

REASONS TO USE A TRAVEL AGENT

According to a recent article in the Wall Street Journal (and consumer research conducted by Forrester Research cited in that article) the number of people interested in using a travel agent to book their travel plans has risen 4% over the past two years.

The cost of booking travel was the main focus of The Wall Street Journal article, and travel agencies (including Liberty Travel) certainly made the grade. It has been said before that a traditional travel agency like Liberty Travel will be able to get travelers a better price on their trip than their online, self-service competitors.

There are several reasons for this, including the fact that many travel agents have been working with hotels, airlines, cruise lines, and other providers for decades, and because of these histories can often negotiate better prices for their clients (cruise lines in particular have great relationships with travel agents, and it shows, especially when one looks at the cruise promotions Liberty Travel offers on a regular basis). Because it is common for pricing on travel packages to differ from one retailer to the next, most travel companies, both self-service and traditional, offer some kind of price matching agreement. Liberty Travel has their Price Beat Guarantee, which will beat a competing on a specific vacation package by \$10 per adult and \$5 per child for each member of the traveling party.

Price of course, is a significant factor for many travelers when deciding whether they should book their travel plans with travel agency, but it is by no means the only factor. Booking with a travel agent offers a multitude of advantages over booking with a self-service website.

Just as important as price is value – consumers want a good price but more importantly, they want to get something great for that price, particularly when it is a big purchase like a vacation. As mentioned above, because of great relationships with resorts, hotels, cruise lines and other experience providers, travel agents are in a great position to offer their customers not only a great price, but a great experience for that price. Particularly for travelers looking for something special, unique or out-of-the ordinary, a request from a travel agent from a major agency like Liberty Travel carries a lot of weight.

Right below price and value is time, a precious commodity for consumers with busy week-to-week schedules. Being able to sit down with someone who plans multiple trips on a daily basis can save a lot of time for consumers. It is likely that a lot of questions consumers would have to answer by research, a travel agent can simply answer. They can also advise on hotel comparisons, what fees to expect, things to check out in your destination. Travel agents can also help match your budget and what kind of trip you're looking for with a destination that you can afford an enjoy.

Last, but certainly not least, is the fact that travel agents provide better customer service than a self-service website. As much as the internet improves, it cannot be motivated to book a fantastic vacation, whereas a travel agent will always be motivated to book the best trip possible for their customers. Travel agents want their customers to come back and book with them again, and will go out of their way to make sure each customer has the best experience possible. And should anything go wrong with a travel plan, customers who booked with a travel agent already have a consumer advocate in place (one backed by a major travel company that represents potentially millions of customers

for a hotel, airline or other provider). Travelers who booked with a self-service site will find themselves making phone calls to call centers staffed by people they have never met, who have little to no investment in whether or not the customer comes back to book with them again.

When you're ready to book your vacation with a travel agency, book with Liberty Travel, America's Vacation Experts who have been providing one-on-one travel planning for American consumers since 1951. Call 1.877.Liberty or visit libertytravel.com.

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