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GLOSSARY

What Are Some Reservation Policies And Procedures?

Hotel reservations policies vary from company to company. A knowledge of some general practices will prompt you to ask specific questions about the policies and procedures from the reservationists when making arrangements for your client. Read the policy particulars on the features below, then study the necessary information on page 88 for booking procedures.

DID YOU KNOW that the hotel Casablanca in New York City gets 60% of its guests through the Internet? They do business via e-mail, which is more personal according to the co-owner, and bypasses time differences, telephone costs and language barriers. Check them out at www.casablanca.com.

Deposits/Guarantees

A **guaranteed reservation** means the hotel room is prepaid for the first night and the specified room, rate and length of time is assured. There are at least three ways to guarantee a hotel reservation:

- By Deposit - A payment is made equal to the charge for one night (personal check, agency check).
- By Credit Card Account Number - The hotel takes the guest's credit card number with the understanding that one night's charge will be put on the account if the room is not canceled within a specified time.
- By Agency Voucher - If the travel agency chooses to guarantee the reservation, the agency receives the bill for the room.

A prepayment or **deposit** is sometimes necessary to hold or confirm hotel reservations. The most efficient form of payment is a major credit card. The client completes the payment at check-out time. The final bill is dependent on the room rate, the actual length of stay and miscellaneous charges such as telephone calls, room service, taxes and service charges.

Confirmation

The hotel reservationist will supply you with a **confirmation number**, rate and dates. Make note of the confirmation number. Time permitting, request written confirmation directly from the hotel as well. Verify price, taxes and extra charges as a part of the confirmation.

Overbooking/Walking

Overbooking is confirming more hotel rooms than the hotel has to offer. It is common practice in the industry to overbook by using a formula based on the percentage of no-shows as recorded over a given period of time. When a guest cannot be accommodated due to overbooking, the hotel will generally **walk** (refer) your client to another hotel that does have space.

Chapter Check Up

1. List four needs or motivations to consider when suggesting a tour and why each should be considered.
2. List and define the three main types of tours.
3. Name and define five components that can be found in a tour.
4. What is the tourist appeal for the following destinations:
 - a. Alaska
 - b. Hawaii
 - c. Theme Parks
 - d. Banff/Jasper
 - e. Quebec
5. What items must be included in a tour brochure?
6. Name three other tour references.
7. What information do you need to obtain from the reservationist when making a tour reservation?

What's Your Opinion?

Do you think tours offer a better value than purchasing each product separately? Justify your answer.

Are people reluctant to purchase a tour package? Why or why not?

Which type of tour most interests you? Why?



What would you do if...?

You were a travel counselor at a travel agency in the local mall. The following clients would like your assistance in making travel plans.

High school band group

Family with two young children

Older retired couple wanting to see England

Two college-age males wanting to bicycle or hike

Your manager wants you to sell tours from preferred suppliers as much as possible to increase the agency profit, rather than selling air, car, hotel, etc. separately. What type of tour would you select? What destination(s) would you choose? Justify your answers.



What Is It Like To Be A Home-Based Agent?

Keys to Success

- ✓ Designated office space and hours
- ✓ Check my e-mail

- ✓ Respond when appropriate

- ✓ Check reservations
- ✓ Ticket necessary reservations
- ✓ Get seat assignments
- ✓ Check for confirmation numbers

- ✓ Check Internet for hot travel buys
- ✓ Inform client if something might interest him

- ✓ Have flexible hours to accommodate client's schedule

- ✓ Read trade magazines
- ✓ Inform client if something might interest her
- ✓ Maintain client files for preferences and desires

Lisa Williams is a travel agent who works in her own home.

I managed and was part-owner of an agency for almost ten years. For personal reasons I decided to do business out of my home. I had done a lot of family vacations as a leisure agent so I decided to sell myself as a family travel specialist. I even took the seminar and received my ASTA (American Society of Travel Agents) designation as a Family Travel Specialist.

The secret to my success has been setting specific office hours and making myself available during those hours. I have my office set up in a separate part of the house, along with my computer, phone and fax machine. At the beginning of my day, I get into my computer and check my e-mail. There are many clients that I have never met. We just communicate by e-mail which has worked out nice. I make it a point to answer all e-mail promptly and check it every two hours.

After responding to urgent e-mail, I check all reservations from the previous day that need to be ticketed or otherwise dealt with. I check for confirmation numbers and seat assignments.

I have signed up with several e-mail services that send notices of good deals and hot travel buys. I am careful to weed out the junk and file the important ones. When a great deal comes in that I know will fit a particular client, I phone or e-mail the client as quickly as possible to let them know about it and give them a chance to respond. Clients only take advantage of the deal about two out of ten times, but it lets them know I am thinking of them and looking out for their interests. This service has gotten me several referrals.

I know that people are not always available between 9 and 5 to discuss travel plans. I make it a point to make myself available at other times. One night a week I make house calls or am available by the phone. I have often met clients at a local fast food restaurant so we can talk while the kids play.

I subscribe to trade magazines and try to skim through them when they come for any information pertinent to family travel. When I read about a new location or services being offered for families, I try to match it to a client. This offers me an opportunity to make a phone call and connect with a client that I might not otherwise hear from for awhile. I keep files on each client for just this purpose.

I have an arrangement with a local agency to issue airline tickets. Many of my clients utilize electronic tickets which saves me from having to pick up and mail tickets.

- ✓ Ticket through an agency
- ✓ Use e-tickets when possible

I have a newsletter that I send out once a month to my clients. One of my preferred suppliers helps with mailing costs and I spotlight a package from the supplier in the newsletter. I offer tips on traveling with kids, items to pack, new destinations, things that would interest my clientele.

- ✓ Send out monthly newsletter

The important things I do for my clients are:

- respond quickly to messages or e-mail
- be available extra hours
- watch out for their interests
- keep current on trends in family travel

The important things I do for my business are:

- keep accurate records of bookings, payments, commissions, etc.
- keep files and records of any tax-deductible items — lunches, gas mileage, postage, etc.
- keep home and office separate and keep set office hours

I have loved being at home and working as my own boss. I enjoy my niche as a family travel specialist. I highly recommend this as a career for anyone.