Agents and Operators

Travel Agent and Tour Operator – What role do they play?

# The Travel Agent

The travel agent is who we need when we think about going on holiday. They don't create the trip, they distribute it, and travel agents need tour operators because the tour operator creates the tour plans, so, fundamentally Travel Agents and Tour Operators work together to bring about a final product – your holiday. The travel agency becomes an advisor and provides the customer (you) with a general idea about the trip when he or she walks into their office or logs onto their website. A travel agency can specialise in a particular destination or a specific trip type, like adventure, fishing, rock climbing, or perhaps in a near future, space.

#  The Tour Operator

A tour operator produces the trip, creates it. At least six months prior to the tourist season (there are 2 seasons: Autumn/Winter from November – April and Spring/Summer from May – October), they construct their product by combining the transport and the accommodation. They buy seats on planes and hotel rooms. They calculate the price of the trip (travel and stay included) by adding in their profit and the price of the brochure which is then put together so that they can offer the trip to agencies or directly through their own network/website. For a more complex stay, safari, a tour of Asia for example, there are specialised Tour Operators.

Due to the increase in independent booking via online availability with sites such as Last minute.com, Expedia and Travelocity internet websites, a number of travel agencies have now merged with tour operators to offer a full service to their customers.

Customers can buy a range of products from the travel agent / tour operator that include holidays and flights, travel insurance, car hire, coach and rail travel, currency exchange and sometimes even theatre tickets.

# Activity 1

Find the names of 8 tour operators in the word search below.



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| TUI Holidays | Trailfinders |
| Virgin Atlantic | Kuoni Travel |
| First Choice | Crystal Travel |
| Thomas Cook Group | British Airways Travel |

# Activity 2

Using the Internet, identify the type of ownership of each Tour Operator – Public Limited (PLC) or Private Limited (LTD)?

Try to find out who are their main customers? Families? Business? Backpackers? Other?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tour operator | Public Limited Company (PLC) | Private Limited Company(LTD) | Main Customer Type |
| Thompson Holidays |  |  |  |
| Virgin Holidays |  |  |  |
| First Choice |  |  |  |
| Thomas Cook Group |  |  |  |
| Trailfinders |  |  |  |
| Kuoini Travel |  |  |  |
| Crystal Travel |  |  |  |
| British Airways Travel |  |  |  |
| Haven |  |  |  |

# Activity 3

Online Booking – can you believe it?

Look at the facts below. Working with a partner, create an interesting poster, PowerPoint or fact file that will include the 10 facts you think are most important. Use images to enhance your poster, PowerPoint or fact file.

# Facts – Online Booking Behaviour

* Almost 60% of all tour and activity bookings are being made online
* Items booked on the internet before a trip: organised tours (5.1%) and entertainment activities/events (39.7%) were booked online, with the latter having doubled since the previous year (Tourism Australia)
* 59% of Asian leisure travellers want to book travel products “whenever they can” and “wherever they can” (Tnooz)
* 60% of leisure and 40% of business travellers are making their own travel arrangements, generally via Internet (Amadeus)
* More than 148.3 million people use the Internet to make reservations for their accommodations, tours and activities. That’s more than 57% of all travel reservations each year! (Statistic Brain)
* Internet travel booking revenue has grown by more than 73% over the past 5 years (Statistic Brain)
* 97% of people now prefer to find business online (Forbes)
* 20% of Google searches are made for local information (HubSpot)
* 96.8 million adult Internet users expected to use online coupons in 2017, figures begin to indicate the trend of ‘coupon hunters’ (eMarketer)
* Over 50% of today’s travellers will rush to the keyboard, rather than the phone to make their travel bookings (Hotel Executive)
* 65% of tourists book hotels reservations for the same day on a mobile device (Statistic Brain, 2016)
* Surveys find more than half of the traveller’s book travel products through the mobile sites and apps of travel agents (Whatech, 2015)
* Travellers are likely to spend more on sightseeing than on shopping, souvenirs and nightlife combined
* The 5 most common things travellers are willing to spend more on as a treat: Sightseeing (53%), special dining experiences (41%), accommodation (41%), activities (35%) and shopping (24%) (Trip Barometer, 2016)
* 8% of travellers book their trip on a mobile device (Trip Barometer, 2016)
* 49% of tourists orientate themselves on general travel sites such as Expedia, Travelocity