

HOW TO: TURN YOUR TRAVEL KNOWLEDGE INTO A CAREER



You've trekked the Andes, caroused in Parisian cafes, listened to club bangers in Ibiza and chilled on white-sanded beaches in the Algarve. There's no limit to your worldly knowledge, but now it's time to settle down and help other people enjoy the delights of tourism. Now it's time to open a travel agency.

For some, a travel agency is the perfect antidote to staying cooped up in a fixed location. Every half hour you'll encounter a new set of holidaymakers with sun-kissed aspirations. Maybe they want to see the Spanish Steps in Rome or catch a flight to the Australian Outback. No matter where they intend to travel, you can live vicariously through them, remembering your own halcyon days of backpacking and seeing new sights.

But establishing a travel agency isn't as simple as catching a flight, especially with travel giants like Thomas Cook and Expedia dominating the industry. But it's not an impossible dream. While you can't hit the heady heights of major travel agencies, it is possible to create a sizeable presence for yourself by combining the high street with the internet.

With that in mind, we've come up with a few recommendations to help you establish the ideal agency and get your customers to their destinations.

The right property

You'll seldom find a travel agency on an industrial estate, or even in an affluent section of suburbia. Largely, they group in city centres, where people from all walks of life will flock. This is partly because everyone wants a holiday, and no one is separated by demographics in that respect.

To find a decent shop to let, you'll have to track down an estate agent you can trust, a feat that's not as simple as it sounds.

Online look

Every high-quality travel agency has an online outlet to facilitate tourism for people worldwide. And you'll need more than a simple WordPress blog to create a functional booking site.

Hire a web development agency to plan and implement your site, then hire a media agency to make sure your site is fully optimised and near the top of Google's search rankings. This isn't a cheap enterprise - it could set you back thousands of pounds - but it's realistically the only way to go toe-to-toe with the big boys.

In the long term, enjoying a large amount of business will mean liaising with flight providers and other booking agencies. It's a huge undertaking, but it's well worth it to see the smile on a holidaymaker's face when you get them a good deal.

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