

BELTA BRAZIL

National Report for FELCA AGM – 2011

AGENTS & Associations

There are around 300 agents in Brazil. But more than 1/3 are branch or franchise of BELTA members. And some of them are small agencies or travel agencies that sell other tourism services other than only educational programs.

BELTA congregates 75 organizations, and 57 of them are agents making an account of approximately 600 point of sales in Brazil, 37 of them offer also inbound programs in the country. They represent around 90% of the international education market here.

Market Growth/Decline

In spite of the economic world crisis, Brazilian economy has grown in the last years. The country has 188 million inhabitants, is the 8th largest economy in the world and produces more than half of the income of the South American continent. Brazilian positive scenario is reinforced exactly when Europe and the USA show signs of economic crisis.

This background will generate a gradually higher demand for education and training. It is increasing demand for internationalization of Brazilian education.

For this reason, the consumer market in Brazil is growth fast. From 2003 to 2014, 50 million people will ascend to middle class. And the exchange agencies have already had more than 50% of their clients from the middle class. It is possible because the Real (Brazilian currency) is stronger in comparison to other currencies, and especially in comparison with the American dollar. Moreover there is payment for exchange program in instalments available.

The expectation for 2011 is more than 20% increase Brazilians travelling for outbound programs. It means: 210 thousand Brazilian students going abroad.

Visa regime – any new difficulties?

BELTA has a strong relationship with the Consulates and Embassies of US, UK, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Spain and others. BELTA has always contacted them for asking for training because the Board of Directors is very concerned to offer the correct information to the members.

Many Embassies and Consulates as well as official education organizations take part of our fair (ExpoBelta) this year with booths and lectures about student visa and educational system as US, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, France, Holland, Germany and European Union Delegation in Brazil among others. Saturday morning before ExpoBelta, Spain Consulate did training for BELTA's associates.

US Consulates São Paulo and Rio train BELTA's agents about student visa twice a year, at least. US Consulate São Paulo did training about Summer Work & Travel in the beginning of August, for instance. The BELTA's agents include a letter in the student application. It is taken into consideration when the student profile is analyzed. Moreover, when the Consul is moving, he/she introduces the new one to BELTA. And BELTA has phone and e-mail contact directly of them (Consul and staff) in order to get information for the members.

Government Relations – any developments with your or other governments?

Since six years ago, BELTA is responsible of the Brazilian Exchange Bureau with the support of EMBRATUR. The purpose of this partnership is to internationally promote Brazilian programs that focus on foreign students through the promotion of the programme "Study in Brazil", which aims promoting the opportunities of studies in Brazil overseas, consolidating the country as an important educational destination.

BELTA, via Brazilian Exchange Bureau, took part at several events in 2010. The association was the responsible for the Brazilian universities participation in NAFSA 2011 and we will be take care of it next year. In 2011 Brazilian booth had 18 universities in 72m² and we wait for the double universities for 2012 in 144m² area.

The Association is also work with EMBRATUR in order to organize a group with several Ministries: Tourism, Education, International Relation, Justice, Labour that will take actions about the needs of the sector.

Besides the mission of conquering overseas market, the Brazilian Exchange Bureau is also responsible for giving orientation to its associates so that the concept of the program is kept, a uniform conduct exists and the offered services are provided within the highest quality.

Other key issues for the industry?

As BELTA's Board of Directors have developed a plan to capitalise the organization, this year the Association is able to invest in the promotion of the agent's image in the market as well as the importance of the International Education market in Brazil. With a public relations and journalism service we have had fantastic results and media exposure by BELTA being in the most important medias of Brazil, like TV (Globo and SBT), Radios (CBN and Jovem Pan), Site (UOL, Terra and other regional websites) and Newspaper (Folha, O globo, Zero Hora).

Nowadays, "Exchange" is a great pauta for Brazilian media and BELTA is the contact for all information. The Board of Directors give interviews twice or three times a week.

Initiatives/Developments for your association?

BELTA's Board of Directors is continuing the work with the vision to improve processes, strengthen the image of the Association and its members within the Brazilian market. Keep following strongly the By Law and Ethic Code, and act closer to the associates to guarantee that these rules are being fulfilled.

We are providing the creation of a new portal – BELTA Online - with new features available to reach the student. Besides establishing a national media campaign and a national market research, considering that these accurate data are very important for the credibility of the segment with the media.

As the previous years, BELTA is improving the performance of the members through famtrips, trainings, meetings and regional activities; maintaining and improving the relationship with consulates and international organizations; seeking sponsors; strengthening BELTA products, such as BELTA Magazine, ExpoBelta and BELTA Online.

BELTA is also building an active performance in the segment working with entities of the educational and tourism sector, considering that EMBRATUR and Ministry of Tourism see BELTA as an important player in the market.

The regional activity of BELTA members is improving with regional media campaign.

Felca Agency Accreditation Code

BELTA promotes FELCA among its members providing information about the Felca Agency Accreditation Code as well as highlighting the importance of the Federation and sending its logo by e-mail and in the monthly newsletter. They are including the logo, and one of them is doing a suggestion: "Member of – logo FELCA" and write the full name in the logo: "Federation of Education & Language Travel Consulting Associations" because the public does not know what FELCA means.