

Travel Consultant Apprenticeship Standard

Travel consultants have a highly responsible role as they provide outstanding customer service, delivering a range of often complex travel arrangements, accommodation bookings and ancillary services which help to ensure their travellers benefit from journeys and time at their destination that is positive and aims to exceed their expectations. Usually travel consultants specialise in either 'corporate' or 'leisure' travel but either way employers agree that their essential knowledge, skills and behaviours are transferable across the industry.

Definition of corporate and leisure travel consultants

Corporate Travel Consultant	Corporate travel consultants typically work according to service level agreements, taking care of the unique needs of business travellers, and know how to tailor itineraries that ease their door to door experience, taking account of factors that may impact on their trip including location and times, business facilities and corporate budgets. A key part of a corporate travel consultant's role is appreciating that their customer must account for every single expense when travelling for business, and so must ensure travel time is organised and used as effectively as possible, and in compliance with the customer's corporate policy or preferred choices.
Leisure Travel Consultant	Leisure travel consultants work in a fast paced, customer focused sales environment which aims to sell experiences and memories and meet the unique needs of leisure customers by sourcing and matching them to a variety of travel options within their budget including: tailor made itineraries, package holidays, special interest holidays, weddings abroad, cruises and seasonal activity based holidays. A key part of a leisure consultant's role is keeping ahead of the ever increasing demand from customers for new and different leisure experiences.

	Industry Knowledge and Understanding (Know it)	Industry Skills (Show it)	Industry Behaviours (Live it)
Geography	Know a varied range of world-wide geography and popular travel destinations to help inform customers' travel plans	Source and provide reliable and relevant geographical information that will help inform enquiries, support customers' travel decisions and close sales	Proactively keep up to date with worldwide geography and current affairs that could impact on customers
Travel information	Know travel information including: passport and visa requirements, diversity for example local cultures, customs and tradition, differences in time zones, climate, medical safety information, foreign office advice and foreign exchange information	Source and provide accurate and relevant travel information that will ensure customers have a positive travel experience	Proactively keep up to date with travel information according to the customer profile of the business and the ever changing dynamics of the industry
Industry practice	Know the travel industry and the systems that support it, including those for reservations and booking, the importance of booking the correct product / service and key information such as travel terminology, abbreviated industry codes, preferred operators' current fare and ticketing rules, and travel regulations	Carry out transactions, using a range of reservation and booking systems, according to standard industry practices and the procedures of the business, ensuring that customers are offered travel options that will meet their individual needs within agreed deadlines	Take a keen interest in travel industry developments to keep professional knowledge current and up to date
Travel options	Know the variety and alternative combination of travel options that are available to customers including modes of transportation, types of accommodation and how to produce an itinerary that will meet customers' precise needs	Source travel options, work with relevant industry suppliers and produce detailed itineraries that best meet customers' needs	Demonstrate commercial awareness and consideration for customers' unique needs when selecting and combining different elements of customers' travel plans
Product and service	Know the unique selling points of travel products and services and understand how to match their features to benefit the customer and provide an enhanced competitive proposition	Match customer needs to products and services and identify opportunities to upsell, suggest alternatives, introduce an enhanced competitive offer when appropriate and always aim to maximise profit when closing the sale	Promote confidence in customers by demonstrating a passion and belief in the products and services being sold
Customer	Know different customer profiles, including sole travellers and groups, how to recognise and identify their requirements and individual needs, their preferred method(s) of booking travel, the need for providing a flexible service to support the process, and how to meet the increasing demand for an enhanced travel experience	Engage customers by building rapport and take opportunities to adapt communication styles to match their needs and deliver an enhanced service which encourages repeat business and consistently aims to exceed their expectations	Respond positively and imaginatively to customers' requirements, demonstrating an enthusiasm to inspire and delight them

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Legal and compliance	Know how to keep customers' details safely and to lawfully process business transactions, recognising the connection with travel industry regulations, business compliance and relevant legislation	Conduct the business transaction in compliance with travel industry regulations, approved codes of practice and business policy and continuously monitor the process to ensure accurate information and advice is given to customers	Be diligent in upholding protocols and business reputation to ensure customers receive the best quality service and advice and communicate and explain emerging issues and updates
Industry technology	Know how to utilise technology in line with customer and business requirements and the scope of technology used within the business and the industry as a whole	Use technology effectively and efficiently and input data accurately in accordance with business procedures	Use technology responsibly and embrace developments in travel technology
	Generic Knowledge and Understanding (Know it)	Generic Skills (Show it)	Generic Behaviours (Live it)
Business	Know the business vision, objectives and brand standards, the market it competes in, external factors that affect customer behaviour and business performance and understand the importance of meeting customers' needs profitably	Actively support business performance by meeting agreed targets and providing travel solutions for customers varying needs and budgets in a way that is profitable to the business	Engage with the culture and ethos of the business and be a positive advocate and driver for high quality performance and achievement
Sales	Know how to operate commercially with the aim of exceeding sales target, how to calculate complex travel costings, understanding the difference between turnover and profit, and how own targets contribute to achieving the overall sales budget	Achieve and exceed commercial targets by applying selling techniques that are appropriate to all customer types, take opportunities to maximise sales for example by selling promotions and preferred supplier programmes and maximise financial performance by upselling, cross-selling and calculating fares and refunds accurately	Proactively seek ways of engaging customers to increase and enhance sales
Team and personal performance	Know and understand the factors that both motivate and impair individual and team performance and recognise how own and team dynamics impact on the experience of the customer and ultimately business success	Work constructively with team members to deliver travel plans and experiences that meet customer needs and recognise opportunities for self and team development to improve performance	Evaluate own personal performance in a consistently positive and professional manner, take on feedback and welcome personal development opportunities
Communication	Understand how to professionally communicate to different audiences using a variety of methods, including available digital resources	Select and use appropriate methods of communication including digital technologies according to the customer and the nature of the travel details being conveyed, ensuring quotes and prices are presented accurately	Be clear and coherent to effectively communicate accurate and complex information professionally and confidently to a diverse audience, in line with business expectations
Sustainability	Understand the impact that the business activity has on the environment and the organisation's approach to operate in a more responsible and sustainable manner	Adapt working practices to minimise the negative effect on the environment	Demonstrate an on-going commitment to reducing impact on the environment in all work activities

Duration	12 to 24 months depending on prior attainment.
Progression	Individuals that successfully achieve the travel consultant apprenticeship standard will be well placed to progress within the industry into leadership or specialist travel roles and onto a higher level of training or apprenticeship in management.
Level	This standard is set at level 3.
Renewal	The apprenticeship will be reviewed every three years, the first review scheduled for October 2017, unless there is evidence of significant industry change which employers agree warrants earlier amendment.
Recognition	The content of the apprenticeship standard for travel consultants has been approved by the Guild of Travel Management Companies (GTMC) and ABTA the Travel Association.