



**SYTA Strategic Plan**  
**January 2016 - December 2020**  
(Revised June 2017)

SYTA is the non-profit, professional trade association that promotes student & youth travel and seeks to foster integrity and professionalism among student and youth travel service providers. SYTA is “The Voice of Student and Youth Travel.®”

**SYTA Vision Statement**

We give opportunities to students and youth so they can gain greater understanding of the world through the experiences of travel.

**Mission Statement**

SYTA is the premier association of businesses dedicated to providing life enhancing travel experiences to students and young people. We instill confidence in our travelers by establishing quality and safety standards for travel providers, and we empower our members through advocacy, education, training and networking opportunities.

**To provide value to our SYTA members by;**

1. Promoting the development and growth of the student and youth travel market.
2. Expanding SYTA’s role as the “Voice of Student and Youth Travel” by keeping the industry, the press, consumers, and the general public informed on student travel related issues, information, and relevant data.
2. Supporting the efforts of members to strengthen themselves and their businesses for growth and unforeseen challenges.
3. Developing partnerships with education and travel organizations worldwide that share our common interests and goals.
4. Having a positive impact on the world around us.
5. Continuing to ensure the financial stability of association.

**SYTA’s Strategic Objectives**

**1. Organizational and business sustainability**

We will maintain a process whereby the Association’s contracts are reviewed each year prior to October 31<sup>st</sup> to ensure the conditions of the active agreement are in alignment with current association objectives and financial abilities.



## **SYTA's Strategic Objectives (continued)**

### **2. Annually produce a conference that meets budget and attendees satisfaction goals**

The SYTA annual conference will continue to be recognized as the premiere "Student Travel" industry event. Conference attendance will be effectively managed to meet financial targets and create exclusivity for those that attend. Each conference will be delivered in such a way that members and attendees feel they are valued and appreciated.

### **3. The SYTA Youth Foundation**

Acknowledging the cultural and educational value of assisting students and youth to travel, as well as the public relations value inherent in the SYTA Youth Foundation (SYF), the SYTA Board of Directors reaffirms its commitment, support, and high-level oversight of the SYF as a primary, on-going and major strategic initiative. The board commits to fostering the growth of SYF and its Trustees by actively contributing toward the overall success of the foundation, its mission and purpose.

- a. The Board of Directors of SYTA will work with the SYF Trustees to align strategic initiatives, creating a cohesive direction and plan for the mutual benefit of both organizations.
- b. The SYTA Board of Directors will invite the Chair and one other member of SYF Board of Trustees to serve as ex officio members on the SYTA Board of Directors.
- c. To assure that the assets of the foundation are directed primarily to support SYF programs and to make certain the ratio of administrative costs vs. revenues maintains appropriate 501c3 standards, SYTA will continue to provide management and financial services to the foundation at below market costs.
- d. The Board of Directors shall make an annual contribution to the foundation equaling not less than 10% of audited net profits from the association's annual financial results.
- e. The Board of Directors will work to assure that SYF and its related activities are incorporated into an overall internal and external communications plan for the benefit of both organization and members.



## **SYTA's Strategic Objectives (continued)**

### **4. Strategic communications plan**

In order to maintain and promote SYTA as the voice of student travel, we must maintain a formal strategic communication plan. The plan must address internal and external communications and capitalize on timely and appropriate announcements and press releases. For internal customers, we must deliver timely and relevant information professionally. When fully implemented, our Communication Plan will create greater awareness of the association, our goals, our achievements, and our support to grow the student/youth travel market, which will drive higher demand for membership in SYTA based on our successes. An internal and external communications plan will be developed and reviewed annually.

### **5. Membership retention and recruitment**

Membership in SYTA is essential for all qualified Tour Operators engaged in student and youth travel. For our associate members, we will strive to assemble the most qualified active members to ensure continued new business opportunities. We will grow wisely and never grow just to grow the membership. Our commitment is to;

- a. Develop and implement a membership recruitment and retention strategy for both Active and Associate members
- b. Continue to obtain a 3% growth in qualified active members
- c. Maintain 85% retention rate of active members and evaluate the ratio of active and associate members annually

### **6. Optimize SYTA's data to deliver value to members**

One of the greatest values of membership in SYTA is the ability to access other members and their organizations. It is imperative that we have reliable systems in place that connects members to members and potential customers to member with ease.

### **7. Update and promote the SYTA Accreditation Program**

The founding members of SYTA established the association to foster greater integrity and professionalism in a slice of the tourism industry focused solely on student and youth travelers.



We shall continue to evaluate the high membership standards while continuing to offer methods for members to achieve greater business success.

**8. Drive leading-edge research on Student Traveler trends and habits**

One of the greatest membership value adds that SYTA can produce is the exclusive release to its members of industry leading research designed to help all members better understand their business and clients. SYTA will complete at least two student and youth travel information surveys with the results due out in 2015 and 2016. These studies will validate the economic and geographical impact of student & youth travelers. As the lead sponsor for this research, SYTA will make partial sponsorship opportunities available to internal and external partners while maintaining control of the delivery and disbursement of such critical data.

**9. Be on the lookout for strategic opportunities**

The Board of Directors will remain vigilant in their recognition of strategic initiatives that will further the vision and mission of the association.

**10. Crisis, Safety and Terrorism Preparedness**

Evolving world circumstances, heightened media attention and the resulting public awareness are changing expectations of what it means to be prepared for crisis situations. It is imperative that SYTA encourage, educate and build a culture of crisis, safety and terrorism preparedness among SYTA membership. To lead the industry and serve as the “voice of student and youth travel” SYTA will be on the forefront of member education, advocacy and resource support.

- a. Develop effective practices in crisis, safety and terrorism preparedness
- b. Provide education to inform and prepare members and encourage a culture of preparedness among member companies
- c. Serve as a voice for student and youth travel on crisis, safety and terrorism

**11. SYTA Advocacy Framework**

SYTA will strive to identify the critical advocacy needs and develop a framework to guide SYTA advocacy for student and youth travel.

- a. Identification of critical issues and opportunities
- b. Financial model to support advocacy



- c. Key actions, partnerships and opportunities to develop awareness and a culture to advance advocacy among membership

## **12. Technology**

Increasing pace of technology advances make it difficult for SYTA tour operator members to be apprised of the technologies available and the potential value to their companies. SYTA will strive to develop general resources and opportunities to support member awareness and utilization of technology to advance their business.

- a. Identification of critical issues and opportunities
- b. Key actions, partnerships and opportunities to develop awareness of technology resources among membership