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Tips from the Certified Agent of the month for January 2010



Each month, ATOUT FRANCE - the France Tourism Development Agency features one of our France certified destination specialists. Sophia Kulich of Sophia's Travel (aka E&M Travel) is our featured specialist of the month of January 2010



Name: Sophia Kulich

Company: Sophia's Travel (aka E&M Travel)

What is the primary focus of your business?: Independent customized itineraries for individuals and small groups. Book many clients to France. Niche: Jewish Heritage sightseeing and holocaust research.

When did you start the certification program?: 2003

When did you finish?: 2004

Where and when did you participate in the required Fam trip?:

September 2008, Midi Pyrenees. January 2010, St. Martin.

What are some of your comments in regards to the program itself?:

It is an excellent program for agents to learn about France and it's regions. Helps agents to advice clients traveling to France to other regions other than Paris.

How have you applied the new information and skills youve learned from getting certified?:

Yes. I started with trips for clients interested with food and wine and put together interesting itineraries to Burgundy, Champagne, Bordeaux. I have some corporate clients who do incentive trips for employees once a year to Bordeaux.

What other training would you like to see available for those that sell France as a destination? :

Continue fam trips program for less known French destinations.

How has this training affected your business?:

I booked VIP clients for private tour to Midi - Pyrenees after visiting this region. Tourists contacts helped. I visited Chateaux Mercues just before I booked client there so I was able to explain client what to expect. Meeting manager personally helped me salvage a situation when dining room was not possible to make reservation at the night they stayed - and trip was booked around that property. The manager arranged instead private dinner in a cave cellar!!!

Share some of your thoughts on the Travel Industry and how your business to France is evolving:

I think specialists with specific niche will be always successful. My packages which I build from scratch using local contacts now are popular with travel agents. I work with travel agents who are not familiar (or do not want to) deal with FIT's.

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