

TIPS ON TRIPS

Why And How To Choose A Travel Agent

(NAPSA)—If you want personalized service when planning your next vacation, you might want to take a trip to a travel agent.

Personalized service seems to be an important factor in the planning of many trips, since, despite the fact that travelers are able to book trips online, travel agent usage is on the rise. Research shows that many consumers use the Internet to conduct travel-related research but turn to agents to book their travel.

“Over and over again, we find consumers reaching out to travel agents for personalized service and for the knowledge and resources they offer as experts,” said Cheryl Hudak, CTC, president and CEO of the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA).

There are many reasons to use a travel agent:

- Agents can find you the best value and offer convenient one-stop shopping. By maximizing their supplier contacts, they can save you money and time.

- If you have a problem with a particular part of your travel experience, the agent is there to act on your behalf. ASTA, for example, is the only travel association aggressively fighting to improve the travel experience and air transportation, in particular.

- Travel agents are experts in deciphering myriad travel information and codes.

- Instead of an impersonal voice thousands of miles away, a familiar travel agent knows what you want and what you value in your travel experience.

- Travel agents offer professional advice to get you where you



A travel agent has the tools to get travelers where they want to go—in less time and often for less money.

want to go when you want to go.

- Instead of checking a long list of travel Web pages, which only provide rates and fares for the companies that have contracted with them, why not go straight to the source? Travel agents have all the information at their fingertips, saving you hours in front of a computer.

- Agents work for their clients, not a travel supplier. A happy customer will be a repeat customer.

When choosing a travel agent, ask if the agent is a member of a professional organization such as ASTA. Select a travel agent as you would any other professional consultant—ask for references, get advice from family and friends and, if you are able, stop by the agency to get a feel for its office and the agent’s willingness to work with you. For help in finding an agent and more tips on travel, visit www.travelsense.org.