



head of marketing for Video Ezy, and the other for a position with Harvey World Travel.

He says his experience in other industries has helped to bring fresh ideas and perspectives to HWT and will help the company move through the tumultuous migration to service fees and increased competition.

"I think change is always scary and a lot of travel agents are going to have to review the way they do business," he says.

Cario says it's important for travel agents to understand their local market and their client base, and look to become destination specialists and develop unique tours and packages.

"It's going to force a lot of travel agents to greater efficiency. There's a still great opportunity to harvest additional business from existing clients."

And, he says, agents shouldn't worry too much about customers who are booking online.

"Those customers who aren't prepared to pay for the services of a good travel agent are not our business."

"We've got to focus on the customers who can see the value in using travel agents. At the same time you've got to demonstrate that value, and a good travel agent can do that."

Cario uses the US as an example where agents have been proactive in finding destinations and niche markets to become experts in.

"It's a case of charging service fees where you can, and that's where good travel agents can get it," he says.

"Look at a supermarket; they put the bread and the milk at the back of the supermarket. You might not make any money off bread and milk but it's everything else [the customer] picks up while [they're] there."

"The same with a liquor store, the beer is down the back. There's very low margin on beer, but it's the full-

business is engineered around delivering something they need."

Now the general manager of Australian operations at Harvey World Travel, Cario says he probably should have been in the travel industry more than 20 years ago.

Get fees where you can

His father was head of engineering for TAA for 25 years; his grandfather flew the first Royal Australian Air Mail, and flew with Kingsford Smith; his wife was a flight attendant for seven years, and his brother worked for Qantas for 25 years.

"Those customers who aren't prepared to pay for the services of a good travel agent are not our business" - MARK CARIO, GM FOR AUSTRALIA, HWT

"And when I was at uni, I was a baggage handler at Sydney for three months during the holidays. The following year I was a passenger agent for three months."

"I actually tried to get a job with Qantas when I finished uni, but it didn't happen. And then I got offered a job with a brewery," he says.

"I gave up on travel until it found me 18 years later."

Cario was on holiday with his family in 1999 when he received two phone calls: one for a position as

price bottle of wine or a packet of cigarettes that makes the money.

"They get the service fee where they can get it and look at the total transaction. That's what smart travel agents should be doing."

Cario says it's a time for franchising groups to work together, sharing best practices and looking at improving productivity and yield.

"People aren't going to come to travel agents because we're a charity. They have to see it as value for money." ☺

Brand aid solutions

Mark Cario, HWT's GM for Australia, opens up about service fees, online booking and being proactive. **Melissa Hadley reports**

Mark Cario's CV reads like a list of popular household brands.

He has experience in a myriad of retail industries over more than 25 years. To highlight just a few, Cario has held senior marketing positions in Tooheys Limited, where he was responsible for all marketing programs and media sponsorships; at KFC, where he was responsible for the marketing of more than 500 restaurants in Australia and New Zealand; and he held positions at OPSM, Barbeques Galore and Burger King Asia Pacific, where he was responsible for the Hungry Jack's brand and the launch of the Burger King brand in Australia.

Cario also previously worked as a lecturer in advertising and as a self-employed marketing consultant with Red Rooster, New Zealand Natural Ice Cream and Mrs Field's Cookies.

Great, I hear you say, but what do these brands have to do with travel?

"At the end of the day, the consumers that I am marketing to, whether it be fast food, alcohol, or any other industry, are the same people who go travelling; it's just their reasons for purchasing are different," Cario says.

"It's a matter of understanding the consumer and making sure the

SNAPSHOT

MARK CARIO

Role
General manager, Australian operations, Harvey World Travel

Education
Bachelor of Business (Marketing and Economics), Certificate in Advertising with a sub-major in Public Relations, Certificate in Media and an MBA majoring in Management

Previous employment
Marketing roles with Barbeques Galore, KFC, Hungry Jack's, Tooheys, OPSM, Colgate Palmolive