6	Rooms Per Night
<b>Final Room Block Obligation</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>Rooms Per Night</b>

events that rely on elective registration verse those with mandatory attendance.

**Mandatory Attendance:** individuals are simply told that they're attending and their registration is paid by their company/organization. It's been my experience that the Mandatory Registration events relatively adapt well to proposed attrition clauses as they do have a better control of securing their audience. Truthfully, these groups tend to worry more about their cancellation clause than an attrition clause. (That's a different story—which will be told at another time)

### Elective Registration:

individuals reserve their own registration and traditionally pay their own expenses. While the event planner/client has the best intentions on executing a sold-out event, there are so many uncontrollable factors that increase their financial risk:

- Will the event attract an audience?
- Location, Time, Price
- State of the Economy, etc, etc.

To these elective events, an attrition clause could be financially devastating because if the event ends up having rooms that require payment; yet, they're unspoken for, the money ultimately comes out of the event profits; making it quite difficult to properly estimate

a profit/loss statement.

### Who's right—who's wrong?

Neither! Both Hotel & Client need to understand that they are entering into a partnership. The true meaning of partnership is where both parties share equally in risk & gain.

### Here's what I teach my Event Management Student's about Risk Management:

1. Identify the Potential Risk
2. Assess the Potential Risk
3. Manage the Potential Risk

The client needs to understand & respect the Hotel's perspective; while the Hotel in turn needs to remember they rely heavily on the client to plan such events; from which business is attained. It comes down to openly communicating to one another. In the end; should there be a high attrition risk for the client, one way to manage the risk, would be to book around the Hotel's slow periods. Such risk management will enable the Hotel to be far more flexible with their attrition allowances, and might even secure you better rates. **TN**

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## STAY-CATION Spend Some Time in Ontario

“Hotels make it easy for families to stay and play by offering packages with local attractions.”

... CHELSEA CREALOCK ...

**T**here's a world of things to see and do within a two hour drive from home—plan a “stay-cation” and take in some of Ontario's delights!

Animal adventurers abound! It's a jungle out there and there are animals waiting to be seen. Land or sea, Arctic or Australasia, the Toronto Zoo has some amazing creatures. Bring your walking shoes and spend the day. Once again this summer visitors can get up close and personal with and even touch sting-rays and sharks at the new Sting-ray Bay with Sharks exhibit. For more wild experiences, check out Safari Niagara, African Lion Safari, Marine-land or Jungle Cat World.

Find out if you have what it takes to be a spy in the new interactive exhibition at the Ontario Science Centre—“The Science of Spying”—on now until September 7th. Fun doesn't mean having your feet firmly planted on the ground. For high-flying fun, take in an amazing aerial view of Niagara Falls and the surrounding area with Niagara Helicopters.

Hotels make it easy for families to stay and play by offering packages with local attractions. One example is the Toronto Delta East Hotel which offers packages with admission to the Toronto Zoo and a Kids Eat for Free program. The kids will love the Monster and Kiddie water-slides located in the 20,000 square foot atrium recreation centre at the family friendly hotel.

Keep reading Travellers Notebook for information on our “Toronto Family Getaway Contest.” **TN**

# We're Close To Home

"Vacation in our backyard this season—so very close to your own."

\*\*\* GARNET COWSILL, HCA MARKETING MANAGER \*\*\*

It's easy to have a great vacation and save money at the same time. As we say in our advertisements, we're close to home, but Hamilton Conservation Authority conservation areas can make you feel as if you're far away from things.

Whether it's camping at Valens or a leisurely game of disc golf at Christie Lake, HCA has an impressive list of recreation opportunities at some of Hamilton's most loved outdoor destinations that will allow you and your family to get away from it all.

And HCA has made it easier and less expensive for you to do that this summer. All you need is a Nature's Rewards annual membership card. The pass, which sells for \$90, is available at your favourite conservation area or at HCA's main office in Ancaster.

Good for one full year from date of purchase, the card can be used at Christie Lake, Confederation Park, Dundas Valley, Fifty Point, Spencer Gorge, Valens and Westfield Heritage Village.

Buy it and receive your choice of one of several outdoor family fun rewards packages, valued at \$36 or more—such as two free day passes to Wild Waterworks, Canada's largest outdoor wave pool—plus member perks and privileges.

Pass holders will save as much as \$20 on gate admission each time they use their Nature's Rewards Card. HCA estimates the pass is worth more than \$200 to the average family of four.

Vacation in our backyard this season—so very close to your own. Camp, fish, swim, hike to a waterfall, play a round of disc golf, or simply relax and enjoy a quite summer sunset.

Visit [www.conservationhamilton.ca](http://www.conservationhamilton.ca) for more details. And check out Hamilton's new waterfalls website at [www.waterfalls.hamilton.ca](http://www.waterfalls.hamilton.ca) for great self-guided waterfall hikes. **TN**

# The Business of Travelling with Your Family

• Mixing family and business is easier and more affordable than you'd think.

\*\*\* SCOTT LESLIE \*\*\*

According to recent studies, the number of travelers taking business trips with their family is on the rise. Why? Many professionals can't afford to take vacation time and avoid their business for long periods of time. As a result, people are increasingly using their company trips as an opportunity to bring family along and get in a mini-vacation.

Admittedly, it's never a good idea to bring your children into an important board meeting or that crucial sales pitch. But you can still take a trip and strike the proper balance between business and pleasure. *Here's how.*

## Accommodations

In recent years, hotels have taken notice of the growing business traveller market and added inexpensive packages to attract their families. Family friendly perks like children's room service menus, gift bags, board games, play stations and activities for kids have also become standard fare at many major hotel chains and resorts. Many hotels also offer free accommodation for kids staying with their parents.

If you're traveling with young children, invariably you'll find yourself bringing along an enormous amount of "stuff." That in itself can be a daunting challenge when you're traveling on business. However, today's major hotels can often help out on that front, offering everything from diapers and baby food to swings and playpens so you can leave all the accessories – and the worries—behind.

## Child Care

When you're at home, spending time with family can be a joy. But when you're on a business trip concerned with meetings and trying to pay the bills, you don't want

to be worried about your children.

Although it is possible to bring a nanny or babysitter along on your trip, most people travel with their spouse. This allows them to attend their conference or business meeting while their other half can look after the children and take them around town. If you need to make childcare arrangements, however, many hotels offer babysitting services to help make your life easier.

## Balancing Business and Pleasure

One of the common reasons for business people to travel is to attend a convention or company event. Fortunately, conventions are often held at all-inclusive resorts or in an attractive destination like Toronto, Montreal or New York City that offer a wide range of sightseeing opportunities. Many conventions organize social outings and activities for spouses and children so families won't feel left out. When the event's all over, travelers also have a perfect opportunity to relax with their family for a few days and enjoy the local sights.

Many of today's most popular destinations like Las Vegas have gone increasingly "family friendly," offering attractions and amenities that will appeal to the business travelers with family. Financial considerations like hotel and airfare discounts for children are also making family travel a more and more affordable option.

Juggling business and family these days is not always easy. But with a little judicious planning, the business trips that used to keep your family apart can now bring them closer together. **TN**

## ENTER TO WIN A TORONTO FAMILY GETAWAY!!!

Getaway includes an overnight stay at The Delta Toronto East Hotel and a family package for the Toronto Zoo! To enter send an email to [TorontoGetaway@BusinessLinkNewspaper.com](mailto:TorontoGetaway@BusinessLinkNewspaper.com) with your answer to this question:

Where can I go in Toronto to touch a stingray?



Contest closes June 30th, 2009. Some restrictions may apply

## Not just another Pretty Place

Close to home, around the block or just up the street, Hamilton Conservation Authority offers a wide range of recreational experiences and natural settings. They help protect important sources of water, provide green space and preserve our community's natural heritage. Science shows green space is good for the environment and economy, for real estate and business, for tourism and business. Beyond economic concerns, we know, too, that the best memories are made where kids can be kids, where they can swirl sticks in a stream, pop open a milkweed pod in autumn and watch the seeds drift away on the breeze, or stretch out in the grassy fields and daydream while looking up into the blue skies.

Vacation in our backyard this season - so very close to your own. Camp, fish, swim, hike to a waterfall, play a round of disc golf, or simply relax and enjoy a quiet sunset.



[www.conservationhamilton.ca](http://www.conservationhamilton.ca)



## A Meeting Planner's Pick

# Cambridge Hotel & Conference Centre

"Taking care of business...that's what you want for your meeting, and that's what you'll get when you choose this genuine conference centre."

... VITTORIA A. WIKSTON, CMA ...

**G**o WEST my friend! Why struggle with the black flies of the north or the gridlock of the big city, when just an hour away from Niagara and Hamilton region is the Cambridge Hotel & Conference Centre. Still in its infancy stages, this property was designed to provide a place to think and strategize and to be ultimate in its category. The Cambridge Hotel & Conference Centre is the region's newest and most ideal meeting facility showcasing 10,000 square feet of dedicated state of the art conference space.

Independence has its empowerment. Unique to the region, the Cambridge Hotel & Conference Centre is proudly independently owned and operated. Unrestricted by familiar franchise policies, their independence encourages their entire hospitality team to take every opportunity to go above and beyond the customers' expectations.

Planning a meeting at the Cambridge Hotel & Conference Centre has never been easier or quicker. They're pleased to introduce their new "MY Meetings Ready-Planned Event Packages". These all-inclusive meeting packages have been created to accommodate all the required meeting necessities ensuring maximum results and successful outcomes. The MY Meetings packages include your main meeting room, wireless high speed internet access, an array of advanced audio visual technology, continuous coffee break & refreshment station and depending on the length of your meeting the packages are complimented with delicious meal options. Full Day meeting packages are priced at \$39 per person, with \_ day packages available at \$32 per person.

For the multiple day agenda, luxurious accommodations and three complete meals are included in the package starting at \$135 per person, based on double occupancy.

Efficient – Effective – Economical! That's the righteous mission behind these MY Meetings Ready-Planned Event Packages. Everything is included, and nickel and diming are words that do not fit into the vocabulary of Cambridge's one-of-a-kind conference centre. "We make cost control easy for our clients",

states Corporate Sales Managers, Brad Beedie and Marilyn Dredge. Their event budget formula is quite simple to follow - "Number of Delegates x Number of Days x Package Price = Budgeting made EASY."

Even though this property specializes in medium size meetings, their 10 meeting room distraction-free facility is designed to accommodate 4 to 400 delegates. All rooms are specially engineered with appropriate lighting (natural lighting where possible), acoustics and space flexible to satisfy the most complex of room set-ups. The Sussex Room is their largest room at 4000 square feet and acts as the perfect general session and/or banquet venue. It's modern and clean line decor approach offers the meeting planner endless opportunities for event theming. Get inspired! It seems in today's hurried lifestyle, corporations are placing more emphasis on teamwork to allow for their team to connect and grow as a functioning company. Through their RedSPARK Program, the Cambridge Hotel & Conference Centre offers innovative and energizing teaming programs that focus on actively engaging participants to empower themselves through the development of leadership skills.

Taking care of business...that's what you want for your meeting, and that's what you'll get when you choose this genuine conference centre. Their skilled team of meeting professional's makes this property a solution oriented choice for both the novice and most veteran event/meeting planner. Make arrangements for a site-tour and you'll soon be on your way to realizing all of your meeting objectives because seeing is believing. **TN**



**The Cambridge Hotel & Conference Centre is located on Highway 24 off the 401 West (London)**  
**Tel: - 519.622.1505**  
**Email: info@cambridgehotel.ca**  
**www.cambridgehotel.ca**



**All rooms are specially engineered with appropriate lighting (natural lighting where possible), acoustics and space flexible to satisfy the most complex of room set-ups.**

## Ready, Set...Planned



Introducing MY Meetings ready planned event packages at the Cambridge Hotel and Conference Centre.

Efficient - Effective - Economical

Seeing is believing. Call 1.866.622.1505 for your personal tour.



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