

For Immediate Release

Innovative Travel Marketing's Jody Merl Named to HSMIA's "Top 25 Extraordinary Minds" List

Accolade Recognizes Media Planning/Buying and Barter Specialist for Saving Millions for Hotel & Travel Industry, Gives Barter Well-Deserved Credit as Strategic, Cash-Saving Financial Tool

January 25, 2011 -- Jody Merl, president of [Innovative Travel Marketing](#) (ITM), has been named by the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMIA) as one of the 'Top 25 Most Extraordinary Minds in Hospitality and Travel Sales and Marketing' for 2010. This recognition makes Merl the first ever barter expert to be on the list of honorees, who have habitually exemplified traits indicative of the best sales and marketing professionals in the hospitality, travel and tourism industries. The tribute will take place during a private ceremony preceding the HSMIA Adrian Awards Gala on January 31 at the New York Marriott Marquis.

A prized asset of the industry that goes under the radar, Jody Merl effectively guides hotel and travel organizations to monetize their unsold rooms or airline seats, as a financially intelligent and critical part of an integrated marketing program. With the mantra 'an empty room is a terrible thing to waste,' she and her company, ITM, have bolstered her clients' purchasing and marketing power -- transforming available inventory into 'currency' to dramatically expand marketing budgets, grow business, cover sales & marketing costs, or fund capital expenditures.

A 30-year veteran of the industry, Merl launched Innovative Travel Marketing in 1992 and has since made it the leading media planning and buying company for the hotel/travel industry that uses barter as a strategic financial tool. Since that time, Merl and her company have literally recovered millions of dollars for her clients by monetizing and trading unsold room inventory that would have gone to waste, while passing on millions in cash savings and increased cash flow to bolster the bottom line. ITM's media buying expertise supports hotel sales efforts and generates spectacular results that could not have otherwise been achieved.

Under her leadership, ITM's customized barter advertising and marketing programs have proven highly successful for independent and chain-affiliated hotels and airlines worldwide. Merl has forged long-standing relationships with a wide range of customers such as Ian Schrager Hotels, Affinia Hotels, The Breakers Palm Beach and JetBlue, which she helped launch with a multi-million radio campaign. All have greatly benefitted from her barter advertising expertise, media placement strategies and merchandising services to increase occupancy, average rate and profit.

According to renowned industry expert Sean Hennessey, president of Lodging Advisors LLC, "Merl has helped to instill confidence and trust in trade as a highly intelligent business practice in the hospitality industry. Savvy hoteliers don't leave money on the table, they use barter."

For more information, contact Jody Merl ITM at 973.331.8171, or visit www.innovativetravelmarketing.com.