



By David Kaufman

Great Ideas, No Budget

Don't let a lack of dollars stall your initiative.
A little thought can open the way to a lot of progress.

Do you feel as though the year just started? Do you find yourself still wishing folks you haven't seen since December a Happy New Year? Well, cut it out – it's March, people! The first quarter is almost over. Spring wear is coming out. Your neighbors are making Memorial Day plans.

Hopefully you were inspired by the January column on new beginnings to start this year with some big plans. But how much progress have you made thus far? Looking back at 2013, some travel managers will have had another average year, supporting their travelers, negotiating effectively for their organization and avoiding most travel catastrophes. Some will not even remember all the grand plans they had in January. Others will look back

on their goals and justify why they could not be accomplished: too busy, no executive support, no budget.

But some of you will have accomplished many of your goals, despite the obstacles. You will find ways to navigate the constraints, pushing forward to advance your organization (and your career). Today we will focus on one of the oldest constraints – and most common complaints: A lack of money.

Doing More With Less

You have great ideas – initiatives that will make your organization stronger, benefit your travelers and maybe even save your company money in the long run – but it's very unlikely you have sufficient budget to

execute your ideas. I would estimate that 80 percent of our clients have received communications during the past year regarding cost-cutting initiatives. This translates into fewer resources to put behind process improvements, smaller budgets for program development and more obstacles preventing approval of anything that costs money.

When companies think about cost reduction, travel is one of the first things on the list; why spend money on something we are trying to reduce? Regardless of how efficient and effective the travel program is, somehow the travel manager is responsible for all the travel spend in the organization. You are the face of millions of dollars of budget! It's a unique position;

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