

Argumentative essay on the future of travel agents

[Business](#), [Customers](#)



Introduction

Travel agents should be responsive to consumer demands to ensure their future in the travel industry. This paper discusses the future for travel agents currently when internet services and technology are so popular and easily accessible. This essay will give a brief view of how technology has overwhelmed the travel retail industry and why the consumer will always need the travel agent. A travel agent can be a person or an organization which organizes and sells travel packages to a client. They work on behalf of the tour operators providing travel services like airline tickets, hotel rooms and train tickets. Their future, however, is not guaranteed due to threats coming from changes in society and technology. Many commentators believe their days are numbered (Evans, 2001).

The travel agent acts as a middleman between the tour operator and the traveler. The trend in commerce today is the termination of the middleman. This is what is happening to the travel agent due to advancements in technology. Travel agents have been striving to save the industry, and their jobs, at the same time, trying to compete with internet pricing. The public is becoming more and more comfortable with the internet and computers thus booking a vacation is very easy. However the public doesn't have the knowledge that the agent possess on destinations, hotels and attractions. This is where the travel agent comes in and to ensure repeat business he has to strive for customer satisfaction. Websites don't provide the customer with answers to all the questions they may have or offer the best value. This means that the service offered by the travel agent can't be replaced by search engines. Travel agencies now focus more on service based activities

<https://assignbuster.com/argumentative-essay-on-the-future-of-travel-agents/>

that are supplying information and service. (Frank, 2006). Travel agents have resulted to offering competitive packages to internet pricing, and if they can't they compensate for something in the package

Travel agents versus technology

The digital age, the growth of the internet and the volume of business transacted online are astounding. Customers can research and do a lot on their own, therefore; the role played by the travel agent diminishes significantly. New technology has made it quick and easy for clients to access and book a simple transaction like a hotel stay. Most travel agent websites are in the dark to this technology and provide rudimentary booking tools like an associate booking link. Another challenge is that some agents don't have websites and the ones that do attract little traffic to their sites. Many travel agents conduct most of their business through the phone. Tourism boards also have focused on the internet as ways of advertising themselves rather than relying on travel agents. This cuts out the middleman that is the travel agents. Hotels and airlines cut a lot of time as people turn to the internet to plan their holidays. This affects the travel agents as only those who are too busy to do it themselves turn to them which has significantly reduced their incomes. Travel agents get paid through commissions and the lesser the clients the less they get. High street travel agents are set to become extinct, figures show seven in ten people, in the last year, booked their tickets entirely online (Stevens, 2012). People are turning to random websites if they are cheaper and forego the travel agent option. The bad economy also contributes to the vanishing of travel agents.

The priority of travelers became an affordable vacation or trip and, so travel agents are overlooked as they may be expensive.

Most people don't realize that travel agencies nowadays can match internet prices. In cases where they cannot they compensate it with something in the offer package. Agencies due to losses in fewer bookings after the popularity of the internet options had to revise their prices. Travel agents had to come up with offers that online booking engines could not counter in order to remain competitive. Travel agents also offer insurance which online booking agencies cannot do. This is essential to travelers who travel with children, elderly parents and travelers with pre-existing health conditions.

Importance of travel agents

Travel agents are highly valued due to the personal relationship they have with the customer. The clients want someone personally to walk them through the many choices they have and ensure they book the right package, not just the cheapest. Travel agents that connect with consumers on a personal level are ensured to survive despite the availability of new technology. Successful travel agents put themselves in the customer's shoes. They also add value to the customer by not just quoting prices but selling on the basis of value rather than price. Technology though fast does not have the capability to comprehend all the client's needs. A travel agent knows what a client can put up with and what the client cannot stand but a website does not.

Web sites also are not proactive that is they don't offer the best value.

Achieving the best value for a customer requires working in a trusted

partnership with the client which a website cannot achieve. Travel agents are convenient that is you don't have to wait in long queues buying tickets and booking hotels. Some travel agents can be cheaper than using a website as they may have discounts due special arrangements with hotels. This can include room upgrades, fee waivers or reservations at popular tours that one wouldn't normally get. It also saves on time since the travel agent has access to information that the average consumer doesn't. The experience while using a travel agent is organized, and the best of everything is usually on offer. In case of problems that one may encounter the travel agent is available to help out or answer any questions. Travel agents specialize in particular types of travel and are thus able to make recommendations to suit exact needs. Through the use of travel agents, the planned trip is a lot less stressful. Planning a vacation is very stressful especially if one doesn't know what to expect. Travel agents are constantly in communication with the travel community, therefore; they provide the most updated information about most destinations one wishes to travel. Travel documentation is easily acquired while using a travel agent and saves a lot of time.

Conclusion

The travel agents' future may look bleak due to the growth of the internet which gives consumers a lot of choices when planning for a vacation. Customers can do so much on their own that one wonders whether the role of the travel agent has ended. However the personal touch and service provided by the travel agent cannot be replaced. In the real sense consumers are rediscovering the value of travel agents in helping them sort

through the myriad information provided by search engines. (Murphy, 2012). Travel agents who are in tune with consumer demands are successful, and the future is still fruitful for them. They connect with clients through e-mail, twitter, Facebook and texts and still provide the human interaction that is essential to their clients. They provide deals, create niches that travelers would have much difficulty putting together. Despite the presence of many options other than travel agents, they still remain essential to customers. There exist many uncertainties while travelling to new destinations, and the availability of a guide is crucial. It gives the client piece of mind that there are precautions taken in case anything unexpected happens. The development of technology and social media plays to the strengths of the independent agent who makes himself indispensable to the customer.

References

- Evans, M. (2001, September). Travel Agents. Retrieved from Tourism Insights: <http://www.insights.org.uk/articleitem.aspx?title=Travel+Agents>
- Frank, K. (2006, October 6). Travel Agents Vs. The Internet - Travel Agents Are Still Worth Paying a Visit To! Retrieved from Yahoo.com: <http://voices.yahoo.com/travel-agents-vs-internet-travel-agents-still-86405.html>
- Murphy, M. (2012, April 25). The Future For Travel Agents. Retrieved from Travepulse.com: <http://www.travepulse.com/the-future-for-travel-agents.html>
- Stevens, J. (2012, June 30). The end of the travel agent? Holiday booking services 'to become extinct' as people go to the web to buy their vacations.

Retrieved from Dailymail. co. uk: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2166772/The-end-travel-agent-Holiday-booking-services-extinct-people-web-buy-vacations.html>