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# Education Today / Career Tomorrow

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## Travel Agent

Time for Vacation! Where does one begin? Constantly changing airfares and schedules, thousands of available vacation packages, and a vast amount of travel information on the Internet can make travel planning frustrating and time consuming.

To sort out the many travel options, tourists and business people often turn to travel agents, who assess their needs and help them make the best possible travel arrangements. Also, many major cruise lines, resorts, and

specialty travel groups use travel agents to promote travel packages to millions of people every year.

In general, travel agents give advice on destinations and make arrangements for transportation, hotel accommodations, car rentals, tours, and recreation. They also may advise on weather conditions, restaurants, and tourist attractions. For international travel, agents also provide information on customs regulations, required papers, and

currency exchange rates. Travel agents consult a variety of published and computer-based sources for information on departure and arrival times, fares, and hotel ratings and accommodations. They may visit hotels, resorts, and restaurants to evaluate comfort, cleanliness, and quality of food and service so that they can base recommendations on their own travel experiences.

Source:  
*The Occupational Outlook Handbook*

## Job Outlook

Spending on tourism and travel is expected to increase over the next decade and travel will increase.

With rising household income, smaller families, and an increasing number of older people who are more likely to travel, the overall number of people expected to travel will increase.

Also, many consumers still prefer to use a professional travel agent to plan a complete trip. Agents handle complex transactions, ensure reliability, and save time.

## Money Matters

**Career:** Travel Agent

**Job Description:** Checks hotel and flight availability, schedules accommodations, confirms reservations, makes itinerary changes, and procures necessary documentation such as passports and visas. Ensures that travel needs are met within the constraints of the company travel budget.

**Salary:** \$25,000-45,000 annually

For more information on how to start your career in Travel, please contact:

Career Counselor Vickie Miller  
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## Education Needed

The minimum requirement for those interested in becoming a travel agent is a high school diploma or equivalent. Technology and computerization have increased the training needs, however, and many employers prefer applicants with more education, such as a postsecondary degree. A college education sometimes is desired by employers to establish a background in fields such as computer science, geography, communication, foreign languages, and world history. Courses in accounting and business management also are important, especially for those who expect to manage or start their own travel agencies.

All employers require computer skills of workers whose jobs involve the operation of airline and centralized reservation systems. With the trend toward more specialization, destination specialist courses are increasingly important.

Personal travel experience or experience as an airline reservation agent is an asset because knowledge about a city or foreign country often helps influence a client's travel plans.

Patience and the ability to gain the confidence of clients also are useful qualities. Travel agents must be well-organized, accurate, and meticulous to compile information from various sources and plan and organize their clients' travel itineraries.



## It's a Matter of Perspective

"The travel industry is alive and well! It is the largest industry in the world and there are many opportunities available. The job outlook is excellent right now. Last year, there was a 100% placement rate for all of my students. At MTI, we are starting our own on-campus, student-run travel agency. This will provide students with real, hands-on experience before entering the workforce."  
 —Linda Owens

"I came to Manatee Technical Institute to better myself—so I wouldn't have to struggle for money. After graduation, I want to travel the world! For my career, I want to become a travel agent. The job has great hours and benefits. The Travel and Tourism program is excellent and I feel that I have learned a lot. The program offers an opportunity to reach my goals and I am ready to get out in the world and work!"  
 —Joseph Pipitone

Teacher • Student

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