

# ROBERT K. COLE

## [Contact Information](#)

### **Experienced Senior Executive – Travel Industry Marketing & Technology**

- Highly respected business professional with extensive global travel industry experience.
- Results-oriented leader with demonstrated success serving as a change catalyst.
- Strategic innovator focused on profitably developing industry leading best practices.
- Excellent track record of success with both large mature firms and small startups.

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Marketing Strategy • Strategic Planning • Business Development • Product Management  
Hotel / Resort Sales & Marketing • Online & Social Media • Service Delivery • Financial Settlement  
Electronic Distribution • Customer Engagement Management • Web 2.0 / eBusiness Technologies

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### **HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS**

#### **Performance Enhancement**

- Transformed traditional tour operator business model by expanding electronically sourced hotel portfolio six-fold, resulting in a 9x increase in interactive transaction volume.
- Generated 20% annual growth rate to \$2.7 billion in gross sales and 40% target segment market share for a global travel distribution system.
- Increased global distribution system market share for car rental company by 40% to 12.9% while increasing online sales volume 4x, increasing e-commerce share of business to 60%.

#### **Business Development**

- Struck merchant model agreements directly with global travel supplier firms comprising 25,000+ hotels and 4,000+ car rental locations.
- Grew online travel startup to \$100+ million in gross dynamic packaging sales with 22% gross operating profit margins over 24 month timeframe.
- Successfully transitioned hotel transaction volume from two leading regional distribution systems (Japanese and Asian) onto global hotel distribution platform.

#### **Strategic Innovation**

- Defined business requirements for real-time, rules-based technology that interactively sources and dynamically prices wholesale travel product.
- Authored five-phase integrated strategic plan to launch and grow travel packaging on leading travel meta-search internet site.
- Created industry leading reporting suite for global distribution system integrating performance trending, competitive set analysis and highly actionable sales planning.

### **WORK EXPERIENCE**

ROCKCHEETAH LLC

#### **Founder**

2004 to Present  
Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin

*Responsibilities:* RockCheetah LLC specializes in providing strategic management advisory services to the global travel industry. Hotels, resorts, destinations and online travel sites benefit from the creative application of industry best practices. Plans typically incorporate next generation e-commerce, integrated marketing, seamless distribution & measurement processes for rapid impact. Major projects have included development of integrated marketing programs for a leading financial transaction processor and the design/launch of SideStep.com's meta-search packaging product.

LA MACCHIA ENTERPRISES / THE MARK TRAVEL CORPORATION

#### **Vice President, Destination Experience**

2005 to 2008  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

*Responsibilities:* Led 75 member team tasked with contracting, product operations and supplier relationship management for global hotel, car rental & feature suppliers supporting leading travel brands including United Airlines Vacations, Southwest Airlines Vacations, Spirit Airlines Vacations, Midwest Airlines Vacations, Continental Airlines Vacations (UK), Funjet Vacations, Fabugo and receptive operator Mark International. Created development requirements for hotel & car products.

CENDANT TRAVEL DISTRIBUTION SERVICES / NEAT GROUP (*Acquired May, 2003*) 2000 to 2004  
**Vice President, Hotel & Car** The Woodlands, Texas

*Responsibilities:* Member of initial management team responsible for creating and patenting the first real-time dynamic packaging technology for the travel industry. Responsible for strategic planning, business development, account management, product requirements planning and productivity analysis for hotel & car rental business sector. Led hotel technology integration team.

BUDGET GROUP, INC. 1999 to 2000  
**Director, Electronic Distribution** Carrollton, Texas

*Responsibilities:* Created, implemented and provided leadership for Budget Rent a Car and Ryder Truck Rental's electronic distribution strategy. Developed industry-first direct interfaces with priceline.com, Southwest Airlines and EuropCar. Managed distribution technology relationships with business partners for GDS, OTA's, IT outsourcing, web development & reservation services.

THE SABRE GROUP 1996 to 1999  
**Director, Hotel Distribution** Fort Worth, Texas

*Responsibilities:* Developed high performance team of direct reports, overseeing all aspects of the Sabre Hotel Program, including research & development, system design, project management, interface connectivity, product marketing, business development, joint ventures, sales & account management, customer service, training & support and budget oversight for 50,000 hotel portfolio.

ANASAZI, INC / TRAVEL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT GROUP (*Acquired August, 1995*) 1990 to 1996  
**Vice President, Business Development & Marketing Services** Irving, Texas

*Responsibilities:* Led business development team, reservation services, member development, direct marketing solutions, management information systems, business strategy & planning, and contract administration areas for company supporting 650+ independent member hotels worldwide.

JOURNEY'S END CORPORATION 1987 to 1989  
**Corporate Director of Marketing** Mississauga, Ontario

FOUR SEASONS HOTELS 1980-1987  
**Corporate Director, Marketing Planning & Information Systems** Toronto, Ontario

**INDUSTRY POSITIONS** Open Travel Alliance (Interoperability Committee)  
Hospitality Industry Technology Integration Stds (Steering Committee)  
Hotel Electronic Distribution Network Association (Board of Directors)  
Cornell Center for Hospitality Research (Partner Representative)

**CONSULTING ENGAGEMENTS** Sidestep.com, Santa Clara, California – Travel Packaging Strategy  
The Old Course Hotel, St. Andrews, Scotland – Redevelopment Plan  
Hotel Seiyo Ginza, Tokyo, Japan - International Marketing Plan  
Rydges Hotel Group, Australia/New Zealand - Wholesale Market Plan  
Sonesta Beach Hotel, Bermuda - Independent Marketing Valuation  
St. George's Hospital Site, London, England - Redevelopment Plan

**SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS** **Guest Lecturer**  
Cornell University, School of Hotel Administration, Ithaca, New York  
University of Houston, College of Hotel and Restaurant Management  
Queens University, Queens School of Business, Kingston, Ontario  
University of Ottawa, School of Management, Ottawa, Ontario  
**Industry Presentations**  
The PhoCusWright Conference, Orlando, FL  
Hospitality Technology & Financial Prof. – HITEC & Annual Convention  
Int'l Assoc. of Convention & Visitors Bureaus Conference, Hong Kong  
Hotel Electronic Distribution Network Association, Various Locations

**EDUCATION** Bachelor of Science, School of Hotel Administration  
Cornell University, Ithaca, New York