



CAREER OVERVIEW BECOMING A TRAVEL ADVISOR

A GREAT CAREER CHOICE



American Society of
Travel Advisors

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BECOMING A TRAVEL ADVISOR

A segment of the Oprah Winfrey Show “**Happiest Jobs in America**” revealed that travel advisors are among the happiest professionals in America. Travel advisors, with clergy, special education teachers, and firefighters, were given this special distinction, thanks in part to the amount of social interaction these professions offer. See:

<http://www.oprah.com/oprahshow/Happiest-Jobs-in-America-Video>.

Payscale.com reports job

satisfaction of travel advisors to be:  **Extremely satisfied**

A career as a travel advisor can be exciting, fast-paced and rewarding. The opportunity to travel to beautiful, exotic and meaningful destinations as part of your career is a major reason why the travel industry is so appealing to job seekers. How many people can say that while working their way up the career ladder or through management? See the sun set in the Greek Islands, visit the Holy Land and Israel, or go on a safari in South Africa.

While some individuals enter the industry simply for the perks of travel rewards, there is much more to it than that. A career as a travel advisor takes dedication, commitment, travel expertise, excellent interpersonal skills, and more. This guide provides you with information about the travel advisor and agency industry, as well as specific information to help you begin your career as a travel advisor.



WHAT IS ASTA?

Rebranded in 2018 as the American Society of Travel Advisors, ASTA is the leading global advocate for travel advisors, the travel industry and the traveling public. Its members represent

80 percent of all travel sold in the United States through the travel agency distribution channel.



American Society of
Travel Advisors

Together with hundreds of internationally based members, ASTA's history of industry advocacy traces back to its founding in 1931 when it launched with the mission to facilitate the business of selling travel through effective representation, shared knowledge and the enhancement of professionalism.

ASTA Members enjoy a variety of benefits, such as access to health insurance; consumer leads; publications including Travel Advisor Daily and research reports; professional development resources including the ASTA Verified Travel Advisor program; and access to a network of fellow travel industry professionals.

On the lobbying front, ASTA fights to protect the interests of its members and the broader travel agency community at all levels of government – federal, state and even local governments. Between 2012 and today, ASTA's efforts led to legislative and regulatory “wins” that saved the industry an estimated \$630 million in new taxes, fees and other costs. These wins include a successful campaign to lift the Biden Administration's international COVID-19 travel restrictions in June 2022 and fighting to secure small business financial relief related to COVID-19 as part of the 2020 CARES Act and subsequent relief legislation, including the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL), the Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) and an expansion of unemployment benefits to include independent contractors (ICs) for the first time in history.

For more information, visit [ASTA.org](https://www.asta.org).

Consumers can contact an ASTA travel advisor through [ASTA.org](https://www.asta.org) as well.

A QUICK STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Step 1 – Review this handbook so you can familiarize yourself with the various types of travel advisors and agencies, the industry and the myriad of requirements you’ll need to know. All options are explained within.

Step 2 – Determine whether your state requires registration (see the “States That Regulate Travel Sellers” and “Starting a Business” sections of this handbook).

Step 3 – If starting a new business, review the “Starting a New Business” section of this handbook for details and resources to help make this process easy to understand and maneuver.

Step 4 – Register for ASTA’s “Roadmap to Becoming a Travel Advisor” self-paced course that will map out how the travel industry operates, tools and techniques to become successful, and insightful tips and tricks to help you along your journey.

Step 5 – Start your journey and have fun as you consider this exciting and rewarding career path. Being a travel advisor is not just a job, it’s a way of life!

WHAT IS A TRAVEL ADVISOR?

Historically referred to as a travel “agent”, a travel advisor has been defined as a retail “advisor” for various travel suppliers, such as airlines and the like. However, the role of the travel advisor has evolved over time. In many cases, the travel advisor of today is a trusted source and consultant for the consumer or traveler who facilitates and manages the sale of travel products and services utilizing resources, connections, and expertise.



THE ROLE OF THE TRAVEL ADVISOR

The main responsibility of a travel advisor is to make the process of traveling – whether for work or pleasure – a stress-free, easy and positive experience. While a travel advisor performs some of the same functions as a reservation sales advisor at an airline, hotel, cruise, or car rental company, their additional expertise brings further value to the consumer that goes well beyond the transaction process. Travel advisors are professionals that add value to the consumer before, during and after the booking is made and the trip is taken.



Perhaps the most critical aspects of the job are the relationships and the trust that travel advisors develop with their customers. Travel advisors must provide personalized, knowledgeable service to each of their clients. They should understand their customers and recognize their travel needs. Travelers appreciate the reliability and attention to detail a travel advisor brings to the whole travel experience or the travel value chain:

- **The Dream** – The Traveler’s wants, desires, needs, motivating factors, friends, values, social media destination influence
- **Travel Research** – Where to go, how to get there, options, social media, costs, etc.
- **Travel Planning** – Options for air, car, hotel, cruise, or other modes of travel
- **Booking** – Purchase, documentation
- **Fulfilling** – The travel itself: the journey
- **Sharing** – Post-trip reviews and discussions via social media, with friends and family, etc.

ASTA’s mottos, “Without a Travel Advisor, You’re on Your Own®,” and “We’ll Take You There”, exemplify the important role professional travel advisors play during the entire travel value chain.

Over time, the travel advisor's job has evolved to reflect the changes and complexities within the travel industry as well as the way people purchase travel. The expansion of the Internet and social media has enabled consumers to be far more educated and savvy about purchasing travel than a decade ago. But too many options can be confusing, overwhelming and time-consuming to the traveler in need of expert advice. Many buyers suffer from information overload from the millions of options available online – and it is the travel professional's job to help them cut through the noise and clutter using their expertise to create the perfect travel experience.

“The two things I love the most about being a travel advisor are the personal reward from seeing my customers' dreams come true and the fact that no two days are alike.”

- Jason Coleman, CTC, travel advisor entrepreneur

WHAT MAKES A GOOD TRAVEL ADVISOR?

- ✓ **You have a passion for travel and travel planning**
- ✓ **You experience personal satisfaction when using your expertise to help others**
- ✓ **You thrive in a fast-pace and adapt to an ever-changing environment**
- ✓ **You are creative and analytical**
- ✓ **You love people and enjoy social interaction**
- ✓ **You are detail oriented**

If the above describes and motivates you, then you may be on the right career path.

Basic Job Requirements

Every profession requires basic core skills, and the travel agency profession is no exception. The following are the basic skills every travel advisor needs to possess when entering the profession:

- ✔ **Marketing and Sales** — You must understand the principles and methods of marketing: reaching, promoting and persuading; as well as sales: selling and closing travel products and service offerings.
- ✔ **Communication Skills** — Being a travel advisor requires oral and written language skills through constant interaction with consumers; it is critical that you can receive and convey information effectively.
- ✔ **Analytical Decision Making** — You must have the capability to ensure that your customers understand the relative costs and the comparative benefits of various products and services you may provide.
- ✔ **Complex Problem Solving** — You can quickly and effectively identify problems, evaluate options and implement solutions both before and when things go wrong in order to mitigate impact to the greatest extent possible.
- ✔ **Customer Service** — As with any consumer-focused profession, you must have superior customer service skills providing support before, during and after the purchase while adjusting yourself to the personality of the customer.
- ✔ **Geographic Skills** — Extensive knowledge of cities, countries, geographic features and socio/geopolitical boundaries is critical in making key travel decisions with and for customers.
- ✔ **Technology** — It is essential that you understand basic computer and Internet skills plus relevant industry tools, such as a Global Distribution System (GDS) or other travel aggregator products available - which are used to reserve, record and invoice travel transactions, and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools used to manage your customer base.
- ✔ **Product Knowledge** — You must have a solid understanding of travel supplier products, services and policies.
- ✔ **Operational/Administrative** — The sales process often requires follow-up with travel suppliers as well as customers and requires the collection and processing of payments; therefore, it is imperative that you have strong business operational and administrative skills, including computer and internet skills as described above, along with account management – sales and relationship management – experience.

TRAVEL AGENCY BUSINESS MODELS

Not long ago most travel agencies were brick-and-mortar businesses located on main streets or in shopping centers. Today, multiple business models exist, from the independent advisor/contractor and home-based/virtual advisor to the multibillion-dollar online agency with thousands of employees. Below gives you a look into the different types of models in detail.

The Retail (Traditional) Travel Agency

A retail travel agency typically consists of a storefront location that provides walk-up clients direct access to consult with a travel advisor. These travel agencies often use their physical location as a means of driving business. In addition, they often use a mix of traditional marketing methods such as direct mail and online marketing – email, social media, display advertising, and system engine optimization (SEO) to encourage travelers to contact the agency to arrange their travel.



Retail travel agencies are often independently owned and managed either by the owner or an office manager. Individual advisors are employed (W-2) or contracted (1099) by the agency to work with clients. Advisors may be compensated by a salary, a commission on their sales or a combination of the two. Larger agencies also employ dedicated marketing, technology, finance specialists and more. These agencies may also have advisors who specialize in a specific type of travel or geographic area (e.g., Europe, Caribbean, Africa, etc.), type of client (e.g., business, leisure, luxury) or travel experience (e.g., cruise, tour, independent travel, destination specialist, etc.) – often referred to as “niche markets”.

Retail agencies typically employ travel advisors with strong sales, travel product skills and expertise. Many travel advisors work in retail locations and many agencies permit staff to work virtually from home.

The Travel Management Company (TMC)

Travel Management Companies (TMCs) are travel agencies that focus on providing travel management services to corporations for business travel purposes many of whom have specific travel policies in place dictating what their travelers are permitted to book when traveling on company business. The TMC's primary role is to help companies effectively control travel spending by both negotiating savings with travel vendors and managing traveler behavior. To accomplish these tasks, TMCs often provide comprehensive data and analytical reports to their corporate customers. In addition, contracted corporate customers are often given access to the TMC's call center or, in some cases, a dedicated agency office is maintained on-site. TMCs often maintain, or contract the services for, a 24/7 emergency help desk to assist customers after hours.



TMCs typically hire advisors who are skilled in one of the three GDS and who also have strong interpersonal skills, analytical, and problem-solving skills.

The Online Travel Agency (OTA)

While several online travel agencies have come to dominate the online travel agency space, there is still room for current and future boutique online travel agencies. This is especially true of advisors who are niche travel experts, offering specialized services and/or products. An OTA can be thought of as a web-based marketplace allowing the traveler to research and book travel products and services online.

Online agencies hire a range of skilled talent, from IT to expert travel advisors who handle the more complex itineraries that require a more personal touch and customer service. While efficiencies can be gained by offering consumers a robust online shopping experience, there often comes a point in the buying process where the online buyer needs personal assistance to complete the transaction.

If you are looking to be home-based or self-employed - whether online or otherwise - the following Independent Advisor category may apply to you.

The Independent Advisor

The independent advisor is typically defined as a **self-employed** travel advisor. As an independent business, these advisors or agencies have their own unique business names and must comply with all applicable local and state registration requirements, like a traditional travel agency. It is the self-employed designation that sets the independent advisor apart from the traditional agency model. Travel advisors who work for a traditional, TMC or OTA are considered “employees” of the business they work for, even if they are home-based, whereas independent advisors are considered self-employed.



Of all the business models described, the independent model is perhaps the most difficult model to fully define, as these advisors are diverse, and their sales are difficult to quantify since nearly half process their sales through a host agency (see *What is a Host Agency* below). Most (87 percent) independent advisors work from home, although a few may rent desks from their host agency. Some also work part time. Some have corporate clients, yet most focus on leisure travel, particularly cruises. There are also some who focus solely on groups or other niche or specialty markets.

There are two primary types of independent advisors, those who are affiliated with a host agency, which are referred to as **hosted independent advisors**, and those who are fully independent.

The primary difference between the two is that the hosted independent advisor contracts with a host travel agency, sometimes referred to as a “host” or “host agency,” for certain services such as airline ticketing. The hosted independent advisor may also be referred to as an independent contractor.

What is a Host Agency?

A host agency is a travel agency that is typically airline accredited by ARC (Airlines Reporting Corporation) which permits them to issue airline tickets specifically and may also have a CLIA (Cruise Lines International Association) number. Some independent advisors will contract with a host agency for services that may include:

- Use of the host's industry identification number, ARC for airline ticketing purposes through the host's Global Distribution System (GDS) used for supplier comparison shopping and booking
- Use of the host's industry identification number (e.g., ARC, CLIA or IATAN, etc.) for commission tracking purposes
- Supplier commission overrides
- Quality control
- Administrative support which may vary by host agency

In return for providing these services, the independent advisor pays a fee, usually in the form of a monthly subscription fee or as a percentage of the advisor's commission.

It is the host agency's identification number that identifies the agency with an industry supplier so that air tickets can be processed via ARC and commission payments can be prepared and paid. Since a share of the profits are paid directly to the host, the host is usually obligated through the independent contractor agreement to forward payment to the independent advisor as stipulated in the contract. Most often, compensation paid by the host to the independent advisor is in the form of a commission, expressed as a percentage of the base fare. Common splits between an independent advisor and the host agency are 70/30, 80/20 and/or 50/50. So, for example, if the split is 70/30, the host may retain 30 percent of profit earned by the independent advisor and forward the remaining 70 percent to the advisor. The percentage split an independent advisor can negotiate depends on the experience, education, knowledge and skill the independent advisor brings to the table.

There are also independent advisors who have their own identification numbers and do not work through a host agency. These are often advisors who have moved their traditional travel agency business to their home. Some of these advisors have given up

their ARC airline accreditation - which can be costly to obtain - in lieu of one of the three non-air travel agency identification numbers discussed later in this document.

U.S. TRAVEL AGENCY INDUSTRY

Market Size and Scope

100,295 workers employed by travel agency firms – *Census Bureau*

46,200 workers identified as “travel advisors” – *Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021*

65,000 self-employed independent travel advisors – *HAR Research*

10,630 travel agency retail locations – *ARC September 2022*

\$136 billion sales, including online travel advisors – *PCW*

\$5.5 billion total payroll output – *Census Bureau*

HOW TRAVEL AGENCIES MAKE MONEY

Today, there are many different travel agency business models. Yet there are two primary revenue sources:

- 1) customer-paid professional fees where, much like attorneys or accountants, advisors charge for their services (based on the transaction or service provided)
- 2) supplier-paid compensation (commissions or overrides and incentives).

Professional fee payments are determined by the agency and charged to the traveler. They may be based on a particular transaction type, such as a price for the issuance of an air ticket or cruise ticket. Or they may be in the form of a cost charged for managing, planning and booking the trip. The fee may also be in the form of a consulting retainer or, in some cases, by the hour. Commissions are earned at the time of the transaction and processed by the supplier either at time of the traveler’s final payment or once the travel takes place, while overrides are typically paid periodically, either quarterly, semi-annually or annually, and are based on the agency’s ability to

achieve a pre-set sales goal. An advisor may earn a commission from a supplier as well as a professional fee from the traveler in connection with the same transaction.

While almost all agencies earn revenue from both sources, it is the agency's business model that often dictates the agency's primary source of revenue. Historically, travel agencies that focused on selling **leisure travel** typically received most of their revenues from suppliers through commissions, overrides or incentives. That mix continues to change. Travel agencies that focus solely on **corporate travel** and airline ticketing are very dependent on customer-paid accounts, often called transaction or professional fees and supplier incentives. For both types of agencies, however, there continues to be a mix.

WHAT TRAVEL ADVISORS EARN

According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics \(BLS\)](#):

- The mean travel advisor salary is:
 - \$46,580 in 2021
 - \$69,420+ upper 10%

**But the potential to earn
much more is great!**

Host Agency Reviews (HAR) reports advisors who are salaried or hourly only make an average of \$46,330; agents selling only make an average of \$46,330; and the average annual income for corporate agents ranges from \$54,419 to \$79,557. However, the opportunity to make significantly more is tremendous depending on the passion, commitment and focus you give to this arena as a business.

<https://hostagencyreviews.com/blog/how-much-do-travel-agents-make-travel-agent-salary>

Glassdoor salary ranges for corporate advisors are in line with BLS and show the dependence of range based on experience, corporation and location. While Glassdoor's July 2021 data reports the average pay for a corporate travel consultant is **\$65,810**.

➤ How advisors are paid:

- Salary alone
- Salary plus commission
- Commission only
- Hourly
- Retainers
- Professional Fees

It is important to point out that advisor salary data referenced above does not include in most cases bonuses, profit sharing, commissions and other potential income sources also referenced. These additional income sources are often on top of any salary received.

My travel business has allowed me to take control of my future by more than tripling my salary in corporate America year over year, well into multiple six-figures.



Will Medina
President
Destination Wedding
Experts, LLC

\$114,955

The overall average
salary for corporate
travel manager
positions

- HAR Research

GETTING STARTED

There is no right or wrong way to start out in this industry and there are no limits to where your career and income can go. Many travel advisors start right after high school or college, while some start later in life as a second or third career.

FINDING THE RIGHT TRAINING PROGRAM

Becoming a travel advisor requires extensive knowledge of the travel industry, as well as knowledge of one or more computer applications, such as a Client Relationship Management (CRM), or a travel booking aggregator tool such as a Global Distribution Systems (GDSs). ASTA encourages you to enroll in [ASTA's Roadmap to Becoming a Travel Advisor course](#) and/or a travel program or school to get a head start on your career.

If you decide to start your career with a travel program or school, whether online or traditional, it is important that you carefully research all the professional travel-training possibilities. You should also keep these points in mind when evaluating a potential travel school or program:

- ✓ Does the program or school offer travel courses in: destination marketing/geography; fares/ticketing/tariffs; industry forms and procedures; automation; marketing and sales and travel industry operations?
- ✓ Is the school providing or advising where to apply for internships?
- ✓ How long has the school or program been in operation?
- ✓ Is the school a member of ASTA?
- ✓ If you're interested in becoming a corporate travel advisor, examine the available GDS training curriculum. It should teach both domestic and international reservation processing as well as accessing and processing airline

I now have a healthy work-life balance and feel I'm being compensated well for my time and expertise.



Nikki Hendrix
President & CEO
Favorite Grampy
Travels

availability, pricing, selling, creating a passenger name record (PNR) and booking hotel, car rental, rail and other travel reservations.

- ✓ Contact travel agencies in your area for their opinion of the travel schools or programs you are considering.
- ✓ Does the school or program offer placement assistance for graduates? If so, what is their success rate?
- ✓ Inquire if there are any graduates of the school who are as travel advisors whom you can contact as a reference.
- ✓ Reach out to working graduates for their evaluation of the program.

To find a travel school in your area, visit ASTA.org and visit the [ASTA Member Travel School page](#).

SEEKING EMPLOYMENT AS A TRAVEL ADVISOR

In today's job market, the most common way to look for employment is as a travel advisor, in addition to building a strong network through LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) and other social media tools, is to use industry website job boards. [ASTA's Career Center](#) is a great place to start and is located in the Education/Careers section of ASTA.org. Also, check out the classified sections of these travel publications:

- **ASTA Career Center** – <http://careers.asta.org/jobseekers>
- **Travel Weekly** – <https://jobs.travelweekly.com/>
- **HCareers** – www.hcareers.com

If you are considering a career in the travel industry, we suggest you set up informational interviews with ASTA Member travel agencies in your area. When doing so, speak to the manager of the travel agency and explain to them your interest in beginning a career in travel. You will have to accommodate their schedule and ask them to carve out 30 to 60 minutes of their time. Consider meeting them for coffee so you can be assured of keeping their attention outside of the office while you discuss career options with them.



During an informational interview, make sure that becoming a travel advisor is the career for you. Ask the manager or an advisor about their typical day, the number of hours worked per day or week, what their challenges are, as well as what they see as the rewards. Plus, you might also ask what the potential may be for a career in your area. If you feel this may be the right path for you, discuss the options for interning at the agency.

Find ASTA Member Advisors near you by searching in our [Member Directory on ASTA.org](#).

TRAVEL ADVISOR CERTIFICATIONS

There are no federal or state certification programs required of individual travel advisors. Certification is optional. ASTA, however, offers various certification and training options for its members:

ASTA Training Courses, Programs Certification

Regulatory Compliance – Travel advisors must deal with a host of federal regulations when it comes to selling travel. The risk of violating those regulations is real and impactful. In 2013, travel agencies of various sizes were assessed penalties ranging from \$20,000 to \$125,000, while during 2014 the U.S. Department of Transportation levied a \$95,000 fine on a single agency for non-compliance. Since advisors have started taking this ASTA course, no fines have been reported.

ASTA's members have access to the [U.S. Travel Agency Regulatory Compliance Handbook](#), a plain-English analysis of the federal statutes and regulations that directly impact travel advisors. They also have access to an [online training course](#) ASTA created to test its members' knowledge of their regulatory obligations. The handbook, course and test provide practical skills and advice to help you develop a plan to meet your regulatory obligations and minimize your risk. Topics include rules surrounding:

- Full Price Disclosure
- Baggage Fees

- Code-share Disclosure
- The Federal Trade Commission's "Cooling-Off" Period
- Disability and Web-Only Offers
- E-Ticket Expiration
- Hazardous Materials Disclosure
- Insecticides
- "Opt-Out" Products and Services
- Price Increases
- Secure Flight Data
- And more...

Ethics in the Travel Agency Industry – ASTA has developed a course focusing on ethics in the travel agency industry. The course content builds upon ASTA's existing Code of Ethics by providing an in-depth study of the critical ethical considerations facing advisors today when interacting with suppliers, consumers, and other third parties. To foster a deeper understanding and enhanced professionalism, the curriculum includes real-world examples to illustrate the key principals that should inform our members' conduct.

[Become an ASTA member](#) and visit [ASTA's Online Training Center](#) on [ASTA.org](#) to start your personalized training.

For those interested in becoming a niche market specialist, ASTA also offers destination training programs and events periodically throughout every year. For more information on becoming a destination expert visit the relevant local, regional or country specific tourism website.

Additionally, consider attending one of ASTA's Educational Journeys, River Cruise X or Showcases which are held throughout every year. More details on ASTA's expos and events can be found on [ASTA.org/Events](#).



ASTA travel advisor
members in Dubai,
Morocco and Kenya

ASTA Verified Travel Advisor® Certification Program (VTA)

The [ASTA's Verified Travel Advisor Certification \(VTA\) program](#) is an industry standard for educational excellence. Through our consumer research we discovered that Americans are more likely to use an advisor when they believe that advisor will put their clients' interests first.



ASTA recognizes the importance of ethics in the industry and holds ASTA members to a high ethical standard. Earning the Verified Travel Advisor® certification demonstrates dependability, integrity and trustworthiness in support of the consumer. The program is a tool that will allow ASTA members to further enhance their professional development and credibility with consumers, suppliers and even the government. Becoming an ASTA Verified Travel Advisor® also means that ASTA has verified your knowledge of the core legal, ethical and regulatory framework that encompasses the business of selling travel.

"I got two sale leads that said that they only sought out VTA Advisors. 😊 Investing the time and money into getting your VTA, is very beneficial!"

- ASTA Member, April 2019

Additional Industry Certification Programs

Additional industry certification programs are managed by [The Travel Institute](#), which offers several programs that range from a basic proficiency test to individual travel advisor certification. Examples of certifications include:

The Travel Advisors Proficiency (TAP) Test

Although it is anticipated that most candidates who take The Travel Institute's Travel Advisor Proficiency Test have completed a travel school program or are already working in the travel industry, the test is not restrictive and has no eligibility requirements. Consequently, anyone may register to take it.

Certified Travel Associate (CTA) Designation

The Certified Travel Associate (CTA) focuses on the essential skills needed to succeed as a frontline travel counselor – selling, customer service, destinations, niche markets

and communication. The CTA is also the first step to earning the CTC designation described below. Although it is mandatory to have eight-teen months' worth of industry experience to earn the CTA, it is never too early to begin studying for the exam.

The CTA curriculum is designed around eight core courses and four elective courses to help personalize your learning experience. The final step in the program is an exam with a passing grade rewarding you with the official CTA designation.

The Certified Travel Associate program can be completed in three to six months; however, candidates have a full year (twelve months) to complete their studies and test. Many students choose independent study but may also opt to attend a CTA Online Study Group for a final review and test.

Certified Travel Counselor (CTC) Designation

The Certified Travel Counselor (CTC) program is designed for seasoned travel professionals who are interested in advancing their career. The CTC curriculum covers ten topics of study; designed to teach owners and managers how to analyze new business opportunities, develop marketing strategies, negotiate, increase their knowledge, grow their business, and earn widely recognized industry credentials.

To learn more about these and other tests and designations, visit The Travel Institute at www.thetravelinstitute.com.

TRAVEL AGENCY CREDENTIALS

If you plan to **open your own travel agency or become a non-hosted independent travel advisor**, you will need certain travel agency credentials including a travel industry ID number. There are three primary credential sources of identification within the industry that suppliers use to verify a travel agency, track the agency's reservations and send the agency earned commission payments.

Travel agencies can obtain a unique eight-digit identification number from either:

- ARC (the Airlines Reporting Corporation);
- CLIA (Cruise Lines International Association); or
- IATAN (International Air Transport Association Network)

Once an agency applies for and receives an identification number, the agency's information (address, phone, e-mail, etc.) is listed in a central database maintained by the issuer (ARC, IATAN or CLIA) for suppliers to use.

Airline Accreditation –The Airlines Reporting Corporation (ARC)

The Airlines Reporting Corporation (ARC) is an airline-owned company providing the travel industry with business products, travel agency and accreditation services, process and financial management tools and data analytics. ARC settles the financial aspects of ticket transactions between airlines and travel agencies and travel management companies in the United States.

ARC coordinates three primary functions that add efficiency to the way airlines and travel agencies deal with each other. These include:

1. **Accreditation** - ARC provides a mechanism that airlines may use to accredit and appoint Ticket Reporting Agencies (TRA).
2. **Ticket Issuance** - TRAs are entitled to issue electronic ticket and other related air traffic documents on airlines that participate in ARC's Area Settlement Plan (ASP).
3. **Ticket Reconciliation and Settlement** - ARC's ASP is a clearinghouse for weekly management of airline ticket sales, refunds, exchanges and payment of compensation - including travel agency service fees (if the advisor elects to process its fees through ARC). The ASP enables agencies to report and remit all transactions to all airlines with one weekly report and check draft.

Obtaining ARC Accreditation

Requirements for establishing an ARC-accredited TRA agency can be found online at:

<https://www2.arccorp.com/support-training/airlines/information-on-agency->

[accreditation-for-airlines/](#). There are three types of travel agency participation through ARC:

1) Accredited Agency Program – For those who desire to issue airline tickets directly, you will have the authority to issue air tickets through a GDS. ARC accredited agencies have access to ARC’s financial settlement services as well as to numerous travel agency tools. You must be located in and authorized to do business in the United States or its territories. You will also be required to provide a bond or irrevocable letter of credit, or cash deposit as a condition for being appointed or retained as an ARC-listed travel agency. The minimum amount required is \$20,000 for the first two years. Travel agency bonds or letters of credit do not protect consumers’ monies. Instead, these security instruments are payable only to ARC when an agency defaults and has outstanding debts.

If you decide to become a new ARC-accredited agency, you will first need to order a new application kit from ARC. The non-refundable fee for the kit is \$2,000 with an ongoing \$210 annual fee thereafter (note: the first year’s annual fee is included in the application fee). Once a travel agency obtains an ARC TRA number, it is generally recognized by all other industry suppliers. No other business number is needed.

2) Verified Travel Consultant (VTC) Program – For those specializing in leisure travel, the VTC program is tailored to the growing number of agencies that do not issue air tickets directly through a GDS. These agencies have access to benefits of ARC participation. There is an application fee of \$195 (note: the first year’s annual fee is prorated based on approval month). See additional information on this program in the Non-Air Identification Numbers section below.

3) Corporate Travel Department (CTD) Program – For those working in their company’s corporate travel department, the CTD program provides companies with direct access to ARC’s central reporting and settlement processing systems. CTDs receive all the benefits of ARC accreditation, including an individual ARC

number. There is an application fee of \$3,000 with an ongoing \$200 annual fee thereafter (note: the first year's annual fee is included in the application fee).

NOTE: ARC information above is subject to change. Complete details can be found in ARC's Industry Agents' Handbook: www.arccorp.com/iah/.

Non-Air Identification Numbers

If you plan to start your own travel agency business and do not want to go through the cost and financial obligation of becoming accredited to issue airline tickets, you will need to obtain an identification number from another source. Once you have this number, hotels, cruise lines, tour companies and other industry suppliers may allow you to book their product for your clients. *Please note: If you plan to work as an employee of an agency, you will use the identification number(s) established by your employer. Likewise, if you plan to work as an independent advisor with a host agency, you will use the identification number provided to you by your host agency.*

There are several types of identification numbers for travel sellers of non-air products including:

- 1) ARC Verified Travel Consultant (VTC) described in the ARC section above,
- 2) IATAN non-air number (formerly referred to as a Travel Service Intermediary (TSI) number) and
- 3) CLIA

Obtaining an ARC VTC, IATAN or CLIA number is the first step in building relationships with suppliers so that your business is recognized as an "advisor" or "authorized representative."

To prevent duplication, ARC and IATAN source their numbers directly from a single pool of numbers controlled by IATA. Likewise, CLIA uses a block of numbers that IATA no longer uses. Most suppliers will accept one of these numbers. You do not need to obtain all three.

Each non-air numbering program has its own financial and business requirements. Complete details for each program can be found online at:

ARC VTC – www.arccorp.com/joinvtc/

CLIA – www.cruising.org

IATAN – www.iatan.org

CREDENTIALS / ID CARDS

IATAN provides the agency community with the primary personnel registration service in the industry for the purpose of issuing travel advisor ID cards that many suppliers recognize for the purpose of providing reduced rate travel privileges. CLIA also administers a travel advisor ID card program. To review the eligibility requirements, visit www.IATAN.org and www.cruising.org.

FRAUDULENT CREDENTIALS – CARD MILLS

Not all travel advisor credentials are created equal, so it's important that you know the difference. There are some businesses that sell deceptive identification cards; sometimes accompanied by a package of insignificant "training" materials that falsely identify the purchaser as a "travel advisor." These businesses, often called "card mills," may make claims to consumers such as "travel like a travel advisor" and are designed to permit buyers of travel services to pass themselves off as sellers of travel services.

These cards are represented as enabling the holder to obtain discounts, upgrades and other courtesies reserved by travel suppliers for professional travel advisors who actively promote the suppliers' services.

Card mills exist to sell, at a substantial price (often \$495 or some amount intentionally set below the \$500 threshold triggering application of FTC (Federal Trade Commission)/state franchise and business opportunity disclosure laws), false identification that places into the hands of purchasers a device they are led to believe will deceive travel suppliers. The card mills promote themselves (in print and Internet advertising and, often, through written scripts and audiotapes used in word-of-mouth solicitation) by making exaggerated claims about the discounts or price advantages

that so-called “independent advisors” or “consultants” may obtain through use of the card.

In addition, some card mills emphasize the purchaser’s opportunity — reminiscent of classic pyramid and other illegal multi-level marketing schemes — to recruit other “advisors” and earn fees for each recruit as well as each time the recruit books travel. In all cases, the primary theme and message of their promotions is that the purchaser can enjoy all the benefits and financial rewards of professional travel advisors with no worry, no hassle and, above all, no work.

Beware of these schemes that could lead you to no hope of reclaiming your investment. Rather, become involved in your industry: begin with advisor training or an internship, consider associating with a host agency as described earlier in this document, and join other professionals in the agency community by joining ASTA. We are your ultimate ticket to success!

ASTA: <http://www.asta.org/Join>

STATES THAT REGULATE TRAVEL SELLERS

Some states require registration of travel agencies and/or regulate how travel is sold. A list of states with “Seller of Travel (SOT)” laws follows below. If you decide to open an agency in one of these states, ***or even if you plan to sell travel to customers in one of these states, you will likely need to register:***

- California – <https://oag.ca.gov/travel>
- Florida – <https://www.fdacs.gov/Business-Services/Sellers-of-Travel>
- Hawaii – <https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/programs/travel/>
- Washington – <http://www.dol.wa.gov/business/travel/>

Please also follow the link to the U.S. Small Business Administration's website in the next section, "Starting a Business", which will point you to information helpful towards obtaining various licenses and permits that may be needed.



STARTING A BUSINESS

For further information on starting a business, the U.S. Small Business Administration has many valuable resources available to assist you: www.sba.gov/content/follow-these-steps-starting-business. While not all steps and resources below may apply to you or your business, you will find valuable information at the U.S. Small Business Administration's website regarding:

- Conducting market research
- Writing a business plan
- Getting business assistance and training
- Choosing a business location
- Financing your business
- Determining the legal structure of your business
- Registering a business name ("Doing Business As")
- Registering for state and local taxes
- Obtaining business licenses and permits
- Understanding employer responsibilities

There are also several available programs listed to assist startups as well.

An additional source of valuable information for anyone interested in starting a business can be found at USA.gov: <https://www.usa.gov/start-business?source=busa>. This website, created by the U.S. government, provides a one-stop platform to find the information you may need.

Once you become a member of ASTA, you can also obtain access to detailed resources that will guide you through the regulatory process.

TRAVEL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

If you plan to own and operate a full-service travel agency with an airline appointment, you will likely need to contract with a Global Distribution System (GDS) and install their GDS product. These systems facilitate the booking and selling of airline tickets, as well as many other products, including rental cars, hotels, cruises, trains, tours and more.

There are three major GDS vendors in the United States – Amadeus, Sabre and Travelport (Travelport operates the Worldspan and Galileo systems). Vax VacationAccess is a fourth reservation system primarily designed for the distribution of leisure-focused products. You will need to contact these vendors directly for price quotes and lease requirements.

Amadeus – <http://www.amadeus.com>

Sabre – <http://www.sabretravelnetwork.com>

Travelport (Worldspan and Galileo) – <http://travelport.com>

VAX VacationAccess – <http://www.vaxvacationaccess.com>

RESOURCES

The following websites contain additional information about the travel agency industry. We encourage you to review these sites for news and information about the current state of the industry.

ASTA Travel Advisor Daily Newsletter –

<https://my.asta.org/ASTA/ItemDetail?iProductCode=PR04TAD1&CATEGORY=PUBS>

ASTA Travel Advisor Magazine –

<http://digitaleditions.walsworthprintgroup.com/publication/?m=55454&i=756199&p=118&ver=html5>

Business Travel News Online – www.businesstravelnews.com/

Travel Agent – www.travelagentcentral.com

Travel Research Online – <https://www.travelresearchonline.com>

Travel Weekly – www.travelweekly.com

Travel Market Report – <http://travelmarketreport.com>

ARC Industry Agent's Handbook – <http://www.arccorp.com/iah/>

The Beat – <http://www.thebeat.travel/>



IS THIS THE CAREER FOR YOU?

The travel business is one of the largest industries in the world and offers many benefits to hard-working individuals. The travel agency and advisor world while demanding can be both lucrative and rewarding. It requires a wide range of abilities for success. However, a love of travel and social interaction attracts many people to the field.



To succeed, you must have a genuine desire to be of service and to solve problems. In addition, you are expected to be articulate, sales-focused and customer service oriented. To handle the technical aspects of your work, you must be organized, thorough and tenacious.

We hope this exciting industry is a match for you.

**Regardless of where you start your career,
remember ASTA offers resources to help
support you every step of your journey.**

Next Step - Register for ASTA's "[Roadmap to Becoming a Travel Advisor](#)" self-paced course that will map out in greater detail the travel advisor journey, expand on four unique travel advisor models for you to choose from as highlighted below, and get your advisor career started!

Travel Advisor Models:

- Full-time/ Part-time Employed Travel Advisor
- Hosted Independent Contractor
- Independent Travel Agency/Advisor
- Corporate Travel Advisor

Learn more at [ASTA.org](https://www.asta.org).

GLOSSARY OF COMMON TRAVEL AGENCY TERMS

A

Add-On - A tour option not included in the basic price.

Advance Purchase – Refers to a requirement that a ticket must be purchased a minimum number of days prior to departure.

Adventure Tour - A tour built around an activity, such as rafting or bicycling.

Affinity – groups of people who share a common hobby, interest, activity, or are united in some type of social interaction and activities.

Air/Sea Package - A package offered by a cruise line that includes the cruise, airfare and transfers between the airport and the ship.

Airlines Reporting Corporation (ARC) - The U.S. airline industry organization that appoints travel advisors in the United States and processes air travel sales. ARC issues ID numbers termed “ARC numbers” to accredited U.S. advisors, which are used by travel industry suppliers to track commission payments.

All-Inclusive (AI)- A tour product that includes all trip components, including meals, for a set price.

Amadeus - A Global Distribution System (GDS) that has its global marketing headquarters in Madrid, Spain, operations facilities in Erding, Germany, and customer support offices in Nice, France. Amadeus’ National Marketing Company (NMC) for the United States is located Miami and the bulk of its subscriber base was converted from the System One platform in 1997 and 1998.

Amenities – a desired or useful feature of a building, destination, and/or mode of transportation

American Plan (AP) - Hotel room rate which includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Ancillaries – Airline products sold to the traveler in addition to the seat itself, such as bag fees, premium seating, on-board food, WI-FI and other services.

ARC Number - The eight-digit identification number assigned to accredited travel agencies in the United States by the Airlines Reporting Corporation. Travel agencies situated outside the United States are accredited by the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which issues a similar tracking number.

Availability – The total inventory available for sale at a particular rate. For example, airline seats, rental cars, hotel rooms, cruise cabins, etc.

B

Back-Office Automation - Systems that computerize non-air booking functions, including accounting and reporting. In many cases these systems interface with the front office reservation systems (GDSs) and are used by many travel advisors to process the weekly ARC sales and other reports.

Back-to-Back Ticketing - The practice of booking two round-trip excursion tickets with overlapping Saturday night stays for the purpose of circumventing higher unrestricted fares.

Baggage Allowance- the amount of baggage a passenger may transport without having to pay additional charges

Base Fare – The cost of an air ticket prior to the addition of fees, taxes and any surcharges.

Blackout Dates – Specific dates on which certain fares do not apply.

Bleisure - travel that combines business trips with leisure travel

Blocked Space – Seats, cabins or hotel rooms reserved for sale to third parties at a discounted group rate.

Boarding Pass – A document issued online or at check-in authorizing boarding (air, cruise, etc.).

Business Class – A class of service generally falling between First Class and Coach/Economy with travel amenities commensurate with the higher fare generally paid.

Business Development Manager (BDM) - a representative of a travel supplier who is responsible for building brand awareness and growing sales with travel advisors

C

Cabin - the passenger area on an airplane often segmented by class of service – First, Business, Premium, Coach/Economy; the stateroom aboard a cruise ship

Cancellation Penalty – A variable fee charged to the traveler when travel is cancelled after purchase that may be charged by the travel supplier or agency.

Cancel For Any Reason (CFAR) - an optional add-on benefit of travel insurance that lets you cancel travel plans for reasons other than those listed as "covered reasons" on a policy

Class of Service – the inventory in which an air passenger is booked according to the fare rules of the ticket purchased, usually on airfare tickets

CDW/LDW - Collision Damage Waiver/Loss Damage Waiver insurance for damage to a rental car vehicle.

Churning - Repetitive or excessive booking and canceling of a reservation in a GDS to achieve productivity credit or to circumvent ticketing restrictions.

City Guide - The tour guide of a city tour, usually a local resident.

City Pair - The origin and destination airports.

City Tour - A guided sightseeing trip through a city.

Coach Class (Economy) - Often used to describe the cabin or “economy” section of an airplane.

Code-Sharing - An agreement whereby one airline markets and sells the services of another airline. The name of the “marketing carrier” may appear on the ticket; however, the service is actually provided by a separate “operating carrier.”

Commission – A fee, often a percentage of the price, that a supplier or agency may add to a service or product in order to make money.

Computer Reservation System (CRS) – Also referred to as Global Distribution System (GDS) (see below).

Consolidator – A business entity that contracts with travel suppliers, usually airlines, to sell tickets in bulk at discounted rates.

Consortium – A collection of organizations made up of independently owned and managed agencies who band together to increase buying power for their members.

Consumer Protection Plan (CPP) - A tour operator-provided policy that provides compensation in case of a tour operator bankruptcy.

Continental Breakfast - Hotel stay that includes breakfast, typically consisting of bread, rolls, butter, jam and tea or coffee.

Continental USA - All areas in the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia.

Corporate Agency – A travel agency whose primary clientele are medium to large corporate businesses.

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) – The trade association of cruise industry. CLIA also is a marketing association that promotes cruise vacations distributed through travel agencies.

Cultural Tour - A tour focused on interacting with and exploring a specific culture.

CVB - Convention and Visitors Bureau.

D

Debit Memo – A bill or demand for payment from either an airline or ARC to a travel agency for charges it believes the agency owes.

Demographics – Population measures, such as age, gender, income, education, race/ethnicity, religion marital status, household size, and occupation

Deregulation - An Act of Congress which took effect in 1978 under which the former Civil Aeronautics Board lost direct responsibility for overseeing and assigning routes, frequencies and fares for the nation's airlines.

Destination Management Company (DMC) - a for-profit company that operates similar to a CVB by providing planning and execution services for travelers specific to their destination

Direct Access - A term used by Global Distribution Systems to describe the mode of reservation processing in which the supplier's reservation system provides a confirmation number within seven seconds of completion of the booking requests and prior to the travel advisor ending the booking transaction.

Double Occupancy Rate - The price based on two people sharing a room or cabin.

DRS (Direct Reference System) - The section of each Global Distribution System containing specific supplier policies and a descriptive list of supplier services.

Dynamic Packaging - An online booking tool that can combine multiple travel components (typically air, car and hotel) in real time into a single, fully priced package (hiding the pricing of the individual components).

E

Ecotour - A tour designed to highlight the conservation of the environment.

EMD (Electronic Miscellaneous Document) – A paperless document enabling the fulfillment, payment and tracking of airline ancillary services purchased such as bag fees, premium seating, on-board food, WI-FI and other services not associated directly with the ticket to travel.

Electronic Ticket (E-Ticket) – A paperless ticket allowing a traveler to travel with only a government issued photo ID (a paper ticket can be lost or stolen).

Escorted Tour - A tour package that is led by a tour director.

Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA) - the estimated time that the traveler will arrive at the destination opposed to the Actual Time of Arrival (ATA)

Excursion – a side trip from a destination point or cruise, usually for an additional cost

F

Familiarization Tour (FAM) - A complimentary or reduced-rate trip for travel advisors and/or airline employees that is designed to educate them on hotels or destinations for the purpose of increasing sales of that product. This is frequently referred to as a FAM or “fam trip.”

Fare Base Code – The airline code that defines the price of an airline ticket and the rules that apply to that fare.

First Class – The class of service offering the most premium level of service.

FIT (Flexible Independent Travel) - Customized independent travel, domestic or international. Historically, FIT referred to Foreign Independent Travel.

Fly/Drive - A travel package that includes an air ticket and a rental car.

Frequent Traveler Program - A plan offered by some travel vendors to award points or bonuses, such as free or upgraded accommodations, to customers in order to encourage repeat use and build brand loyalty.

Front-Office Systems - Travel agency reservation systems commonly referred to as GDS or CRS.

Full board - Hotel stay including three meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner).

G

Galileo – A GDS within the Travelport portfolio.

Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) - The trade group representing corporate travel managers.

Global Distribution System (GDS) – An automated reservations system that travel professionals use to perform a variety of travel functions including air, hotel and car rental reservations. GDS is sometimes referred to as a Computer Reservations System (CRS). Several GDSs provide their services to users worldwide (e.g., Amadeus, Sabre, Travelport), while others provide regional or national coverage.

Government Travel Request (GTR) – A form of payment used by some government agencies to pay for official government air travel.

Group – several persons, usually consisting of 10 or more people, traveling together

H

Half Board - Hotel stay including breakfast, and either lunch or dinner.

High Season – peak season as defined by the travel supplier or destination

High-Season Supplement - Additional charge that applies during high season.

Hosted Tour - A group tour met at the destination by a representative of the tour operator.

Hub – A city in which an airline has a major presence and is often a significant connection point for service to alternate cities (as in hub and spoke system).

/

IAR (Interactive Agent Reporting) - The electronic sales reporting system from ARC (Airlines Reporting Corporation) used to reconcile ticketing between agencies and airlines on a weekly basis.

IATA Number - The membership identification number assigned to accredited travel agencies located outside of the United States by the International Air Transport Association. IATA numbers identify a travel agency to hotels and car rental companies so that applicable booking commissions are paid. Travel agencies in the United States are accredited by ARC (Airlines Reporting Corporation), which issues a similar number.

Inbound Operator - An operator that handles travel arrangements at a destination. Also known as a receptive operator.

Incidentals – Charges incurred by the participants of a tour, but which are not included in the tour price

International Air Transport Association (IATA) - The trade association of the world's airlines. Headquartered in Montreal, Canada, IATA operates as a supra-national organization proposing rates, conditions of service, safety standards, and provides the mechanism which makes the unified system of air transportation possible. IATA appoints retail travel agents and operates the ticket settlement system for travel agencies located outside the United States. IATA's executive offices are in Geneva, Switzerland.

International Airlines Travel Agent Network (IATAN) - A wholly owned subsidiary of the International Air Transport Association (IATA). IATAN offers a travel agency ID card to accredited travel agency members in the United States.

L

Land Arrangements – all the details of the land portion of a trip (hotel, car, tours, sightseeing, etc.)

Layover – The period spent between connecting flights.

Leg Day – pronounced “Ledge Day” - ASTA advocacy event held in Washington, D.C. for members to meet their elected officials

Leisure Travel – Travel for fun and relaxation, vacation or visiting friends and family.

Local Host - A representative of the tour operator who aids at a destination.

Luxury Travel – luxury travel is subjective to the traveler; it can be loosely defined as travel that constitutes a high-end and the state of great comfort and extravagance during the travel experience

M

Marketing Plan – A written report that details marketing objectives for a product or service, and recommends strategies for achieving these objectives

Maximum Stay – The longest period a traveler can stay at a particular destination and still qualify for a particular fare or discount.

Minimum Connect Time – The shortest time permissible in order to successfully transfer to a connecting flight – always select a flight that exceeds the minimum connect time.

MCO (Miscellaneous Charge Order) - An electronic ARC/IATA form that can be used by advisors and airlines to process payment for services other than airfares, such as additional collections, change fees, cancellation fees, group deposits, etc. MCOs are generally used to process cash sales through the agent's ARC report (IAR).

Meet-and-Greet Service - A service that assists travelers upon arrival with entrance formalities, baggage handling, transportation and orientation.

Modified American Plan (MAP) - Hotel stay including breakfast and dinner.

Multi-generational travel – multi-generational travel is a travel category referring to travel with any combination of parents, siblings, children, grandchildren, and assorted family members with the goal to broaden horizons, provide opportunities to reconnect and provide an enriching assortment of shared experiences

N

NCF – Non-commissionable fares - the travel agent is not paid a commission on those fees

Negotiated Rate - A term used to describe rates negotiated by a hotel company with a specific client.

Net Fare or Net Rate - A wholesale rate exclusive of commissions.

No Show – A traveler who does not arrive for their booked flight, hotel, car rental, cruise, etc. reservation.

Non-Refundable – A ticket for which no monies will be returned if the traveler no longer intends to use the ticket.

Non-Transferable – A ticket that can only be used by the person originally booked to travel.

Nonstop – A flight that travels directly to its destination without making any stops or connections.

O

O/D - Origin/ Destination

Online Booking Tool (OBT) - an internet-based system that allows you to book flights, rail, hotels and more.

Off-Peak – A less expensive time to travel usually as a result of lower traveler volumes during that period.

Online Travel Agency (OTA) - a web-based marketplace that allows consumers to research and book travel products and services, including hotels, flights, cars, tours, cruises, activities and more, directly with travel suppliers

Open Jaw - A triangular air itinerary where only two legs are ticketed; for example, a traveler is ticketed to fly from Atlanta to Miami, drive from Miami to Orlando and ticketed to fly back to Atlanta from Orlando.

Operator – The company provides a transportation service regardless of the mode of transportation.

Other Supplemental Information (OSI) - A PNR field used to provide additional passenger information to the airline.

Overbooking - A condition that exists when a vendor sells more inventory (e.g., air, hotel, car, etc.) than is available.

Override - Additional commission paid to advisors as a bonus for productivity and/or volume.

P

Package - Any combination of travel with more than one component, such as hotel and air sold as one product.

Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) – An additional fee usually added to the air ticket for use of an airport; can also apply to a cruise terminal.

Passenger Name Record (PNR) - The GDS file that contains information about a passenger's travel plans, including name, contact information, flight itinerary, hotel booking segments, car rental booking segments, and related details along with confirmation numbers.

Passenger Space Ratio - The number of gross registered tons of a ship divided by the total passenger capacity.

Passenger to Crew Ratio - The number of passengers divided by the total number of crewmembers on a cruise.

Passive Segment - A segment booking entered in the GDS for the purpose of ticketing or record keeping for which an identical booking has already been made in the carrier's reservation system.

PAX - A term used by airline and industry staff referring to a passenger or passengers.

Period Ending Date (PED) – An acronym for the closing date of the ARC reporting period (always every Sunday).

Point-to-Point – Refers to airfares between two cities.

Porterage - Baggage handling service.

Pseudo City Code (PCC) – A GDS identifier that distinguishes one travel agency location from another, generally a three- to five-character code (alpha, numeric, or combination), depending upon the GDS.

Published Fares – A fare offered publicly for sale by an airline and available through the GDS, web and other sources, as opposed to a private fare available to only certain corporate or other accounts.

Q

Queue System - Computerized file or address in GDS. GDS users (travel advisors, hotel companies, etc.) are provided with queues, identified by a queue address, to which messages are delivered.

R

Receptive Operator - Company engaged in the management of receptive tour services, such as local transportation, transfers and tours.

Record Locator Number – The numbers/letters assigned to an air reservation by the carrier used to access the PNR.

Red-Eye Flight – An overnight or late-night flight on a commercial airline.

Regional Carrier - As defined by the DOT, an airline with annual revenues of less than \$100 million.

Reissue – When a change of travel plans occurs, often a ticket reissue is necessary; this may result in fees or penalties depending on the source of the change of plans – traveler or airline.

Roundtrip – The combination of the outbound flight and the inbound or return flight to the original destination.

Rule 240 - Airline-defined rules regarding passenger rights in the event of a schedule irregularity or force major event.

S

Sabre (Semi-Automated Business Research Environment) - A Global Distribution System operated by The Sabre Corporation, based in Southlake, TX.

Shoulder Season – The period between busy and quiet seasons in which prices are typically at a mid-point; usually applies in the hotel and lodging space.

SI Field - The “supplementary information” field in a GDS hotel reservation in which a travel advisor communicates via free text special requests such as non-smoking rooms, corporate rate number and arrival time to a hotel.

Single Room Supplement - The additional amount due for not sharing a hotel room or cruise cabin.

Special Service Request (SSR) - A PNR field designed to request special passenger services from the airline using commonly accepted four-character keywords.

Special-Event Package - A package designed around a specific event, such as a sporting event. These packages typically include a ticket to the event.

Spring Break Package - A package specifically marketed to budget-conscious students for travel in the spring.

Supplier – A company offering travel services to the public such as an airline, cruise line, hotelier, car-rental firm, tour operator, etc.

T

Terms & Conditions (T&C) - A contract that specifies the terms and conditions of a purchase. It typically contains a supplier’s voluntary cancellation and change policies and other conditions of travel.

Tour Operator Program (TOP) - Developed by ASTA as a marketing program for ASTA member tour operators. TOP tour operators must meet requirements set by the TOP program.

Tour Operator - A company that develops, markets and operates vacation packages that contain two or more components (e.g., air, hotel, car, transfers, etc.) and are sold as one price.

Transfers - Arrival and departure transportation service that provides transportation between the airport, rail station, cruise terminal and hotel.

Travel Management Company (TMC) -

Travel Agent Service Fee (TASF) - An ARC program that travel advisors use to process service fees through ARC.

Travel Agent - Seller of retail travel services, including tour packages, to consumers.

Travelport – A GDS headquartered in the U.K., Travelport is the parent company of Galileo and Worldspan.

Trip Cancellation Insurance/Travel Insurance - Optional insurance that provides travelers a refund in the event he/she cancels the trip for reasons covered under the policy. Insurance policies typically include coverage for emergencies such as illness, baggage loss, and accidental death/dismemberment.

V

Voucher - A document issued by the tour operator to be exchanged for a specific service (e.g., hotel, transfer, etc.).

W

World Tourism Organization (WTO) - Formerly the International Union of Official Travel Organizations, now a United Nations affiliated organization of government tourist offices.

Worldspan— Now part of Travelport, Worldspan is the U.K.-based GDS formed by the merger of the PARS and DATAS II GDSs in February 1991.

Y

Yield Management - The practice of controlling the supply and price of airline, hotel or car rental inventory in order that the supplier might achieve maximum revenue.



"The more time I spent in class, the more I got comfortable talking to my fellow students about my love for travel. When I started receiving positive feedback from other students telling me they can hear so much passion when I talked about travel, I knew I was going to be able to connect well with future clients."

-Virtual Campus student



Travel Agent Training Virtual Campus Program

Our travel agent training Virtual Campus program is much more than the traditional independent on-line learning program.

Deeper learning and long-term retention are more likely to occur in the collaborative environment that is offered in our Virtual Campus Training Program. This program is designed to engage the participant with a small cohort of other learners.

Travel Agent Training Independent Learner Program

Our travel agent training Independent Learner program is a self-paced, on-demand training program. The material is current and delivered via an online portal in a fun and engaging self-paced format.

Most people will agree that a collaborative learning environment is going to result in a deeper educational experience. But for those with a limited budget or time to invest then our travel agent training Independent Learner program is designed for you. There are 30 lessons that take 15-30 minutes each and are an overview of topics for a new travel agent.

Travel Leaders of Tomorrow, an Internova Travel Group company, was founded in 2013. Since then we have had over 1,000 future travel advisors go through the training program. Travel Leaders of Tomorrow has been a proud member of ASTA since its inception.



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WHY NEXION



More Profits



More Education



More Tools



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NEXSTART

NEW ADVISOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The NEXstart program gives you all the benefits and mentorship of being a full Nexion® Travel Group member while tapping into the extensive training of the Travel Leaders of Tomorrow program. Gain the knowledge and experience needed to become a travel advisor, while partnering with North America's foremost host travel agency.

NEXstart is our most comprehensive training program.

This program includes:

- Weekly, small group, instructor-led Travel Leaders of Tomorrow Virtual Campus
- Collaborative learning environment
- Hands on practice/training

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NEXSTART LITE

NEW ADVISOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

NEXstart Lite is our on demand independent learner program.

This program includes:

- Self-paced e-learning modules as part of the Travel Leaders of Tomorrow Independent Learner program
- Group business coaching through NEXstrides

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NEXSTRIDES

NEW ADVISOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

At Nexion Travel Group, we want our new-to-the-industry members to feel ready to make strides toward building a successful business. NEXstrides is an innovative, one-year business coaching program available to NEXstart and NEXstart Lite program members, so they have the confidence and direction needed when starting a business as a travel professional. Led by our certified business coach, NEXstrides is included in the value of membership.

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