

Avian Flu: What to Expect and How Companies Can Prepare for It

The avian flu that is steadily making its way around the globe will develop into a pandemic that will kill tens of millions, create chaos in companies and send the world economy into a tailspin.

Or it won't.

That uncertainty represents a huge challenge for governments, corporations and citizens worldwide: No one knows what will happen to the avian influenza virus in the coming months and years. Will it mutate into a strain that will allow people to readily infect others and sicken untold numbers? Or will it fizzle out?

Nonetheless, many people are taking into account scenarios ranging from mild to severe in order to plan for what could turn out to be a calamity. With the news over the past few weeks that the flu has moved into a number of additional countries, faculty members at Wharton, health care professionals and risk consultants say it is important that companies assess how their organizations could be harmed by a pandemic and take preventive measures to mitigate the damage and keep their enterprises operating. Indeed, experts say companies should actually be planning for all sorts of risks and include efforts to prepare for a possible flu pandemic within that broader strategic plan.

Wharton management professor Stephen Kobrin attended sessions at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January and heard executives and others outline the potential dangers of the bird flu. It became clear to him just how calamitous a pandemic could be.

"The concern is not simply with people getting sick and staying out of work," says Kobrin. "It has to do with a fairly substantial breakdown in infrastructure. If there is a pandemic, people will be reluctant to leave their homes. That means disruptions in food supplies, supply chains, mass-transit systems and information technology systems if the systems [fail] and IT people aren't there to fix them. The issue is, 'How do you operate in the context of turmoil?' You have to plan for a substantial breakdown in the physical and social infrastructure. The question companies should be thinking about is how to keep their businesses going."

Imagine just a few of the effects a pandemic would have on attendance at any number of venues—high-rise offices; factory floors; airlines, buses and trains; schools; hospitals and doctors' offices—as people stayed home either because they were already sick or feared becoming ill.

Wharton management professor Peter Cappelli recalls the strictures that were put in place in companies when he was visiting Singapore during the epidemic of severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, in 2003. Each morning, some companies made employees report their body temperatures—an indicator of whether they were infected with SARS—before being allowed into their offices to work. Officials implemented a "buddy system" under which one employee was required to take the temperature of a co-worker to certify that the "buddy" was not lying about his or her thermometer reading.

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NBTA Foundation Expands Global Leadership Professional (GLP) Program

With an increasing number of GLP program participants and an overwhelming interest among our international travel professionals, the NBTA Foundation will once again offer a 2-day GLP program in London. The Foundation has partnered with the Institute of Travel Management (ITM) to provide a 2-day negotiations workshop entitled, *Skills and Strategies for Successful Negotiations*. The 2-day session will explore how to analyze and more effectively control the negotiation process and how to improve the results. The session will take place at the Millennium Mayfair in London, April 17-18, 2007.



In continuing its mission of providing unparalleled educational opportunities for the business travel professionals, the NBTA Foundation partnered with The Wharton School to create a new level of learning for those responsible for corporate travel decisions. For more information on the GLP program or to complete an application form for the 2-day London program, please visit our Web site at www.nbtafoundation.org.

NBTA Foundation To Award 2007 Scholarships Apply Today!

The NBTA Foundation will award \$89,000 in scholarships this year for qualified members to attend the Certified Corporate Travel Executive program (CCTE), the Global Leadership Professional program (GLP) and the Independent Studies Program (ISP). The NBTA Foundation's scholarship program is just one of many benefits offered to NBTA members. The Foundation is committed to advancing the professional development of business travel professionals.

To date, the Foundation has awarded more than 300 scholarships, valued at more than \$1 million to NBTA members. Completed applications are due no later than **Friday, May 11, 2007**. To download the application, please visit www.nbtafoundation.org and click on Scholarships. For more information on our scholarship program, please contact Kia Megas, 703-236-1163 or email, kmegas@nbtafoundation.org.



Introducing 2007 New Board of Trustees Members

In January 2007 a new NBTA Foundation Board of Trustees was announced. This has come into place as part of the normal board rotation cycle. Four new Trustees were appointed to serve two-year terms alongside 11 returning members. The NBTA Foundation would like to welcome the following new board of trustees members:

New members

Mary Casey
VP Strategic Account Management
Starwood Hotels & Resorts

Denise Lodrige-Kover
Vice President, BTS & Strategic
Partnership Accounts
Hilton Hotels Corporation

Bindu Bhatia
Vice President, Global Sales, North
America
Carlson Wagonlit Travel

Norma Rohrbach
Vice President Global Services Sourcing
Citigroup

As we welcome new members to the Board of Trustees we must also say good-bye to those members that have completed their

two-year term. The NBTA Foundation would like to thank the following board members who completed their term on December 31, 2006:

Outgoing members

Fay Beauchine
Senior Vice President Enterprise Sales
Carlson Companies

Susan Jacobs
Senior Vice President, Travel Services &
Corporate Events
Visa USA

Jack O'Neill
Executive Vice President & Chief
Operating Officer
Carlson Wagonlit Travel

Mathias Friess
General Manager, Sales & Distribution
Virgin Blue

Ellen Keszler, Chair of the Foundation remarked, "Their leadership, commitment and dedication in overseeing the Foundation and assuring that it succeeds in its mission and goals are much appreciated."

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"Infrared cameras were also in place to identify people with fevers," Cappelli says. "If you had a fever, you had to notify public-health officials. They would screen you for symptoms, then quarantine you at home if you were sick. If you were uncooperative, they would make you wear an ankle-bracelet. SARS was doing enough damage to the economy that there was a national sense they had to be on top of this—and quickly."

Excerpted with permission from Knowledge@Wharton, a bi-weekly online resource that offers the latest business insights, information and research from a variety of sources. For the full text of this article and others, go to <http://knowledge@wharton.upenn.edu>.

Professor Peter Cappelli is one of the professors of the February 5-day Global Leadership Professional (GLP) program.

Tenth Annual Gala Dinner Tables on Sale Now!

With the month of March just around the corner, the NBTA Foundation is busy preparing for what is shaping up to be the Foundation's most successful ever, tenth annual gala dinner. The date has been set and the location has been finalized. This year, the Crowne Plaza Times Square Manhattan is hosting the Foundation's premier black tie event on Monday, March 26. The event is being held in conjunction with NBTA's inaugural Business Travel Financial Forum earlier that day.

Every year business travel professionals from around the country come together to join in NBTA Foundation's premier fundraising event. This prestigious occasion provides an excellent opportunity for travel professionals to network with their peers in the business travel industry and at the same time support our industry's only research and education foundation.

The NBTA Foundation is committed to providing business travel professionals with outstanding educational programs and groundbreaking research that has been a valued resource among NBTA members. Proceeds from the gala dinner help the Foundation continue to provide members these benefits.

Last year's event was the largest, with nearly 400 industry leaders in attendance and the most successful yet, raising more than \$165,000. Many tables have already been pre-sold, with only a limited number of Friends tables remaining. If you are interested in sponsoring a table or to learn more about the dinner, please call Daphne Bryant at 703-236-1141 or email at: dbryant@nbtafoundation.org. NBTA direct members that need assistance with seating, please contact Kia Megas at kmegas@nbtafoundation.org.

NBTA Foundation Inaugural Golf Classic at NBTA



Looking for a relaxing way to begin your week in Boston at the NBTA Convention? Come "tee off" with us at the NBTA Foundation Inaugural Golf Classic on Sunday, July 22, 2007 at the Pinehills Golf Club. This is an excellent way to unwind and enjoy some networking prior to the start of a busy week at NBTA.

Pinehills has been rated in the Top 10 by *Golf Magazine* and features over 300 acres of rolling hills and two, new 18-hole championship courses designed by Rees Jones and Nicklaus Design. In addition to the green's and cart fees, participants will receive access to the driving range, practice greens, continental breakfast, lunch, and numerous golf merchandise mementoes. Many golf contests will be set up around the course, including several hole-in-one opportunities for great prizes.

Registration and sponsorships are limited and available on a first come, first served basis. For more information or to register visit www.nbtafoundation.org/Funding/inauguralgolfclassic.

Important Dates to Remember

February 11 – 16, 2007

**Global Leadership Professional (GLP) Program
*Essentials of Management – Mastering Core
Business Concepts***
The Wharton School – Philadelphia

March 25, 2007

NBTA Foundation Board of Trustees Meeting
New York

March 26, 2007

**NBTA Business Travel Financial Forum: A Wall
Street Look at the Business of Business Travel**
New York

NBTA Foundation 10th Annual Gala Dinner
New York

April 17 – 18, 2007

**Global Leadership Professional (GLP) Program
*Skills and Strategies for Successful Negotiations***
London

May 11, 2007

Scholarship Application Deadline

May 20 – 22, 2007

**Global Leadership Professional (GLP) Program
*Scenario Planning – Decisions for Success***
The Wharton School – Philadelphia

July 21 – 22, 2007

**Global Leadership Professional (GLP) Program
*The Changing Global Environment – Strategic
Thinking and Planning in the 21st Century***
NBTA International Convention & Exposition
Boston

July 22, 2007

NBTA Foundation Inaugural Golf Classic
Pinehills Golf Club, Boston

July 22 – 25, 2007

NBTA International Convention & Exposition
Boston

September 16 – 18, 2007

**Global Leadership Professional (GLP) Program
*Finance & Accounting for the Non-Financial
Manager***
Dallas

September 18, 2007

NBTA Foundation Board of Trustees Meeting
Dallas

November 11 – 13, 2007

**Global Leadership Professional (GLP) Program
*Negotiation and Influence Strategies for Success***
Denver

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BNSF Railway Company



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Business Travel Professionals

110 NORTH ROYAL STREET, 4TH FLOOR
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