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10 Reasons To Use A Travel Agent In 2017

by [Cheryl Rosen](#) / November 22, 2016/2017



Photo: [Dubai International Airport](#)

Buying travel is a unique purchase, because you are buying both a product and a service.

A travel agent knows how to sell both parts—the airline and resort and cruise line that best match your needs, and the service that will guarantee your vacation is seamless and stress-free.

1. Travel agents are trained to take a critical look at each piece in your trip puzzle.

They make sure each piece meets your specific needs, so you're happy with every penny you spent. Like a doctor or an accountant, a travel counselor will ask the right questions, listen to your answers, understand your pain, and offer expert advice to guide you in making one of your most important decisions—how to spend your invaluable time off.

2. They can make sense of the multitude of offers from cruise lines and airlines and hotels.

This year travel companies are offering more brands than ever before in history—on land, in the air and on the seas. Is Fathom the right cruise for you? Is Delta Light good enough? A travel professional can decipher the subtle differences and choose the one that fits your requirements for this unique trip.

3. Storms and natural disasters are making travel more difficult.

This year has been a particularly tough one for travel, with natural disasters and system failures overwhelming some suppliers. But travel agents have the access and the knowledge to help speed your re-accommodation, and act as your advocate when there are problems. When you book with an agent you can reach out to an actual person with whom you have built a trust relationship. Travel agents can help change travel dates due to weather, or change the destination completely. They can hold cruise and air options for you and confirm your hotel before booking a non-refundable reservation. And in these weather-affected times, no client wants to sit on hold with the airlines or a tour operator for hours—so let a travel agent do the work for you.

4. The world is constantly changing, and travel agents are on the ground experiencing it.

Has the Caribbean recovered from the latest hurricane? Can Americans travel to Cuba these days? Has the smoke cleared in Napa? Travel advisors don't just sell a destination—they discover, research and experience the places they offer over and over, sharing the actual and current status quo with their customers. Just like in everyday life, it takes a village to understand the dynamics of every destination. Why do it alone if you don't have to?

5. Travel agents add a human element.

A travel professional ensures that you are a person, not a number. They are invested in their clients' happiness and satisfaction and want to make sure each and every trip is packed full of positive lifelong memories. They are with you before, during and after your trip—kind of like "for better or for worse." Travel agents answer their phones and respond to their email no matter where you are on the planet.

6. They offer unique services for discerning clients.

Marketing to the masses is pointless for travel agents, says Mary Misinco, a travel advisor at Travel Experts, Inc. in Macon, Ga. "Our services are not for everyone, they are for those that appreciate that they do this for not just a living, but because it is how they make life and travel better. They are the whisper, not the shout out. "Exclusive."

7. Like any professional advisor, they know more than you do.

Should you book that Rhine River cruise heading north or heading south? Travel agents know which hotel rooms have the best view; they know you should renew your passport six months before it expires; they know you should bring your own road maps in Europe because rental car companies don't provide them. They can recommend a private guide instead of a ship excursion, an interesting destination along the way, a chance to get off the beaten track and see something uniquely important to you. Because in this wide and amazing and wonderful world, you just don't know what you don't know.

8. They have your back.

Whether you need an upgrade to an ocean view or a ticket out of harm's way after an earthquake, your travel agent will be there for you, intervening with suppliers on your behalf. When things go wrong, a travel professional knows whom to call to get it fixed on the spot. If your flight is canceled, just have a seat and pick up the phone while the rest of the passengers are lined up trying to rebook. Didn't get the room category you booked? No need to argue with the front desk. One call will get it corrected.

9. They save you so much time and stress.

Sure, reading about places to go is fun and enticing—but planning a trip is stressful. There is so much data available online, in magazines and books, and even on TV. Like a doctor or an accountant, a travel counselor will ask the right questions, listen to your answers,

understand your pain, and offer expert advice to guide you in making one of your most important decisions—how to spend your invaluable time off. Travel agents travel for work, looking at everything from the size of the rooms at hotels and cruise ships to the dining options that are available, onsite and nearby. And if they haven't personally been where you want to go, a colleague has or their preferred tour operators have. They know the hidden gems in a given destination because they've either seen it, or because they listened to the previous client who came home and raved about something they found by chance. They also tend to specialize in destinations or niches like LGBT or Special Needs travel. Every time they travel they are focusing on these details—so customers can just dream about their destination and not have to worry.

10. They can offer customized experiences that no one else can.

A travel professional has the connections to arrange for the side trips, the special passes, the upgrades and little touches that are not available to the general public. From the visa and passport requirements to the name of the maître d' at the best restaurant in town, a good travel agent has the inside information that makes your trip perfect. Because there are no do-overs for a vacation gone wrong. So, ask someone who does—ask your local travel agent!