

Title:

Agent Tricks of the Travel Trade

Word Count:

1239

Summary:

Article re: Tips and techniques on how anyone can become a travel agent and maximize their savings on airfare, lodging, cruises, and much more. In addition, learn about special travel related opportunities that increase the benefits of holding a travel agent's license regardless of whether or not you help others make travel arrangements, or only lessen the burden of your own travel related expenses.

Keywords:

travel, travel deals, liesure, airfare, cruises, hotel, ebook, e-book, caribbean, europe, lodging, review, reviews, agent, deals, beach, casino, retreat, wine, discounts, honeymoon, vacation, skiing, holiday, escape, islands

Article Body:

I'll be forthright: I'm not a homemaker. I feel more at ease constantly on the move, city after city, mountaintop to seaside surf, living out of my suitcase and fumbling through a foreign language phrase book, than I feel even comfy and cozy, napping on my couch on a Sunday afternoon. Perhaps I'm a little crazy, but I find it thrilling sprinting to make a connecting flight (even if it's the red eye); I believe it convenient when the airline informs me my luggage is a flight behind, leaving unencumbered to begin sightseeing immediately; and I think myself resourceful when I arrive at a booked hotel only to realize I forgot to make reservations but still haggle a room. Of course, while I don't mind any of the perceived headaches of traveling, I do mind the high costs often associated with it. Traveling, for me, is primarily about escaping—whether it be work, commuting, obligations, sometimes even family and friends—but how is it an escape if I'm worried about how much I'm spending the entire trip?

I mention cost as something that would potentially worry me were it not for the fact that, in reality, it doesn't worry me at all. At least not since I wised up, did the requisite research and taught myself the agent tricks of the travel trade. Travel agents' tricks that is, because in addition to being a constant traveler and writer, I am also a licensed travel agent. Not in the sense that I work for others, booking their hotels, finding their flights, or landing them a deal on an Alaskan cruise. Truth is, I only use my license for personal escapes

(well, okay, occasionally for family and friends too, but only when their remarks regarding my debonair good lucks are particularly flattering).

If you've never heard of this travel industry loophole before, this may sound somewhat (or completely) preposterous. In fact, however, it is quite common among everyday people, both those who travel often or but once a year, both those whose work relates to travel to those whose work relates only to that which remains stationary. What I mean, plain and simple, is anyone—you, me, your second cousin Otto, or my next-door neighbor Irene—can get their travel agent's license lickety-split, and immediately begin reaping the benefits.

First things first: when making travel arrangements for themselves, every agent knows not to book a single step of their journey through one of their own, i.e. other travel agents. Instead, they use travel consolidators.

Think about the difference those terms: agent and consolidator.

An agent, in any industry where they're principal players, obviously gets something in return for the services they provide. In sports, agents represent athletes, working off the field to win their clients lucrative contracts and commercial cameos so the athlete can in turn, without financial distractions, concentrate and win on the field. For these services, agents win themselves a percentage of every deal they broker. The same is true in showbiz, modeling, or corporations where headhunters wheel and deal multi-million dollar salaries and stock incentive plans for their CEO clients. Likewise, then, in the travel industry, agents receive discounts, courtesies and other special benefits, not from the customer for whom they book a hotel or flight, but from the vendor providing that service (i.e. the hotel chain or airline) who profits from the customer. As agents for airlines, etc., they drive customers toward vendors whom offer them the most in return.

A consolidator, on the other hand, does virtually the opposite. Rather than inflate the costs of travel by collecting fees, they combine, for the sake of efficiency, the expensive and unstable parts of travel into a cheaper, more solid whole. They work to maximize vendor's numbers, ratios and the cost per head. Think about it in terms of magazine publishing: the real cost in printing an issue is not the number of copies made, but merely arranging and setting the plates that will allow the print run in the first place. Once that is set to go, the only added costs are that of extra paper and ink. The travel industry is the same, the more spaces that fill, the cheaper tickets or rooms become per person. As in any industry, consumers (i.e. travelers in this case) benefit from the sheer volume of numbers (i.e. all travelers, yourself included).

You, as a licensed travel agent would obtain special contact with these

consolidators and the deals vendors must offer to maximize their costs per person. But while it's all well and good to make arrangements through a consolidator as opposed to an agent, just because you acquire a license (available online in under an hour) doesn't mean the consolidator will believe you're as much a travel professional as they are. To avoid common mistakes that expose amateurs from pros, you must learn the proper lingo and travel codes. For that there are volumes of eBooks (with corresponding printed versions) that provide the requisite knowledge, which you can quickly study before contacting a consolidator and easily flip through if put on the spot. Get these references. Some of them are thick, but in reality you'll spend less than a hundred dollars on everything you need to in turn potentially save thousands on the first trip you plan with your travel agent's license in hand.

Furthermore, instead of turning to the discount fare finders like Orbitz, Expedia, Travelocity or Priceline that lay-travelers search, as a travel agent, you additionally gain access to the lesser known, but more lucrative sites travel consolidators utilize.

Together, the benefits will materialize almost immediately. Buy plane tickets the day before the flight's scheduled to depart, but only pay what you would have had you purchased tickets two months in advance. Get a spacious cruise ship cabin beside the captain's quarters for the price of an ocean-level closet. Find yourself lodging in the seaside, honeymoon suite for the price you might have paid for the basement hide-a-bed beside the ice machine.

Finally, the travel industry is a weird and wonderful creature, in this case, thankfully profit driven as much as other industries we often loathe. To those who present themselves as viable agents, promoting and thus earning money for the industry as a whole, it means endless perks. I get more special offers from airlines, cruise lines, and packaged tour companies than I know what to do with. For me, casinos, theme parks, and luxury resorts are not necessarily what I strive for, but if that is your cup of tea and your hocus pocus agenting appears legitimate, you'll suddenly find yourself choosing between the best of many worlds: free weekends in the Napa Valley, first class seats to Tokyo, an all expense paid safari, a cruise down the Nile...

So what are you waiting for, get started! Find a comprehensive eBook or alternate guide that takes you through the process of becoming a travel agent, step-by-step. Don't sit on this opportunity, but rather start traveling cheaply, today...

As for me, I've got a flight to catch...

Now, where did I put my passport?

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