

***THE RELATIONSHIP OF TRAVEL AGENTS AND CONSUMER TRAVEL  
MAGAZINES CONCERNING THE TRAVEL DESTINATIONS OF  
TOURISTS USING TRAVEL AGENCIES***

A Senior Thesis

By

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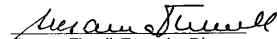
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Concerning the Travel Destinations of Tourists Using Travel Agents**

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More and more people are spending more and more dollars on leisure travel as baby boomers with disposable income have reached the stage in life where they want to "see the world." The world awaits them. Worldwide, the travel industry was worth almost \$500 billion in 1997. Virtually every hamlet in the developed world — not to mention large cities, states and countries — is undertaking some kind of effort to attract tourism dollars. From the locales to the tourists, travel destination is quite important. Also important is travel agents, those professionals who may play a large role in helping tourists determine their travel destinations. Another potentially important factor in determining travel destinations is consumer travel magazines. This study — by way of a survey mailed to 500 randomly-selected travel agents in the U.S. — was designed to learn the relationship, if any, between travel agents and consumer travel magazines, and the effect, if any, of any such relationship on the travel destinations chosen by tourists making use of the services of a travel agency. The study found that travel agents: read consumer travel magazines; believe they have a significant impact on the travel industry; and view the information they glean from such magazines as helpful in their relationships with their clients, but that they are fairly skeptical about relying on the information too heavily.

*The Relationship of Travel Agents and Consumer Travel Magazines  
Concerning the Travel Destinations of Tourists Using Travel Agencies*

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**Introduction**

Worldwide, the travel industry is a \$473 billion segment of the economy.<sup>1</sup> Since an “overwhelming”<sup>2</sup> portion of the total travel expenditure by Americans is spent through U.S. travel agencies, the natural assumption is that travel agents exercise a high degree of influence over how tourists<sup>3</sup> spend their leisure travel dollars, including determining travel destinations.<sup>4</sup> Consumer travel magazines also may play a significant role in how tourists choose to spend their money, including concerning travel destinations, but little is known about the impact of consumer travel magazines on the travel industry — and on travel agents in particular.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Harry Shattuck, “Internet changes the face of travel,” *Houston Chronicle*, March 8, 1998, 1G (“Shattuck”). It is an “industry that is expected to be the largest U.S. private employer by 2000 and [which] currently represents approximately 10% of this country’s private gross domestic product.” C.R. Goeldner, “The 1998 Travel Outlook,” *Journal of Travel Research*, 36-2 (1997): 58, paraphrasing Jonathan M. Tisch of Loews Hotels.

<sup>2</sup>Shattuck, 1G.

<sup>3</sup>The World Tourism Organization in 1991 defined “tourism” as “[t]he activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes.” World Tourism Organization, *Collection of Tourism Expenditure Statistics*, 1995, p. 1. For purposes of this study, “tourism” is limited to leisure travel only.

<sup>4</sup>“Destination” has been defined as “the place visited by a visitor. ... A destination is the basic geographic unit used for the production of tourism statistics.” *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>5</sup>Anecdotally, at least, consumer travel magazines are controversial. “Except in slight and occasional instances, the condition of travel journalism in the United States — the glossy travel magazines, the giddy travel TV shows, in particular — is a public scandal, a disgrace.” Harry

One of the more important decisions that tourists using travel agents must make concerns travel destinations.<sup>6</sup> What, then, is the degree of influence, if any, that travel agents have on travel destination choices, and what is the degree of influence, if any, that consumer travel magazines have on travel agents concerning the travel-destination recommendations and other information they provide to tourists? The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of consumer travel magazines, through travel agents, on the travel destinations of tourists using travel agencies.

It would seem that the travel-agent industry is fast approaching a critical juncture in its history as technology threatens to reduce the need for the “middle-man” function that travel

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Shattuck, “Frommer takes on travel journalism,” *Houston Chronicle*, April 12, 1998, 1G, quoting Arthur Frommer, editor and publisher of *Budget Travel*, a new quarterly magazine, and author of travel guides for more than 40 years. Frommer called such publications and TV shows “inane and irrelevant” and “elitist, haughty, and high-society.” *Ibid.* Concerning his objective, Frommer states that he intends to publish “the first national travel magazine that is relevant to people’s lives.” *Ibid.* Shattuck, the *Houston Chronicle’s* travel editor, does not agree with Frommer’s “blanket condemnation,” listing several publications he thinks belie Frommer’s statements. *Ibid.* “Granted,” though, he said, “the ‘glossy magazines’ to which Frommer refers — the Big Four consisting of *Conde Nast Traveler*, *Travel & Leisure*, *Travel Holiday*, and *National Geographic Traveler* — frequently deposit us in the lap of luxury at exotic destinations.” *Ibid.*, 1G and 6G.

“Travel agents provide a highly customized service that depends on a great deal of personal contact between the agent and the customer.” Ronald E. Goldsmith, Leisa Reinecke Flynn, and Mark Bonn, “An Empirical Study of Heavy Users of Travel Agencies,” *Journal of Travel Research*, 33-1 (1994): 38.

The role of the travel agent in the decision-making process varies enormously. Some customers know what they want and simply want the travel agent to book; increasingly, however, customers are coming to travel agents with a set of broad criteria and are expecting them not only to provide a range of products but also advice and information.

Adele Hodgson, ed., *The Travel and Tourism Industry: Strategies for the Future* (1987): 62.

agencies have performed.<sup>7</sup> Cyberspace travel transactions tripled between 1996 and 1997 — from \$276 million to \$827 million.<sup>8</sup> The Travel Industry Association of America (“TIA”) predicts that by the year 2000 cyberspace travel transactions will reach \$4.7 billion, \$8.9 billion by 2002.<sup>9</sup> “Clearly[,] the Web is revolutionizing the way...consumers plan and buy their travel,” says the president of the TIA, William S. Norman.<sup>10</sup> Further adding to the marginalizing of travel agencies is that travel Web sites and many other types of Web sites contain considerable information about destinations.<sup>11</sup> What travel agents can provide, however, that Web sites cannot

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<sup>7</sup>The first World Conference on Information Technology and Tourism was held in September, 1995, in Kansas City. One of the conclusions drawn there was that:

...the increasing possibilities for individuals to make their own travel arrangements by home computer threatens the very existence of travel agents. Travel agents are realizing that they must provide a value-added service. As travel professionals, their services will be paid as fees by customers, rather than in rebates from the suppliers. In this process of professionalization, travel agents must provide value for money. To the extent that travel agents are able to fill this new role, they will be needed by leisure and corporate travelers.

Robert B. Bentley, “Information technology and tourism: an update,” *Tourism Management*, 17-3 (1996): 142.

<sup>8</sup>Shattuck, 1G.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid. and see* J.R.P. Hanna and R.J. Millar, “Promoting tourism on the Internet,” *Tourism Management*, 18-7 (1997): 469-471, and Marc Gunther, Michael H. Martin, and Eryn Brown, “Travel Planning in Cyberspace,” *Fortune* magazine on-line, <[www.pathfinder.com](http://www.pathfinder.com)>, September 9, 1996. (In the survey that is the subject of this paper, 85% of travel agents indicated they “never” or “infrequently” used the Internet to research locales they had seen in travel magazines.)

<sup>11</sup>“Literally at the click of a finger we can find extensive details about destinations....” Shattuck, 1G.

provide is personalized service.<sup>12</sup> The question that tourists must answer is whether to book travel through a Web site or through the personal attention of a travel agent.<sup>13</sup>

When booking through a travel agent, will the travel agent make recommendations to the client based at all on information contained in consumer travel magazines? In *Travel, Tourism, and Hospitality Research*, an entire chapter is devoted to “Travel and Tourism Information Sources.”<sup>14</sup> One of the chapter’s subtitles is “Periodicals.”<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, of the 34 publications listed, not a single one could be classified as a consumer travel magazine.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>A research report released by TIA in early 1998 projected that “traditional travel agencies will feel the pinch from online competition” but that human interaction would nonetheless continue to be sought out by many persons. *Ibid.*, 5G.

<sup>13</sup>The author of “Internet changes the face of travel,” Harry Shattuck, the travel editor of the *Houston Chronicle*, closed the article by stating that “[g]iven a choice between the marvels of our computerized world and the personalized attention of a fellow human, I’ll take both.” Shattuck, 5G.

<sup>14</sup>J.R. Brent Ritchie and Charles R. Goeldner, eds., *Travel, Tourism, and Hospitality Research*, (1994): 81-90. The chapter’s opening paragraph states:

The number of sources of secondary information available on tourism, travel, and hospitality continues to grow. In the rapidly expanding, dynamic world of tourism, practitioners must know what information is available and where to find it. Information gathering requires a great deal of...tourism executives’ time; yet little exists to guide them to the best sources of data for their particular concerns. Thus, this chapter provides a comprehensive list of the numerous sources along with a summary of the types of information available [in] each.

*Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 84-86.

<sup>16</sup>Some of them could, however, be classified as academic tourism journals. It is doubtful, though, that academic tourism journals are read by very many tourism practitioners. “Hardly any people in the tourism industry read academic journals.” A.V. Seaton, “Blowing the whistle on tourism referees,” *Tourism Management*, 17-6 (1996): 397.

While cyberspace may be a serious threat to travel agencies and travel agents, it is not the only serious threat emanating from technological innovation. Another is virtual reality — “a recent development derived from experiments in computer simulations and new forms of human-computer interfaces.”<sup>17</sup> Virtual reality constitutes what some believe is a serious challenge to “our understanding of the entire travel and tourism industry [because] it will be possible theoretically for complete travel experiences to be taken through virtual reality.”<sup>18</sup> Travel agents, it would seem, face many challenges, many of which involve the quality of service provided. One question to be answered by this study concerns whether travel agents view consumer travel magazines as a part of the solution to the provision of excellent service.

### Literature Review

No published studies were found in which information was sought about the relationship of travel agents, consumer travel magazines, and the travel destinations of tourists using travel agencies. Several related studies were noted, however. A study on measuring the effectiveness of

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<sup>17</sup>Roger Cheong, “The virtual threat to travel and tourism,” *Tourism Management*, 16-6 (1995): 417.

With virtual reality, information is not displayed in two dimensions via the computer monitor; instead, the user finds him/herself in the same dimension as and is immersed within the data. The experience within the realms of virtual reality is augmented with various sensory stimulations such as sight, sound, and even touch, together with their respective feedback. In essence, virtual reality is “a computer-mediated, multisensory experience” that serves to facilitate access into dimensions that differ from our own.

*Ibid.*, 418.

<sup>18</sup>J.S. Perry Hobson, “Virtual reality and tourism: fact or fantasy?,” *Tourism Management*, 16-6 (1995): 425.



destination advertising concluded that the State of Texas' tourism advertising expenditures in 1992 and 1993 had yielded \$401.87 for every dollar spent.<sup>19</sup> The study was based on information gleaned directly from tourists and did not concern travel agencies or travel agents.<sup>20</sup> One study that did concern travel agents had to do with evaluating the advice they give tourists on health issues.<sup>21</sup> The authors noted "a paucity of research on how travel agents fulfill their role in the tourism distribution channel or how tourists perceive the service they offer."<sup>22</sup> Another study sought to determine the role of "awareness" and "familiarity" with destination.<sup>23</sup> The authors noted that previous researchers "referring to the importance of a positive image concluded that advertising is an effective means by which to improve [a destination's image]."<sup>24</sup> The authors of

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<sup>19</sup>Edward G. McWilliams and John L. Crompton, "An expanded framework for measuring the effectiveness of destination advertising," *Tourism Management*, 18-3 (1997): 135.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 131-32.

<sup>21</sup>G. Lawton and S. Page, "Evaluating travel agents' provision of health advice to travellers," *Tourism Management*, 18-2 (1997): 89-104.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 90.

Travel agents are an important source of information and advice on many aspects of holiday planning, yet few studies have explicitly examined this aspect of information provision in the tourism industry. Research has...indicated that...nearly 70% of travellers travelling to an unknown destination used a travel agent and valued their agent's recommendations over personal recommendations by friends.

*Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup>Ady Milman and Abraham Pizam, "The Role of Awareness and Familiarity with a Destination: The Central Florida Case," *Journal of Travel Research*, 33-3 (1995): 21-27.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 23.

Recognizing the importance of awareness and positive image, many

the more recent study, however, reached the conclusion that advertising was not an effective means of attracting tourists.<sup>25</sup>

### **Method**

A survey instrument was developed and mailed to 500 travel agencies nationwide after being pre-tested by a highly-experienced travel agent in College Station, Texas. A number of suggestions made by this person were incorporated into the survey instrument which was ultimately distributed. The travel agencies to which the questionnaire was mailed were chosen by systematic selection from the American Society of Travel Agents world membership directory, 1997-98 edition. First, the number of pages in the directory containing addresses for U.S. travel agencies was ascertained. Second, the number of addresses per page was ascertained. Third, the two figures were multiplied to discover the total number of U.S. travel agency addresses contained in the directory. The number of pages, 222, was multiplied by the number of addresses

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tourist destinations have been involved in extensive public relations campaigns aimed at developing awareness through press relations, product publicity, and other communications processes.

*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 27.

[D]estination managers should notice that the most effective way of creating a positive image of the destination and increasing the interest in and likelihood of visiting it is through trial-purchase, or, in other words, first visitation. Therefore, if the aim is to encourage consumers to try a particular tourism destination for the first time in order to create satisfaction, future revisitation, and brand loyalty, then these managers ought to seriously question the wisdom of spending millions of dollars on advertising campaigns aimed primarily at destination awareness development.

*Ibid.*

per page, 111, for a total of 24,642 addresses. That figure was then divided by the survey size, 500, equaling 49.284; consequently, every 49<sup>th</sup> address was chosen, using random selection to determine on which page and column of addresses the counting would begin.

The title of the questionnaire, "Individual Travel Survey for Travel Agents," made it clear that the instrument was to be answered by a travel agent. An introductory bold-faced statement noted that the instrument concerned "vacationing travelers" and not "business travelers." The questionnaire was mailed in November, 1997, and a follow-up mailing was effected in January, 1998. The return rate was 25.2%. The 58-item questionnaire, which is appended to this paper, was designed to seek answers to the following research questions:<sup>26</sup>

1. Does degree of experience as a travel agent affect the degree, if any, to which travel agents use consumer travel magazines to aid in delivering services to their clients?

2. Do — and, if so, to what extent — travel agents use consumer travel magazines to aid in delivering services to their clients?

3. If travel agents use consumer travel magazines to aid in delivering services to their clients, how do they do so?

4. Do — and, if so, to what extent — clients of travel agents use consumer travel magazines in interacting with their travel agents?

5. If clients of travel agents use consumer travel magazines in interacting with their travel agents, how do they do so?

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<sup>26</sup> "Tourism is a complex and highly fragmented activity, whose very diverse nature presents special challenges for data collectors." *Travel and Tourism Data* (1989): 3.

## Limitations

The informative but otherwise fairly small number of respondents to the survey limits generalizability. There seemingly was slight confusion about whether the survey sought respondents' views concerning *consumer* travel magazines, *trade industry* travel magazines, or both. One respondent circled the term "travel magazines" in the introductory note to the survey and then wrote: "You need to distinguish between industry publications, e.g., *Travel Weekly*, *Travel Agent*, *Travel Age*, and consumer publications, e.g., *Conde Nast*, *Travel & Leisure*, etc. My answers herein are based on industry publications. Belatedly, I think you wanted the other." Another respondent commented: "By travel magazines, I have assumed you mean *Conde Nast* or similar magazines and not magazines geared for travel agents, such as *Travel Age West*, which clients would not have access to." Precisely because tourists would not have "access" to travel-industry trade magazines, the author believed the respondents would understand that the questionnaire was seeking information concerning *consumer* travel magazines; consequently, this study assumes that the respondents, in fact, understood the type of travel magazines concerning which research data was being sought.

Further, because there was no practical way to distinguish between travel agencies oriented to business service and those oriented to tourism, the survey was mailed to travel agencies in general. It is likely, then, that some of the respondents, though probably only a few, represent business-oriented travel agencies. For instance, one respondent noted: "I do both corporate and leisure but much more corporate." Finally, it may also be a limitation that some of the questions in the survey assumed travel agents read consumer travel magazines. The

possibility that some travel agents were “forced” to answer questions that did not relate to them is lessened considerably, however, by the fact that virtually all of them indicated that they do read such magazines.

## **Results and Analysis**

### **Travel-Agent Demographics**

To get a picture of the travel-agent respondents to the survey, a variety of demographic questions were posed. Exactly two-thirds of the respondents were female, reflecting the general perception that the travel agency business is staffed heavily by women. Belying the idea that travel agents are quite young, only 2% of the respondents indicated they are in their 20s. A plurality of 36% are in their 40s, while 33% are in their 50s, 16% are in their 30s, and 14% are over 60.<sup>27</sup>

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**Table 1**

<b>Age Range of Travel Agents</b>	
<b>20 to 30</b>	<b>02%</b>
<b>31 to 40</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>41 to 50</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>51 to 60</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>61 plus</b>	<b>14%</b>

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Apparently, becoming a travel agent is not what a person does late in her or his professional career. Only 2.8% of the respondents 61 and older had less than 10 years'

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<sup>27</sup>Because of the rounding of percentages to whole numbers (up and down), the total percentage for any question reported could be 99%, 100%, or 101%.

experience as a travel agent, but 17.8% had more than 10 years' experience. The prime years for working as a travel agent were 41 to 60, with 75% of the respondents having less than 10 years' experience falling into that age range and 65% of the respondents having more than 10 years' experience falling into that age range.

Sixty-three percent of the respondents reported having a college degree. Interestingly, however, only 13% of those reporting a degree said it was in tourism or a closely-related field. Not surprisingly, 72% of the respondents with less than 10 years' experience as a travel agent reported a college degree as compared with 59% of the respondents with more than 10 years' experience reporting a college degree. Interestingly, however, for *none* of the respondents with a college degree and less than 10 years' experience was the degree in tourism, while for 16% of the respondents with more than 10 years' experience, the degree was in tourism. Given the fairly low number of respondents, this result could be anomalous, but it could mean that travel agencies hiring travel agents in the 1990s want them to have a college degree but are not concerned with whether their specific major was tourism.<sup>28</sup> That 83% of the respondents are in their 40s, 50s, or beyond is borne out by the number of years the respondents reported having been a travel agent. Seventy-one percent indicated they had been a travel agent for more than a decade, 13% had been in the business from seven to ten years, and 16% had put in from one to six years.

The United States Census divides the country into nine regions. These regions were used in the survey to ask the location of the travel agency where the responding travel agent works:

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<sup>28</sup>The survey instrument asked no questions concerning non-college training or education in the travel industry --- either at the entry level or at the advanced Certified Tourism Counselor level.

24% work in the South Atlantic region, 22% in the Pacific region, 16% in the Middle Atlantic region, 14% in the East North Central region, 11% in the Mountain region, 3% each in the New England, West North Central, and West South Central regions, and 2% in the East South Central region. Finally, as indicated earlier, virtually all (95%) of the respondents are full-time travel agents.

### **The Travel Agent**

One of the more fundamentally important questions in the survey concerned whether the travel agents themselves read consumer travel magazines. The answer was a resounding “yes” at 98%. Seventy-six percent reported that they renewed expired subscriptions to such magazines, 11% replied that they did not, seven percent indicated the question was not applicable to them, and six percent did not answer the question. That only 6% of the respondents did not answer the question supports the idea that only 2% of the respondents do not read such magazines at all.

How travel agents view their role is important to the overall question of whether and to what extent they use consumer travel magazines in their work. Thirty-one percent said they viewed their principal role as booking travel plans, 43% said they viewed their principal role as developing travel ideas for tourists, 12% thought their principal role was something other than the two, and 14% responded that they thought their principal role was equally divided between booking activities and more qualitative activities. Perhaps reflecting a shift in the nature of travel agency business, 50% of the respondents with less than 10 years’ experience said developing travel ideas was their principal role, while only 40% of the respondents with more than 10 years’ experience said developing travel ideas was their principal role.

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**Table 2**

**Self-Perceived Principal Role of Travel Agents  
With Less Than 10 Years' Experience**

<b>Booking travel plans</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Developing travel ideas for clients</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Other principal role</b>	<b>06%</b>
<b>Booking/developing ideas role equal</b>	<b>08%</b>

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**Self-Perceived Principal Role of Travel Agents  
With More Than 10 Years' Experience**

<b>Booking travel plans</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Developing travel ideas for clients</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Other principal role</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Booking/developing ideas role equal</b>	<b>16%</b>

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Consumer travel magazines are plentiful around travel agencies, according to the respondents, 87% of whom indicated that from one to six such magazines were received by the agency (whether weekly or monthly, etc.). The agents viewed the role of the magazines themselves as significant in the success of the tourism industry, 56% viewing them as somewhat significant and 14% viewing them as very significant; only 1% thought they played no role at all. Another pivotal question concerned the frequency with which a consumer travel magazine had in some way influenced any advice or recommendations given by a travel agent to a client. Almost three-quarters of the respondents, or 72%, said such magazines had influenced their advice sometimes or frequently, 24% said any such influence occurred only infrequently, and 4% said they never were influenced by consumer travel magazines in any advice given to clients. The 4%



figure would seem to reflect the small group of travel agents who profess not to read consumer travel magazines at all.

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**Table 3**

**Frequency of Consumer Travel Magazine Influence  
on Advice or Recommendations Given to Clients**

<b>Never</b>	<b>04%</b>
<b>Infrequently</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>58%</b>
<b>Frequently</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	<b>01%</b>

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In terms of which part of consumer travel magazines travel agents find most useful in benefitting their clients, "feature stories" is the favorite of 62% of the respondents, while 13%

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**Table 4**

**Travel Magazine Part Most Beneficial  
Concerning Advice or Recommendations Given to Clients**

<b>None</b>	<b>02%</b>
<b>Advertisements</b>	<b>06%</b>
<b>Feature Stories</b>	<b>62%</b>
<b>Letters to the Editor</b>	<b>02%</b>
<b>Sightseeing Information</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Other Magazine Parts</b>	<b>01%</b>
<b>All Magazine Parts</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Answer Missing</b>	<b>02%</b>

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indicated that all the categories were "most beneficial," 12% said information about sightseeing

trips was the most beneficial to them in advising clients, 6% indicated that the advertisements were the most helpful, and 2% said none of the categories listed were helpful — likely again reflecting the small number of travel agents who do not read consumer travel magazines.

Among the more important advice that a travel agent gives a client concerns travel destinations for the simple reason that a good travel destination equals a happy client and a bad travel destination equals an unhappy client — perhaps even a very unhappy client. Good information about travel destinations — especially for travel agents not having visited the particular locale — is essential to giving clients good advice. Travel agents were asked how often they found that “locale” stories in consumer travel magazines accurately described the locale: 42% thought frequently, another 42% thought sometimes, 10% thought infrequently, 4% very frequently, and 2% (the same 2% who never read such magazines?) thought never. That 84% of the respondents thought the information provided about locales in feature stories is accurate sometimes or frequently suggests that consumer travel magazines are at least somewhat informationally reliable. Perhaps reflecting knowledge acquired by personal observation, 46% of the respondents with more than 10 years’ experience said they frequently believed that “locale” stories in consumer travel magazines accurately described the “locale” portrayed, while only 33% of the respondents with less than 10 years’ experience said they frequently believed that “locale” stories in consumer travel magazines accurately described the “locale” portrayed. It also could be that travel agents newer to the business simply are more skeptical of what they read in consumer travel magazines about travel destinations.

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**Table 5**

**Frequency of Accuracy of Locale Portrayal in Consumer Travel Magazines  
As Perceived by Travel Agents With Less Than 10 Years' Experience**

<b>Never</b>	<b>06%</b>
<b>Infrequently</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>Frequently</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	<b>06%</b>

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**Frequency of Accuracy of Locale Portrayal in Consumer Travel Magazines  
As Perceived by Travel Agents With More Than 10 Years' Experience**

<b>Never</b>	<b>01%</b>
<b>Infrequently</b>	<b>09%</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>Frequently</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	<b>02%</b>

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Even though travel agents do not find locale information derived from feature stories in consumer travel magazines to be more than sometimes inaccurate, they nonetheless do not use such information frequently in "promoting" travel destinations to their clients. Exactly one-half of the respondents said they used such information to promote locales to the clients only sometimes, while 33% responded at the infrequently level, and 12% said they never used such information for promotional purposes. In other words, while travel agents find the information basically accurate, they do not place enough trust in it to recommend that their clients go to such destinations on that basis alone. On the subject of consumer travel magazines containing useful information about weekend trips, almost two-thirds of the respondents agreed (48%, sometimes;

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**Table 6**

**Frequency of Consulting Consumer Travel Magazine  
Concerning Discounts and Special Activities for Children**

<b>Never</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Infrequently</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Frequently</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	<b>05%</b>

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16% frequently). Concerning advantages for children traveling with adults, such as discounts and special activities, travel agents were quite split on whether they consulted consumer travel magazines for such information: 21% said never, 25% said infrequently; 28% said sometimes; 21% said frequently, and 5% said very frequently.

Cruise ships, of course, are not a specific geographic location, but they are in the nature of a travel destination because the cruising tourist necessarily must visit (at least the harbor of) the ports of call of the cruise chosen. There is intense competition for tourists in the cruise-line industry, and considerable information is published about the various cruise lines, their ships, and their ships' itineraries in consumer travel magazines. Several questions in the survey focused on whether — and, if so, how — travel agents used such information in advising clients. Travel agents were asked their basis for promoting particular cruises. None said they did so on the basis of advertisements in consumer travel magazines, 45% said they promoted particular cruises based on information returned to them by their satisfied clients, and 38% said they promoted particular cruises on some basis other than those listed in the question (word of mouth, magazine

advertisements, incentives provided to travel agents by cruise lines, and not promoting particular cruises on any basis). While the respondents said they do not promote particular cruises based on consumer travel magazine advertisements, more than a third of them say they use information about cruise lines gleaned from such advertising in discussing travel plans with clients. Sixty-one percent, however, said they infrequently or never use such information.

As with cruise lines, hotels are not themselves geographic locations, but they are very important to clients' degree of enjoyment at the travel destination. Travel agents were asked how often they had booked a particular hotel for a client based on an advertisement for the hotel noted in a consumer travel magazine. Forty-three percent said they had done so sometimes, but 52% said they had done so only infrequently or never. Finally, travel agents were asked two questions about "letters to the editor" in consumer travel magazines. Of all the questions in the survey concerning consumer travel magazines which listed "very frequently" as a possible choice, the question asking travel agents how often they read the letters to the editor in consumer travel

**Table 7**

**Frequency of Reading "Letters to the Editor"  
in Consumer Travel Magazines**

<b>Never</b>	<b>06%</b>
<b>Infrequently</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Frequently</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	<b>21%</b>

magazines was answered "very frequently" by two to one more than any other question. Twenty-

one percent of the respondents said they read the letters very frequently, 25% said frequently, 28% said sometimes, 20% said infrequently, and 6% said never, meaning that 94% of the respondents read such letters at least sometimes. The survey did not attempt to address the idea of why travel agents read such letters, but it did ask whether the travel agents found such letters useful in discussing travel plans with clients. Of those respondents who answered other than never to the threshold question, 60% said they sometimes or frequently did so, and 33% said they did so infrequently or never.

### **The Client**

From the answers to these questions, it is clear that travel agents use and value consumer travel magazines, but what indication do agents have that their clients, in general, interact with such magazines? Do clients want to talk about “letters to the editor” they have read in such magazines, do they bring the agents specific information from such magazines, do clients say they have called toll-free telephone numbers in response to advertising in such magazines, do agents notice a difference in tourism expenditure levels between clients who refer to such magazines and those who do not, and do clients ever complain to travel agents after-the-fact about not having liked a travel destination suggested to the client by the agent on the basis of the agent having read about the locale in a consumer travel magazine?

“Letters to the editor,” which can be quite spicy in consumer travel magazines, may get read by both travel agents and their clients, but 90% of agents say their clients do not bring them up in discussion. While some clients bring specific information from consumer travel magazines to travel agents, most do not — 59% never or only infrequently doing so, although 41%, a large minority, do so sometimes or frequently. That 86% of the respondents reported that their clients

**Table 8**

**Frequency of Clients Bringing Information  
From Consumer Travel Magazines to Travel Agents**

<b>Never</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Infrequently</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Frequently</b>	<b>09%</b>
<b>Very Frequently</b>	<b>01%</b>

bring them specific information from consumer travel magazines at least infrequently is some indication that tourism clients read and seem to value (or at least are curious about) some of the articles or advertisements contained in consumer travel magazines.

On the subject of clients mentioning to agents the calling of toll-free telephone numbers gleaned from advertisements in consumer travel magazines, almost half of the respondents, 48%, indicated that clients did so sometimes, while 41% said they never or infrequently did. Another interesting question is whether there is a difference in tourism expenditures between clients who refer to consumer travel magazines in discussions with their agents and those who do not. Agents were asked whether they had noticed a difference in tourism expenditures between consumer travel magazine “mentioners” and “non-mentioners,” with 71% indicating they had not noticed a difference. On the question of whether clients complained after-the-fact to agents who recommended a travel destination based on information gleaned from a consumer travel magazine, 95% of agents said this never or only infrequently occurred. It seems clear that to

whatever extent tourists who use travel agencies read consumer travel magazines, they do not discuss them very meaningfully with their travel agents.

### **Comments of Survey Respondents**

At the end of the survey instrument, approximately a third of a page (standard-sized paper) was lined and left available for the general comments of the respondents, who were told in a prefacing statement to add any comments they might like to make. Of the 126 respondents to the survey, 25, or just less than 20%, chose to comment. Their comments follow, arranged in categories created by the author to facilitate their presentation. Interestingly, the bulk of these comments would seem to suggest that travel agents place little value or sense of reliability on consumer travel magazines — in some opposition to the survey’s statistical findings.

#### **Comments Concerning Using or Not Using Consumer Travel Magazines**

“I read lots of travel magazines, but, as a rule, my clients don’t.”

“1) Compare travel magazines with other resources in terms of usage and application. 2) Have each agent define individual view of principal role.”

“Most of our travelers are couples or families. The use of professional travel writers traveling alone cannot really provide a useful critique of travel, accommodations, or tour experiences. Exotic and adventure tours and travel experiences and out of the ordinary are nice to read about as entertainment but not very useful for the bulk of our clients.”

“We use travel magazines as a guide — for information — but we do not [use them to make destination suggestions to our clients] until we verify details about hotels, air fare specials, location, weather....”

“I have finished my CTC [Certified Travel Counselor] designation and take groups out all over the world, so I have personal knowledge to use.”

“The articles in [consumer travel] magazines are always very positive. They never, to my knowledge, contain criticisms. *Conde Nast Traveler* gives me the most negatives. I try to go myself — and have over the years. The computer [as a source of destination information] is more realistic.”



"I have been involved in travel work more than 40 years — 10 with an airline and 34 with a travel agency. Too many travel magazines write favorably about their advertisers on a very biased basis. For U.S.A. travel, I find AAA tour books the best one source for leisure travel information (and they do not pay me to say so). Tourist offices and personal travel experiences have been the best for international information."

"Recent actions by airlines worldwide have turned the whole industry upside down. Travel magazines *never* give correct information on rates because of their constant changes. The magazines are excellent for the 'out of the ordinary' but have little for the average tour/cruise participant that is meaningful."

"Ours is a mainly leisure-oriented business. All the travel agents are well traveled, literate, and capable. There is literally no area we have not visited except the North Pole. We visit locales like the Caribbean, Europe, Asia, Indonesia, etc., every year. Have traveled on all cruise lines. We offer our experiences and expertise — and we charge for our professional knowhow."

"It is my belief that most travel agents don't have the time to read commercial travel magazines, and, over the years, they can be repetitive. Most travel agents have little time to read our trade papers, which provide necessary information. I personally juggle between magazine subscriptions so that I get a variety of opinion."

"Travel magazines are really lousy and very incorrect. They must be paid by the location!"

"I don't have time every week to read all my trades, but for the most updated and pertinent information, I turn to *Travel Agent* first, *Travel Trade* second, and then catch up as time allows on others."

"I do not really value most of the information in travel magazines. I consider them to be biased sources influenced by the payment of advertising dollars to the magazine."

"The secret of the travel business is knowledgeable employees and no turnover."

"You need to distinguish between industry publications, e.g., *Travel Weekly*, *Travel Agent*, *Travel Age*, and consumer publications, e.g., *Conde Nast*, *Travel & Leisure*, etc. My answers herein are based on industry publications. Belatedly, I think you wanted the other."

"By travel magazines, I have assumed you mean *Conde Nast* or similar magazines and not magazines geared for travel agents, such as *Travel Age West*, which clients would not have access to. Most agents do not have the time to read newsstand travel magazines, and I don't know any agents that would be influenced by such magazines."

### **Limitations on Usefulness of Response to Survey**

“I should point out that I am the GM [general manager], and not a booking agent. Also, the numbers I have used are for the office as a whole, not, e.g., for an average agent. Finally, we are heavily corporate.”

“I do both corporate and leisure but much more corporate.”

### **Miscellaneous**

“[The] Internet will drastically change the dying travel industry, as the airlines would love to see.”

“Question 38: Most travel agencies do not handle people utilizing local buses or traveling by car. Question 1: Our office is not equipped with Internet yet. Therefore, we cannot use it.”

“I am trying to figure out why you are asking about travel magazines; is this what the students are preparing for?”

“I think it would have been interesting to see how many travel agents had completed their CTC (certified travel counselor) designations.”

Three commentators stated only that they wished to be mailed the survey results.

### **Conclusions**

The typical travel agent is female, on the high side of middle-aged, has more than 10 years' experience as a travel agent, has a college degree but not in tourism, and works full time in the job. While the vast majority of travel agents — female, male, younger, older, highly experienced, less experienced, college degree, no college degree, full time, part-time — read consumer travel magazines, they express a certain ambivalence about their usefulness and reliability. Older, more experienced travel agents are more likely to view their principal role as booking travel plans for clients, while younger, less experienced travel agents are more likely to view their principal role as helping their clients develop travel ideas. The distinction, however,

may be more statistical than actual because many travel agents also reported that they could not place one role over the other.

Clearly, consumer travel magazines are received by travel agencies, and seventy percent of the respondents said the role of such magazines was somewhat significant or very significant, with just short of three-quarters of the respondents reporting that such magazines had sometimes or frequently influenced the advice they gave their clients. Almost two-thirds of the respondents indicated that “feature stories” were the most helpful single part of such magazines, and 84% thought the information on “locales” provided in feature stories in consumer travel magazines was sometimes or frequently accurate, but only half of the respondents used such information to promote locales to their clients and 33% did so only infrequently.

Interestingly, information on cruises and cruise lines contained in consumer travel magazines was reported by the respondents to be used not at all in making recommendations to their clients. Clearly, travel agents value their own personal cruise experiences and the experiences of returning travelers much more than any cruise information contained in such magazines. Information concerning hotels in consumer travel magazines, however, is treated somewhat differently by travel agents — just less than half indicating that they sometimes use such information to book hotel stays for their clients.

Seventy-four percent of the respondents reported reading “letters to the editor” in consumer travel magazines, and 60% of that group said they sometimes or frequently found such letters useful in discussing travel plans with clients. This set of statistics is understandable as being in agreement with the response that many travel agents find information from returning cruise travelers meaningful. Information provided by returning passengers and statements made

in letters to the editor are unscientific, of course, but it is understandable as a matter of common sense that anecdotal information, especially where the source is known to the audience, is respected. At least infrequently, 86% of clients refer to information gleaned from consumer travel magazines in discussing travel plans with their travel agents, a serious indication that clients read and place at least some value on information contained in consumer travel magazines.

The research questions may be answered thusly:

1. More experienced travel agents use consumer travel magazines in their work to a slight extent higher than do less experienced travel agents.

2. Without regard to experience level, travel agents do use consumer travel magazines in their work — and at a moderate level of involvement.

3. The way in which travel agents use consumer travel magazines in their work is as a source of various types of information, with specific exceptions (such as cruise information), but they are somewhat skeptical of relying on such information too heavily.

4. Although the survey was of travel agents and not the clients of travel agents, it is reasonable to conclude from the information gleaned from the travel agents concerning their knowledge of whether their clients read consumer travel magazines that such magazines are in general read by clients of travel agents.

5. On the same basis as in question 4., it is also reasonable to conclude that clients of travel agents, in reading consumer travel magazines, view the information contained in them (construed unfavorably) with some skepticism or (construed favorably) at least with curiosity.

## Attachment "A"

## Individual Travel Survey for Travel Agents

This survey has been designed to gather data for research on the use of travel magazines. The results of the survey will be used in an independent study course in the Texas A&M University Fellows Honors Program. Its main purpose is to help determine the relationship between travel magazines and the travel industry. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability and return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope. Your cooperation with this survey is greatly appreciated and will be most helpful. If you would be interested in receiving a copy of the results of this survey, please so indicate at the end of the survey. Thank you.

**Note: Please answer this questionnaire as concerns vacationing travelers and NOT as concerns business travelers and please mark only 1 choice per question.**

1. How often do you, as a travel agent, use the Internet to research various locales you have seen in travel magazines?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1)Never. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2)Infrequently.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3)Sometimes.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4)Frequently.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 5)Very Frequently.
2. If you answered other than "never" to question #1, what is the most frequent principal target of your investigation?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1)Airlines. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2)Cruises.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3)The locale itself, including sightseeing or tour information.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4)Other: Specify \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 5)All.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 6)Not applicable.
3. Which area of Internet information from travel magazines do your clients seem to be the most interested in?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1)Airlines. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2)Cruises.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3)The locale itself, including sightseeing or tour information.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4)Other: Specify \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 5)All.
4. How often do you look for information in travel magazines concerning advantages for children, such as discounts and special activities?  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1)Never. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2)Infrequently.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3)Sometimes.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4)Frequently.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 5)Very Frequently.

Please rank the following questions as to what the majority of your clients think is most important:

5. Does the hotel cater to children? \_\_\_\_\_ 1)Very important. \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Important. \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Not important. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Does the hotel cater to senior citizens? \_\_\_\_\_ 1)Very important. \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Important. \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Not important. \_\_\_\_\_

7. How often have you had any clients discuss with you "letters to the editor" they have read in travel magazines? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Never.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Infrequently.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Sometimes.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Frequently.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Very Frequently.
8. How often have any of your clients ever brought information to you from a travel magazine? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Never.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Infrequently.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Sometimes.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Frequently.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Very Frequently.
9. How often has a client told you he or she has used an 800 phone number to get more information concerning an advertisement in a travel magazine? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Never.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Infrequently.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Sometimes.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Frequently.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Very Frequently.
10. How often have any of your clients complained about being dissatisfied after visiting a particular locale that you recommended because of a story on it you read in a travel magazine? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Never.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Infrequently.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Sometimes.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Frequently.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Very Frequently.
11. How many travel magazines does your travel agency receive? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) None.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2) 1 to 3.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3) 4 to 6.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4) 7 to 10.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5) more than 10.
12. How often has a travel magazine influenced the advice you have given clients? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Never.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Infrequently.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Sometimes.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Frequently.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Very Frequently.
13. How often has a representative from a travel magazine contacted you concerning the magazine? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Never.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Infrequently.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Sometimes.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Frequently.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Very Frequently.

14. How often do you read the "letters to the editor" in travel magazines? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1)Never.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Infrequently.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Sometimes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4)Frequently.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5)Very Frequently.

15. If you answered other than "never" to question #14, how often have you found such letters useful in discussing travel plans with clients? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1)Never.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Infrequently.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Sometimes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4)Frequently.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5)Very Frequently.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6)Not applicable.

16. Based on your knowledge of the travel industry, how often do you find that "locale" stories in travel magazines accurately describe the locales written about? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1)Never.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Infrequently.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Sometimes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4)Frequently.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5)Very Frequently.

17. How often have you promoted a locale because of a story you read in a travel magazine? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1)Never.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Infrequently.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Sometimes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4)Frequently.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5)Very Frequently.

18. How often have you found useful information concerning weekend trips in travel magazines? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1)Never.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Infrequently.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Sometimes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4)Frequently.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5)Very Frequently.

19. How significant is the role of travel magazines in the success of the tourism industry? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1)No role.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Not very significant.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Not significant or insignificant.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4)Somewhat significant.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5)Very significant.

20. When you promote particular cruises, it is primarily because of: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1)Word of mouth from previous cruisers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Travel magazine advertisements.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Cruise lines giving travel agents incentives to book trips.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4)Other: Specify \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5)I do not promote particular cruises.



21. How often have you used information about a cruise line from an advertisement in a travel magazine in discussing travel plans with a client? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Never.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Infrequently.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Sometimes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Frequently.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Very Frequently.

22. How often have you contacted a particular hotel for a client because of an advertisement you saw in a travel magazine? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Never.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Infrequently.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Sometimes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Frequently.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Very Frequently.

23. What part of travel magazines is the most beneficial to you in helping your clients? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) None.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Advertisements for hotels, airlines, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Feature stories.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Letters to the editor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Information about sightseeing trips.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6) Other: Specify \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7) All.

24. Which of the following cruise lines that advertise in travel magazines do your clients travel on the most? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Big Red Boat.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Carnival.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Norwegian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Princess.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Royal Caribbean.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6) Other: Specify \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7) All.

25. Have you noticed a difference in the tourism expenditures between those clients who refer to travel magazines and those clients who do not mention any such publications? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Yes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) No.

26. If you answered yes to question #25, do you find that clients that refer to travel magazines generally spend more or less on tourism? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) More.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Less.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Not applicable.

27. What is the age range of the largest group of your clients? \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) 20 years or younger.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) 20 to 30 years.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) 30 to 40 years.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) 40 to 50 years.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5) over 50 years.

28. Of those clients that you deal with directly, the majority are: \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Male.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Female.

29. What is the educational level of the largest group of your clients? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) High school graduate.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Bachelor's degree.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Master's degree.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Doctoral degree.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Professional degree.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 6) I do not know.
30. What is the profession of the largest group of your clients? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Student
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Clerical.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Professional.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Retired.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Other: Specify \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 6) I do not know.
31. Where do the majority of your clients plan trips to? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) The United States.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2) The Caribbean.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Mexico.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Canada.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Europe.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 6) Asia.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 7) Other: Specify \_\_\_\_\_
32. What source do you think most of your clients use to learn of particular locales? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Guidebooks.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Travel magazines.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Visitor's bureaus.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Word of mouth.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Travel agents.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 6) Other: Specify \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 7) I do not know.
33. What type of accommodations do most of your clients prefer? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Hotel/motel.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Cruise ships.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Staying with friends.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Camp grounds.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Staying with relatives.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 6) Bed and Breakfast.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 7) Other: Specify \_\_\_\_\_
34. How many of your clients request "non-smoking" travel arrangements? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) None
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2) 10%-25%.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3) 25%-50%.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4) 50%-75%.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5) more than 75%.

Please rank the following characteristics as to what you think the majority of your clients think is most important:

35. The location of a hotel. \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Very important \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Important. \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Not important. \_\_\_\_\_

36. The price of a hotel. \_\_\_\_\_ 1)Very important. \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Important. \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Not important. \_\_\_\_\_
37. The name of a hotel. \_\_\_\_\_ 1)Very important. \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Important. \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Not important. \_\_\_\_\_
38. The majority of your clients that are traveling on vacation within the continental United States seem to prefer to travel by: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1)Airplane.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Private car.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Rental car.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4)Train.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5)City bus.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 6)Tour bus.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 7)Other: Specify \_\_\_\_\_.
39. During which part of the year do you assist clients most? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1)Spring.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Summer.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Fall.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4)Winter.
40. For whom do you plan most trips? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1)Individuals.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Couples.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Groups of friends.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4)Tour groups.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5)Other: Specify \_\_\_\_\_.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 6)All.
41. How often do you book trips for clients on any of the "short notice" programs? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1)Never.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Infrequently.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Sometimes.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4)Frequently.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5)Very Frequently.
42. What is the average number of clients (in real numbers) you work with per week? \_\_\_\_\_
43. If a client requests help with travel plans for a specific locale that you believe to be unsatisfactory, how often do you inform your client of your opinion? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1)Never.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Infrequently.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Sometimes.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4)Frequently.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5)Very Frequently.
44. In assisting clients with travel plans, what do they request to see or do the most while at a particular locale? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1)Tourist attractions.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2)Historical sites.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3)Theaters.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4)Museums.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5)Night life events.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 6)Other: Specify \_\_\_\_\_.

45. What is the time frame used by most of your clients when booking a trip? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1) Within 1 month prior to the departure date.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2) 3 to 6 months prior to the departure date.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3) More than 6 months prior to the departure date.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4) Other: Specify \_\_\_\_\_
46. What principal role do you, as a travel agent, view yourself as having? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1) Booking travel plans.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2) Developing travel ideas for clients.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3) Other: Specify \_\_\_\_\_
47. What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1) Male.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2) Female.
48. What is your age range? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1) 20-30.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2) 31-40.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3) 41-50.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4) 51-60.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 5) 61+.
49. Do you have a college degree? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1) Yes. \_\_\_\_\_ 2) No.
50. If you answered "yes" to #49, is your degree in tourism or a closely-related field? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1) Yes. \_\_\_\_\_ 2) No. \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Not applicable.
51. How many years have you been a travel agent? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1) 1 to 3 years.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2) 4 to 6 years.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3) 7 to 10 years.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4) More than 10 years.
52. What is the regional location of your travel agency? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1) New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT).  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2) Middle Atlantic (NJ, NY, PA).  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3) East North Central (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI).  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4) West North Central (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD).  
\_\_\_\_\_ 5) South Atlantic (DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV).  
\_\_\_\_\_ 6) East South Central (AL, KY, MS, TN).  
\_\_\_\_\_ 7) West South Central (AR, LA, OK, TX).  
\_\_\_\_\_ 8) Mountain (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY).  
\_\_\_\_\_ 9) Pacific (AK, CA, HI, OR, WA).
53. Are you presently employed as a full-time or part-time travel agent? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1) Full-time.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2) Part-time.
54. Do you personally read and use any travel magazines? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1) Yes. \_\_\_\_\_ 2) No.
55. If you personally read and use any travel magazines, when the subscription expires, have you found the magazine(s) useful enough to want to renew the subscription(s)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1) Yes. \_\_\_\_\_ 2) No. \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Not applicable.

56. Do you, as a travel agent, specialize in a particular region? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 1)Yes. \_\_\_\_\_ 2) No.

57. If you answered yes to question #56, which region do you specialize in the most? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 1)The United States.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2)The Caribbean.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3)Mexico.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4)Canada.

\_\_\_\_\_ 5)Europe.

\_\_\_\_\_ 6)Asia.

\_\_\_\_\_ 7)Other: Specify \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 8)Not applicable.

58. Within the continental United States, which region are you the most familiar with? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 1)New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT).

\_\_\_\_\_ 2)Middle Atlantic (NJ, NY, PA).

\_\_\_\_\_ 3)East North Central (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI).

\_\_\_\_\_ 4)West North Central (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD).

\_\_\_\_\_ 5)South Atlantic (DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV).

\_\_\_\_\_ 6)East South Central (AL, KY, MS, TN).

\_\_\_\_\_ 7)West South Central (AR, LA, OK, TX).

\_\_\_\_\_ 8)Mountain (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, WY).

\_\_\_\_\_ 9)Pacific (AK, CA, HI, OR, WA).

Please add whatever comments of any sort you may have concerning this questionnaire generally, concerning any individual sections or questions, or concerning the nature, purpose or results of this study. Especially, please free to explain any answer you gave which you believe requires amplification. Please also mention any areas you believe the questionnaire should have addressed but did not. Use the space provided below and add additional sheets, if necessary. Your comments will be greatly appreciated.

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Please return this questionnaire in the postage-paid envelope which has been provided. Please do not specifically identify yourself or your location. Thank you very much for your cooperation.