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PERSONAL JOURNAL Why Moms Love Business Trips

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

DOW JONES

THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2013 - VOL. CCLXI NO. 96

WSJ.com

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The Business of Mommy Business Trips

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could spend one night at the conference, her neighbors pitched in with baby sitting and driving the boys to school and lacrosse practice.

At the convention, which about 2,000 people attended, Ms. Rabinovich took a day-long yoga class from a well-known instructor and met other women training to become instructors. With one new friend, she strolled the city and stopped for a glass of wine. "It was a big trip for me," Ms. Rabinovich says.

Yoga enthusiasts—anyone who doesn't own a yoga business or teach in studios—comprise about 40% of attendees at events hosted by the magazine Yoga Journal, says Elana Maggal, the company's conference director. "It's a fun and educational thing to do for people who are married with children and need a legitimate reason to leave home," she says.

Yoga Journal, which is owned by Active Interest Media, produced its first such event 18 years ago. Now demand is so great, the company will host four conventions this year—in New York, San Francisco, Estes Park, Colo., and Hollywood, Fla. In 2014, a fifth conference will be added. About 40% of the publishing company's revenue now comes from events, Ms. Maggal says.

Much of the real costs of these events are absorbed by brands that are eager to have access to an important consumer group—one that both



At April's Yoga Journal conference in New York, many attendees were mothers making a rare trip away from home.

makes many household purchasing decisions and is active on social media.

The Mom 2.0 Summit has a stated goal of connecting moms who blog with marketers. For its coming event, Dove has signed on as the convention's title sponsor and the brand will announce a new marketing campaign called Let's Make Girls Unstoppable, which it hopes the attendees will blog and tweet about, says Rob Candelino, vice president of marketing for Unilever Skincare, which owns Dove.

Mr. Candelino declined to specify the cost of sponsorship. "It's not inconsequential," he says. Sponsorships for the other 24 brands taking part in the event started at \$10,000 each, says Mom 2.0 co-founder Carrie Pacini. Other sponsors include Honda and Jamba Juice. Whirlpool Corp. is providing hats for the Derby party

it's sponsoring.

Last month, 360 people traveled to Ventura, Calif., for the second annual Craftcation Conference, a four-day DIY-bacchanal at which attendees learn to market and promote their macramé and kombucha.

Amid the seminars (including "Pickle Bootcamp" and "Accounting and Bookkeeping for the Indie Business"), attendees enjoyed yoga classes, food tours of local restaurants and a 1980s-themed dance party.

"It maybe was a little too fun," says Craftcation co-founder Nicole Stevenson.

Rodan + Fields, a San Francisco-based direct-sales skincare company whose sales representatives and customers are mostly mothers, considers its conventions and other travel as key benefits for its sales force. The women who sell wrinkle cream and recruit oth-

ers to sell it tend to be women who stay home to raise their children and are seeking an outside-the-home identity as much as income, says Lori Bush, the company's president and chief executive. "Money is not usually the primary motivator," she says. "It's being involved in a business that is very social."

To that end, Rodan + Fields provides many chances to leave home and socialize. About 5,000 sales reps attended the company's annual convention. This year's was in Dallas in February. Though the company asks its sales force to pay travel expenses and an enrollment fee, it picks up the rest of the tab for the convention. "It's a major marketing expense, a multimillion-dollar event," Ms. Bush says.

Andrika Langham, 35, hooked up with Rodan + Fields last fall because she wanted a part-time job that was forgiving of a mom's schedule. The Knoxville, Tenn., resident attended the Dallas convention. Since the arrival of her children, ages 7 and 5, she hasn't traveled without her family.

She has taken to her new gig with such gusto that she has earned a spot on a company trip in October to San Francisco and California wine country, where she will meet with her peers, learn more about new products and tour vineyards.

"I would kind of feel guilty as a mom, but this is different than someone planning a girls' trip," she says.