

INNOVATIVE

EST. *Travel* 1990

Thirty-six years ago, destination specialist Innovative Travel was launched by myself, with few resources and big dreams!

Over the years, the fledging dream has become a reality with the help of the collective vision shared by an amazing team both in NZ and internationally. Enabling travellers to explore incredible locations within a over arching goal to achieve 100% client security a key objective in the foundation of Innovative Travel.



In 1990 this dream seemed a goal with insurmountable challenges!
I was frequently asked how I, a single blonde, would be able to create a credible specialist travel wholesale travel company to ancient sites in the Middle East & Mediterranean such as Petra, Ephesus and the Valley of the Kings in a region regarded as a male dominated environment, and at a time when the fax machine was the main form of expensive communication



The challenge – How to keep our figure on the pulse and negotiate the hurdles of a start up company?



The Temple of Hercules
Amman, Jordan

1991 : I quickly learnt a key threat emerged from the male dominated wholesale travel industry, who didn't appreciate the establishment of our Innovative Travel as a boutique destination specialist.

The result : A large and established competitor, made a decision to create false rumors with the intention to destroy our fledging reputation and obliterate the company.

The odds were not good, an established team of 50 against our humble team of 3 !

How did this Samson and Goliath story conclude on a Friday afternoon.....?

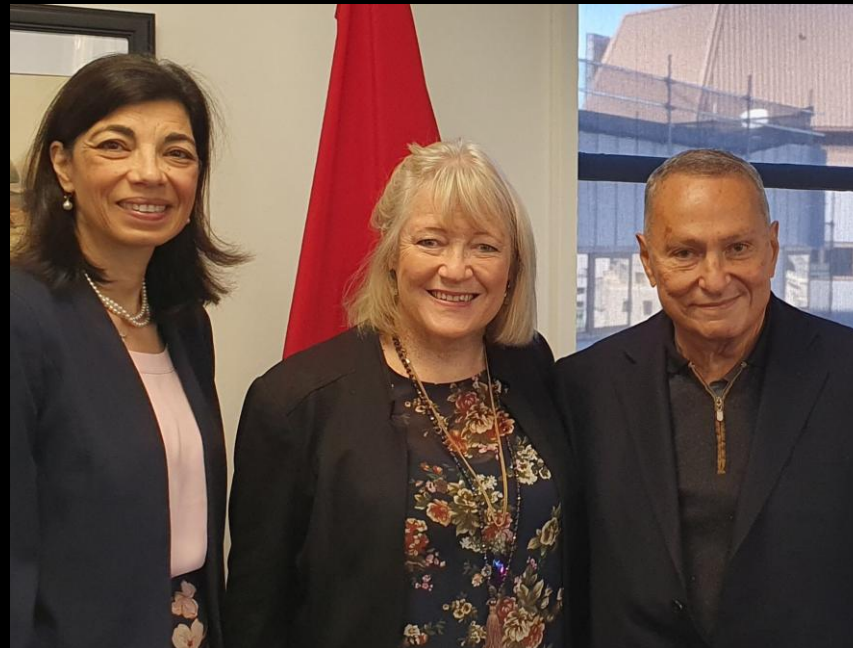


The challenge of finding the right business partner

The reality became clear, we needed to leverage our relationships in the Middle East and select a business partner, who would add strength and depth for Innovative Travel.

One day in the mid 1990's Elhamy ElZayat called from Cairo, his company was already looking after our Egypt clients. He planned a visit to NZ with archeologist Dr Kent Weeks. During his visit in New Zealand in a Queenstown bar, the question was asked by Elhamy did I want to become his NZ business partner? So, the negotiation began

A key question what were our respective benefits in establishing a more formal business connection Did our goals and values align?



With former Egypt Ambassador to NZ, Dina Farouk El Sehy.



Negotiating with the right party

As part of the business negotiation, after successfully arranging for Dame Malvina Major to appear at the Jerash Festival in Jordan, I made a big request to Elhamy.....

How about an Opera at the Pyramids?



Then MFAT Request for Honoray Consul role for NZ in Egypt

Two years later MFAT called regarding an approach to Mr ElZayat to act as Honorary Consul for NZ in Egypt. The role required addressing trade complications and critical port delays. An important point of consideration – there were several names being considered.

What was the requirement and why would he want to commit to such a role?



Tremors of a different nature in 2011!

The Tahrir Sq Revolution began in late January 2011. Communications were cut by the Mubarak Government with both the internet and cell lines frozen. Negotiating client safety was critical. Our advantage, Elhamy's office one street from Tahrir Square, in addition to 6 local offices throughout Egypt. Although we couldn't communicate immediately we felt calm knowing all clients would be personally contacted.



Just a few weeks later, the February Christchurch Earthquake struck. Innovative Travel's office on the corner of Cashel St and Barbados Street, was Red Zoned



Our first post earthquake team meeting 5 days later in the North west at Nicholas' home which was safe. Many challenges no office access and almost zero equipment. We met regularly. With limited internet, and no PC's it was not possible to resume business.

Staff homes and the company faced massive challenge in our normal highest selling season. But with insurance we will be okay OR NOT!



COVID : NZOSTA the NZ Outbound Suppliers Association

was literally founded in 3 days after many sleepless nights and battling Imposter syndrome I sent an email to every NZ based tour operator. At times we competed but in this perilous time, a unified organization dedicated to secure a method for our outbound wholesale/tour operator travel industry to survive during the uncertainty of an unknown framework.



Suppliers Unite With Support Group

A new travel industry supplier group has been formed—with the aim of providing a single voice for New Zealand's travel suppliers.

The group is chaired by Innovative Travel's Robyn Galloway, who says during these testing times there is so much commonality in the issues suppliers are facing and it made sense to join forces in the form of the supplier support group.

"It is critically important we have a single voice. The group will facilitate the easier flow of information between suppliers," she says. "Time of the essence—and now we've got a quick communication channel."

... Have You Lobbied?

The group is keen to hear from anyone who has utilised any direct MP or Parliamentary connections to pro-

mote the industry's cause. "The travel industry is in uncharted waters [...] in these challenging times it makes absolute sense to pull together," adds Robyn. However she says rather than an independent lobby group, the group is about supporting initiatives and efforts already in action.

... Members

The group is made up of 15 members: Active Asia; Adventure World; APT Group; Cruise World; Croatia Times Travel; Exotic Holidays; Francis Travel Marketing; Globus family of brands; Innovative Travel; The Travel Corporation; Total Holiday Options; travel&co; Viva Expeditions; Wild Earth Travel and World Journeys.

Meet At Heritage



Suppliers: Lobbying now, plus eye on future

Much of the discussion centred around the present lobbying of government for further assistance for the travel industry, when the NZ Travel Suppliers Association met in Auckland last week.

Guest speakers included Brent Thomas chair of TAANZ, Clint Smith from Capital NZ and Leon Grice from Rako Science.

Robyn Galloway, chair of NZTSA says the increased cooperation between TAANZ and NZTSA is leading to a more consistent and comprehensive messaging to government.

'The group has an eye on the future



Paul Dymond, Wendy Wu Tours; Robyn Galloway, Innovative Travel; Joe O'Sullivan, Cruise World; Marija Kapitelli, Croatia Times Travel; Simon Peterson, Rako Science; Leon Grice, Rako Science

when travel becomes possible again,' says Galloway.

'Leon Grice of Rako Science updated the group on the saliva testing technology the company has developed to assist agents, businesses and consumers to make travel in a Covid environment simpler and compliant with emerging regulations across the globe.'

Galloway acknowledged the ongoing contribution and commitment of the NZTSA committee – Joe O'Sullivan Cruise World, Marija Kapitelli, Croatia Times Travel and Paul Dymond, Wendy Wu Tours.



Cheers to the chairs... Robyn Galloway, NZTSA; Brent Thomas, president TAANZ

Twelve weeks prior to election on 20 October 2020, there were multiple hands screaming for help. How could our newly formed NZ Tour Operator Group NZOSTA – elevate our concerns to Government for critical funding support?



Failed efforts were frightening!

Our own efforts were failing.
External assistance was required.

The objective to negotiate funding assistance after already loosing hundreds of thousands dollars in the first few months of Covid.



Aligning the goals – A challenge as no official Minister for outbound tourism.
Many tactics – Capturing Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs Kris Faafoi, attention - \$2 Billion of clients travel funds spread across the world.
Time was required to remit funds back to NZ. \$2 billion spent internally through Covid could produce up to \$300 million in GST revenue. A unique scheme was created via MBIE



SAFE TRAVEL Warnings



By 2018, many clients wished to travel to Türkiye, with Innovative Travel, but following the attempted revolution in 2016, travel warnings remained in place for Istanbul & Ankara.

The Türkiye SAFE Travel site recorded one policeman shot 18 months prior in Istanbul.

Yet the SAFE Travel site made no mention of the 100 policemen and women killed each year in the USA.

A key negotiation query :

What matrix does SAFE Travel use ?

Did the formula contain intentional or unintentional bias?

Diplomatic relationships, allow for open dialogue



With NZ Ambassador to Türkiye
Greg Lewis



With former Türkiye
Ambassador to NZ
Omur Unsay

My thanks to Dame Malvina Major for our several combined ventures and to Elhamy ElZayat, a Queens Birthday Order of Merit recipient for his services to New Zealand, for being our Amazing Cairo Director, who manages to look on the bright side and to our Incredible Innovative Travel team.



Negotiation takeaways

Define the objective

For a broader understanding take a “Moon view’ prior to the meeting – View it objectively from a neutral position

Understand your objectives, what is fixed and what is the fallback position?

Understand your own history and bias which impacts your “compass view” and consider any relevance

Endeavour to ascertain the other side’s viewpoint from a broader perspective with a soft opening

Ensure in “peace times” to invest time in building relevant and reliable key relationships.

To ensure continuity of stakeholder relationships, broaden involvement to more than one person.

If the initial approach doesn’t work, look to reframe the issue and locate the key to achieve your objective

When kiwi DIY general knowledge isn’t going to resolve the situation, seek external advice from specialists in the field, if necessary engage specialists on your behalf.

How do we at Innovative Travel, **negotiate** negative perceptions for the Middle East, which actually comprises over 18 countries.

There are times when a photo is worth a thousand words.

This brief video was filmed in Egypt during my 31st visit to showcase amazing Cairo as it really is.

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