Gittens: Delta cutback hurts Atlanta FTAA bid

Staff Report

The recent decision by Delta Airlines to cancel daily service from Atlanta to two key Latin American markets – Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro – will seriously hurt Atlanta’s chances to serve as permanent host to the secretariat of the Free Trade Area of the Americas later this decade. That is the opinion of Angela Gittens, director at Miami International Airport and the former chief at Atlanta’s Hartsfield International Airport.

Angela Gittens

Local trade would feel brunt of hike in air rates

By JOHN FERNANDEZ
Managing Editor

Flower importers, computer parts exporters and apparel makers – three vital components of South Florida’s trade with the world – would feel the impact of a proposal by the International Air Transport Association to raise

Disputes may delay tariff relief for Andean nations

2 companies in spats with Peru have local ties

By JOHN FERNANDEZ
Managing Editor

The Andean Trade Preferences Act, recently renewed and extended by U.S. lawmakers, takes effect Oct. 1, but Colombia and Peru may not realize the full benefits because Disputes may delay tariff relief for Andean nations

2 companies in spats with Peru have local ties

of lingering trade disputes with a few multinational companies, some with strong South Florida ties.

The newly privatized sectors of telecommunications and energy have spawned these dis-

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Miami bank fined in 1st U.S. action

Staff Report

Great Eastern Bank, a small bank in Airport West, is the first financial institution in the country to be fined under a 6-year-old law aimed at stopping money laundering.

Miami bank fined in 1st U.S. action

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How ‘bout them Finns?

This week’s question for Dr. Commerce: We hear a lot about corruption in Latin America, and now in large U.S. corporations. Which countries are the most and least corrupt?

Of course, there is no way to know for sure (see IMF-Argentina story, page 23), but a survey by Berlin-based Transparency International recently rated Finland as the least corrupt nation, followed by Denmark and New Zealand. The others in the top 10 as least corrupt were No. 4 Iceland, Singapore, Sweden, Canada, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The U.S. was

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How ‘bout them Finns?
This service works to set up meaningful appointments in new markets

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I have taken advantage of these services for many years, usually with good results.

I have taken part in trade missions and trade shows, used the international partner search and used many other USCS services.

I am planning to use another service in November, to help me find students for the International MBA at Florida International University.

There are some obvious advantages to having the USCS as your partner in developing new international business. The cache attached to the name carries a lot of weight in many countries.

When someone from the USCS calls to set up an appointment for you, the gatekeepers cannot resist, and that saves you five international calls, six e-mails and lots of frustration.

The so-called Gold Key service is the most useful. Basically, you have all the resources of the U.S. Department of Commerce working to set up meaningful appointments for you in a new market.

You will have to work with one of the department’s export assistants to ensure that all the parameters of your target audience are understood, but usually the appointments they set up are valuable.

You have to remember that the people working for you in-country are local nationals, and they may not be very knowledgeable of your industry.

You must help them. And some companies will sneak themselves into your appointment calendar even though their real motive is to sell you something.

I have used the Gold Key in Caracas, Santiago and Belo Horizonte, Brazil, to help set up meetings with end users and potential distributors.

In Belo Horizonte, the commercial assistant drove me around and went with me on my visits. This was a great assistance, even though I spoke reasonable Portuguese. His presence opened many doors and added a personal touch.

I believe it was also valuable to him, as he saw what was expected of a Gold Key user and how local companies responded to the visit.

In Caracas, I was supplied with a translator as part of the package, although my Spanish is also OK. The translator was helpful in many ways, especially in recommending good restaurants to take new clients.

The Gold Key service ranges between $250 and $800 a day, depending on destination. Of course, the quality of service depends entirely on the interest and abilities of the local USCS. Some are better than others.

If the local commercial assistants are not properly supervised, you may end up meeting lots of their relatives and friends who are “in the business.” Nepotism is, unfortunately, not dead.

Also, the level of research will vary greatly. When I used the international partner search to try to find suitable distributors, the results were mixed.

Some did a good job, while others, I think, just used the local Yellow Pages. Again, you have to work closely with the local trade specialist to make sure the help you receive is useful.

In one extreme case, many years ago, I was referred to three possible distributors. When I tried to contact them I found that two were already out of business, and the other represented my main competitor.

Beyond the Gold Key and international partner search, the USCS offers international market research, customized market analysis, international company profile, and trade shows and missions. I have also made use of the last two.

The trade shows I attended were well-run and well-promoted. The trade mission I attended (Portugal, Spain, Turkey and Greece) was excellent. I met many future clients and agents, and ended up collaborating with other members of the mission on business deals for many years. A double benefit!

As an international businessman, I used to lament the fact that many countries did much more to support their exporters, from paying for attendance at major trade shows to allowing bribes to be legally written off. We Americans were always at a disadvantage.

But with the support of the USCS we can reduce that disadvantage greatly. And the fee we pay for the service means that the anti-commerce politicians cannot point fingers at government support of businesses, even though, in the words of President Calvin Coolidge, “the business of the United States is business.”

We are blessed with an active USCS here in South Florida, which you can contact at 305-526-7425 in Miami or 954-356-6640 in Fort Lauderdale.

The USCS has a network of 157 offices in 84 countries, as well as 105 Export Assistance Centers in the United States, all to help promote U.S. companies and products.

Contact: globalsalesman@worldcity