

# Lunch & Learn – Travel Edition

## Choosing Trip Vendors

### I. Do I Have Enough Information?

- a. Qualify Your Client – Who, What, When, Where, How Much?
  - i. Value your time by asking the right questions up front
  - ii. Don't become their "Personal Google"
  - iii. Have they done any research on this trip, if so, where...
- b. Be the Travel Expert
  - i. Understand Geography
  - ii. Understand the experience they want
  - iii. Leverage your resources and maintain your professional posture. (you can get the answer so don't act like you don't know)

### II. Googling Destinations/Vendors

- a. The "Best Vendor" Myth
  - i. There is NO UNIVERSAL BEST VENDOR – every client's needs are different
  - ii. Understanding the type of vendors that offer what your client needs/wants is key
  - iii. You can't use a cookie-cutter approach based upon other's opinion – you know your client's wishes they don't
  - iv. There are no shortcuts when it comes to research
- b. When Googling a type of trip use the results as a guide to begin your research not as your final answer
- c. Pay attention to the type of websites that come up in the search
  - i. Does it list customer reviews, industry reviews, advertisements, etc.
  - ii. What is the date of the post – the more current the better
  - iii. All rating systems are not created equal
  - iv. Use reputable sources
- d. Be specific in the wording of your search
- e. Use the vendors as a point of reference to begin your research process
  - i. Do not quote from public website – access the Travel Agent Portal

### III. Searching the Travel Cafe

- a. Familiarize yourself with the menu and format of the Travel Cafe
- b. Type destinations/vendors into the Search Bar to gain recommendations
- c. Follow the instructions in the listing regarding registering with the vendor
  - i. If registration requires a Supplier Request Form allow 48 business hours for processing. If you have questions regarding status contact Archer Travel
  - ii. When registering with vendors be sure to register with Archer's IATA Number and Host Agency information and your personal information as

the agent.

**IV. Vendors Other Than Expedia/VAX**

- a. Expedia and the vendors within VAX are great options but not your only options
- b. Consider the type of trip that your client wants – vacation package, land tour, cruise, luxury vs. economy, safari, religious, etc.
- c. Utilize the Search Box inside the Evolution FB Groups FIRST before you type a question.
- d. Other Vendors to Consider: Trafalgar, Globus, Monograms, Goway, Pleasant Holidays, Delta Vacations, and Vacation Express
- e. Excursions: Viator, Shore Excursion Group
- f. Understand which vendors require full payment upfront and which ones allow YOU TO OFFER a payment plan to your client.
  - i. Note the number of days before the trip – this impacts the ability to offer a payment plan or not. Be upfront with your client in the initial qualifying so that you properly set their expectations if they are planning last minute travel
  - ii. Beware and informed of vendors that require credit inquiries to manage payment plans for you
  - iii. You are the Travel Agent – don't shy away from putting in the work to process your client's payments for them – that's why they use you
- g. When choosing a vendor consider their respective commission structures – when possible choose the vendor that you can earn the most from.
- h. Research individual vendor loyalty/rewards programs so that you take advantage of the additional perks you are entitled to as a TA