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T H E

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TRAVEL AND TOURISM



With more people having the leisure time and the money to travel, the tourism industry is full of career opportunities.

The thought of a career in travel often conjures up visions of exotic locations, new and fascinating cultures, and strange and wonderful foods. And, yes, all of those things can be part of a career in the travel and tourism industry.

However, careers in this field are also as much work as they are fun. Many who work in this industry spend the majority of their time making arrangements to send others to those exotic locations.

Travel agents, for example, do have opportunities to take familiarization tours — working trips that help a travel agent become familiar with an area so they can make recommendations to their clients more knowledgeably. But most of an agent's time is spent at a desk, working with clients in person or on the telephone.

Typical duties include making travel arrangements and reservations; recommending hotels, restaurants, and cruise lines; and answering questions about passports and weather conditions.

Linda Owens Travel and Tourism Instructor

Q. How is being a travel agent different today than ten years ago?

A. The level of knowledge that a travel agent must possess has greatly increased over the last ten years. In the past, a travel agent simply took orders. Today, a travel agent must provide a service that the client cannot get online. Also, travel agents today must be incredibly professional.

Q. What is the future of the travel industry?

A. The travel industry is here to stay. People are going to travel, regardless of the economy or the political climate. The Baby-boomer generation is now retiring; they have the time, the money, and the

Experience, sales ability, and the size and location of the agency determine the salary of a travel agent.

Tour operators also take familiarization tours. Their job is to look for combinations of destinations, restaurants, and attractions that will appeal to a group of people as a package. A fall foliage tour, for example, would take a group of people to the Northeast to see the changing colors of the trees. The tour might also include a visit to a pumpkin farm, an overnight stay at a 200-year-old bed-and-breakfast, and an afternoon at an area festival. Tour operators are also responsible for ensuring a worry-free tour for their clients.

Cities, states, and national governments all compete for the revenue from the tourism industry. There are government-funded tourism offices on virtually all levels, from local convention and visitors bureaus to national offices set up in foreign countries. Jobs in these offices focus on marketing a particular destination to potential tourists.

desire to travel. As for the industry itself, luxury travel agencies are capitalizing.

Q. What are employers looking for in a potential travel agent?

A. Employers are looking for professionalism. A high level of knowledge and great customer service skills are also important qualities in a travel agent.

Q. Looking at the work available in Florida, what kind of role does travel and tourism play?

A. Tourism is the number one industry in the state of Florida. From theme parks to cruises, Florida offers infinite career opportunities.

SKILLS REQUIRED

Travel professionals must be detail-minded, articulate, service-oriented, and knowledgeable about airlines, hotels, and destinations.

WHERE/HOW TO GET TRAINING

Schooling

Government tourism offices prefer employees have at least a bachelor's degree in a subject such as marketing, business administration, or tourism. A degree in English, journalism, or communications can lead to a career as a travel journalist or copywriter. Some larger travel agencies provide training for new employees. Clerks and receptionists sometimes move into travel agent positions after gaining experience. However, many agencies prefer to hire people who have completed travel programs offered by colleges, vocational schools, and proprietary schools. A strong background in math is also important. The American Society of Travel Agents recommends that students make sure a school offers courses in fares, tariffs, and ticketing; industry procedures; computer reservation systems; sales and marketing; and geography.

Tour escorts and reservation agents need at least a high school diploma. A bachelor's or master's degree in travel and tourism may be helpful to an aspiring agency owner or manager.

Internships in the travel industry are available through many colleges and proprietary schools. Check with the institutions you're considering to see if they offer these opportunities.

Financial Aid

Grants, scholarships, loans, and work/study programs are available for college and technical school students. For most of this aid, prospective students must submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid, which is available from high school guidance offices and postsecondary financial aid offices. The Job Training Partnership Act is a federal program that will pay for training programs for people with low incomes as well as for dislocated workers. Contact the nearest office of the Department for Employment Services.



For more information on federal financial aid programs, call (800) 4FEDAID

FUTURE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Job openings will arise as new agencies open and existing agencies expand, but most openings will occur

as experienced agents transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Travel agents spend most of their time behind a desk conferring with clients, completing paperwork,

contacting airlines and hotels for travel arrangements, and promoting group tours.

RESOURCES - HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

BOOKS:

- Travel Prospectives: A Guide to Becoming a Travel Agent by Ginger Todd & Susan Rice
- So You Want to be a Travel Agent: An Introduction to Domestic Travel by Douglas A. Payette

ONLINE:

- www.astanet.com (American Society of Travel Agents)
- www.nacta.com (National Association of Commissioned Travel Agents)

LOCAL:

Career Counselor, Vickie Miller
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YOU HAVE THE POWER

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JOB IN THIS FIELD

Job titles	Place of work	Kind of work	Average salary*
Travel agency manager	Office	Oversees running of agency, marketing, and finances.	\$27.00 - \$51.00 (hourly) + commission
Travel agent	Office	Helps clients with travel arrangements, makes hotel, air, car, and tour reservations, answers questions.	\$11.00 - \$26.00 (hourly) + commission

*Salaries may vary depending on region and experience. Sources: Chronicle Guidance Publications and Occupational Outlook Handbook.