



# SOCIETY OF POLISH AMERICAN TRAVEL AGENTS

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Mr. Slawomir Noszczak  
General Manager for The Americas  
LOT Polish Airlines

February 03, 2010

Dear Mr. Noszczak:

Speaking for myself, the whole Board, and the participants of the Winter Meeting of SPATA - Society of Polish American Travel Agents, I would like to protest against, and express my feelings of sorrow and discontent with LOT's decision to introduce, on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010, a new procedure of issuing contracts between LOT Polish Airlines and accredited Polish travel agencies in the USA.

We, the owners of Polish travel agencies, do not understand the politics behind the decision to cut us off as a direct channel of LOT's ticket distribution system.

The decision to cancel the up-front commission for Polish travel agencies has not only economical, but also to political meaning, because it seems to purposely discriminate against the Polish carrier's well established partners, who have a long history of building the client base for PLL LOT in the USA. This decision caused the inability of travel agencies to function normally to meet everyday costs of maintaining an office, such as renting office space, using a ticket reservation system, advertising, hiring workers, paying phone bills, obtaining bank bonds required by ARC, etc. This decision caused also the necessity to turn to other channels of distribution, i.e. consolidators.

The owners of Polish travel agencies are asking why consolidators such as Mill-Run Tours, Picasso Travel, or Downtown Travel already have preferred agreements with LOT Polish Airlines? Unlike travel agencies within SPATA, the consolidators have no history of selling LOT tickers, nor did they contributed to building the client base for LOT in the USA. They can not say they have generated \$15 million dollars in average annual LOT ticket sales (from statistical data.) as we can. Nonetheless, the Board of LOT decided to reward the consolidators with preferable contracts which we were denied.

This lead to a situation where consolidators create incredible pressure on our travel agencies. They compete with each other to offer us up-front commissions, only to obtain access to our Polish-speaking clients. They do not know the specifics of the Polish market nor the Polish clients, and they are not interested in promoting LOT, our national carrier. Quite the opposite - they only count on stealing our clients, offering them lower prices, and ultimately trying to convince them to use the consolidator's own preferred carriers - not LOT.

Because of their Polish national background, Polish travel agents, as members of the strong organization SPATA, have concern over the national Polish carrier, and are the direct reason for LOT's strong position in the competitive American market of transatlantic transportation. Moreover, facts cannot be ignored. We are professional businesses, pursuing continuous professional training and continuing education of our employees. We are open to new technologies, and we support new projects in the field of marketing as well as the promotion of Polish tourism. We have a strong position in Polish communities in America. We know our clients. We have years of experience in building not only professional but also personal relationships with the clients. Those are the reasons for our high average annual LOT ticket sales (estimated 15 million dollars in 2009).

POLISH AIRLINES



POT/PNTO



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The idea of charging service fees before receiving a commission (which depends on the overall sales), and putting that weight on the client, seems to us unacceptable. It would only be somehow justified in one case: LOT would have to standardize this system for retail agencies as well as for consolidators, Internet Web Sites, and direct sales from the company. Such a move would even our competitive position.

Otherwise, when we charge service fees for the tickets issued in our offices, we lose credibility in the eyes of our Polish-speaking clients, who, in the meantime, are able to buy cheaper tickets from the consolidator, who also sells them directly to clients bypassing local travel agencies.

Preferred contracts with non-Polish consolidators discriminate against Polish travel agencies accredited by ARC or IATA without any guaranties for LOT to up the sales in the long run. In the times when only the financial end effect counts, consolidators will only sell what brings them profit. Without the client base, without the knowledge of Polish market in the USA, without the backup of Polish media, organizations, and communities, consolidators will find themselves in a spot. Without the help of Polish travel agencies, consolidators will not be able to perform as well. This situation can lead to completely unexpected and unpredictable consequences, including loss of financial profits, which both the carrier and the carrier's distributors are anticipating.

So please, revise the contracts and commission structure for Polish travel agencies. Make a better decision in this matter, which would reflect strengthened relationships, and the prospect of a brighter future with increased optimism and improved sales results.

Best regards,

Jagoda Minkowicz  
President  
Society of Polish American Travel Agents

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