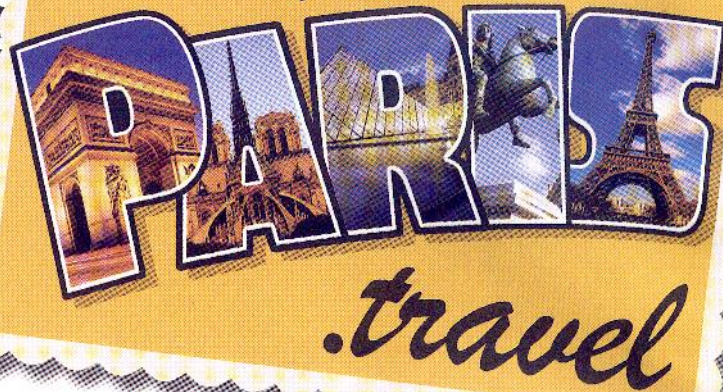


GREETINGS from



PILL PUSHERS



REP OF A (DRUG) SALESMAN

When it comes to pitching drugs to doctors, the thinking goes, the best sales reps are those who are best liked by physicians. That's why Big Pharma closely follows surveys that ask physicians to rate rep effectiveness. Last year just such a poll from GfK Market Measures put Pfizer and Merck on top.

But popularity may not be the point. **TargetRx**, a consulting firm co-founded by a former Merck executive, **Michael Luby**, claims it can identify what really makes a sales rep effective. For the past six years, Luby has conducted his own surveys of physicians, using a computer program that links responses to actual prescribing habits. The results: In marketing to primary-care doctors, Abbott Laboratories reps have the most impact; Pfizer and Merck reps rank seventh and eighth, respectively. Some key factors that move a pitch onto the prescription pad: good written material and the ability to describe a drug's target patient. —Amy Barrett

WIRED LIFE

A NEW STOP BEFORE YOU TAKE OFF

SURF THE WEB for vacation spots this summer, and you're likely to encounter an alternative route: a dot-travel domain in addition to the usual dot-com or dot-net. The new domain became a dot on the e-map last fall after getting the go-ahead from the **Internet Corporation for Assigned Names & Numbers**, the nonprofit group that coordinates Internet addresses worldwide.

Ronald Andruff, CEO of **Tralliance**, which oversees the selling of names in the new domain and maintains a registry, says a dot-travel Internet address will signal both authenticity and convenience. Now, consumers looking for "Paris vacation" get back millions of hits, including many repeats.

Tralliance checks the credentials of the travel and tourism outfits it registers to be sure they are bona fide groups with rights to the names they wish to use. All of the new domain's Web sites will be listed at www.directory.travel.

Some tourism groups, such as the **Travel Industry Assn.**, won't add or move to a dot-travel address right away. "Dot-com and dot-org seem to work fine," says TIA spokesperson Cathy Keefe.

But heavy hitters such as **British Airways**, **Disney**, and the state tourism boards of Utah and Florida have already signed on. The **Canadian Tourism Commission** will make

Canada.travel its primary site this spring. Tralliance says about 21,000 dot-travel domain names have been sold since October, at \$100 to \$250 a year (compared with \$8 to \$35 annually for dot-com domain names).

Will consumers keep doing Google searches for "Florida resorts" when they can type in "Florida.travel" instead? For the time being, Dale Brill, chief marketing officer for Florida's tourism arm, Visit Florida, is betting on both domains. "Dot-com is such an established standard," he says. "Nobody can predict how consumers will react."

—Elizabeth Woyke

REWIND

HEDGE FUNDS GET CLIPPED BY THE SEC

CONVOLUTED FINANCING schemes are catching up with some hedge fund managers. The latest example: On Mar. 14 three hedge funds and their portfolio manager, Jeffrey Thorp, agreed to pay the Securities & Exchange Commission \$15.8 million to settle fraud and insider trading charges in connection with 23 deals involving private investments in public equities, or PIPEs. The SEC says Thorp and the funds—Langely Partners, North Olmsted Partners, and Quantico Partners—made more than \$7 million in illicit profits from 2000 to 2002. Thorp allegedly used unregistered shares obtained in the private placements to cover

short positions, a violation of federal securities laws. The defendants settled without admitting or denying wrongdoing.

The case also is the latest sign that regulators are cracking down on hedge fund abuses of nonpublic information (**"More heat on hedge funds," BW—Feb. 6**). Thorp allegedly traded seven stocks in advance of the public announcement of their private sale. "We've been devoting substantial resources to investigations involving unlawful trading practices by hedge funds and others in PIPEs deals, including cases involving insider trading and other deceptive trading schemes," says Scott Friestad, an associate director at the SEC's Enforcement Div. "We're determined to...deter others from engaging in these practices."

—Amy Borrus

