

Decoding the travel advisor client

Understanding client needs and preferences





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Overview

As a travel advisor, understanding your clients is foundational to creating personalized trips that delight them at every step of their journey.

However, there is limited data and insights on this audience, making it harder to recognize their distinct needs, wants, and behaviors.

To deepen our knowledge of these travelers, we developed custom research on travel advisor clients around the world. The aim of the research was to understand the habits and preferences of travelers who use travel agencies, what they are looking for from advisors, and the factors that determine loyalty and retention.

Methodology

We conducted a custom online survey with Wakefield Research across 10 markets: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, India, Italy, Mexico, Spain, the UK, and US.

The survey included 5,000 respondents who used a travel advisor for a leisure trip in the last 18 months.





Key findings

1. **Expert advice and time savings** are the top reasons to use travel advisors.
2. Travelers use advisors to provide **stress-free experiences**, often using them for complex trips like international travel or multi-destination trips.
3. Travelers want help with travel-related **services beyond booking hotels and flights**, including activities, insurance, and car rentals.
4. **Finding the best deals** is an essential area of support that travelers are looking for.
5. Travelers remain **loyal to advisors that provide strong customer service and communication**, but will switch if service quality, pricing, or value falls short of their expectations.
6. Recommendations from family and friends are the most popular way to find a travel agent, but **online search and social media are more popular with younger generations**.

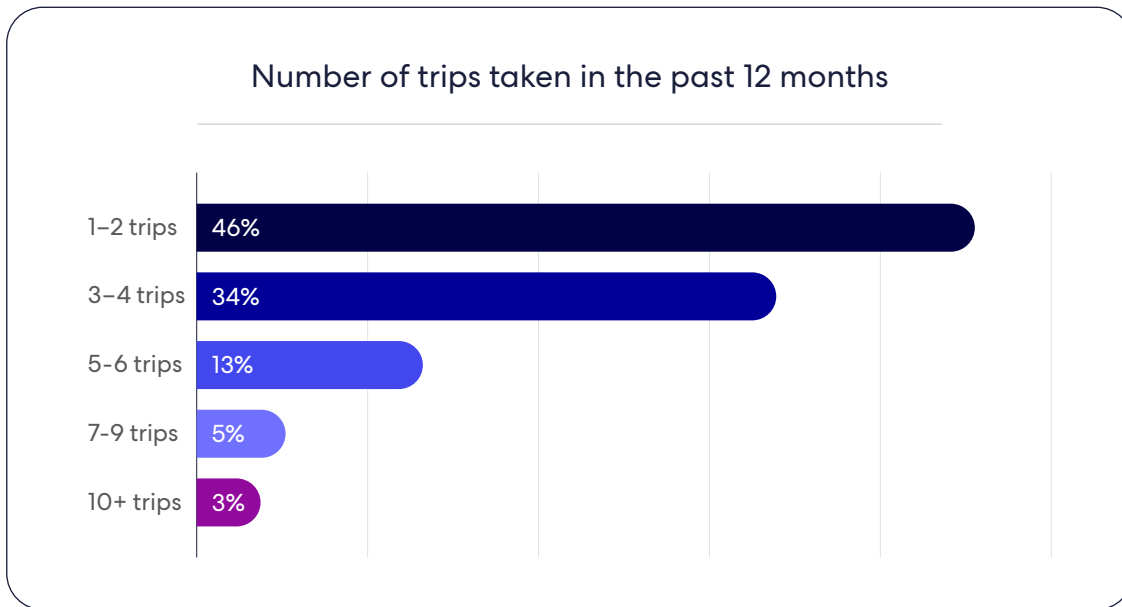
This research provides a deep look into who travel advisor clients are and follows their decision-making journey, from how they select an advisor to why they stay with or leave an advisor.

Tips and recommendations for how travel advisors can take action based on our findings are included in the report to help set up your business for success.

Trip behavior of the travel advisor client

The first step in creating exceptional experiences for your clients is understanding their travel patterns and behaviors.

Most respondents took one to four trips in the past year, with **46% taking only one to two trips**. This indicates they want to get the most value out of their time away, so they turn to travel advisors for personalized guidance.



Younger generations are taking more trips than average. In the past 12 months:



20%

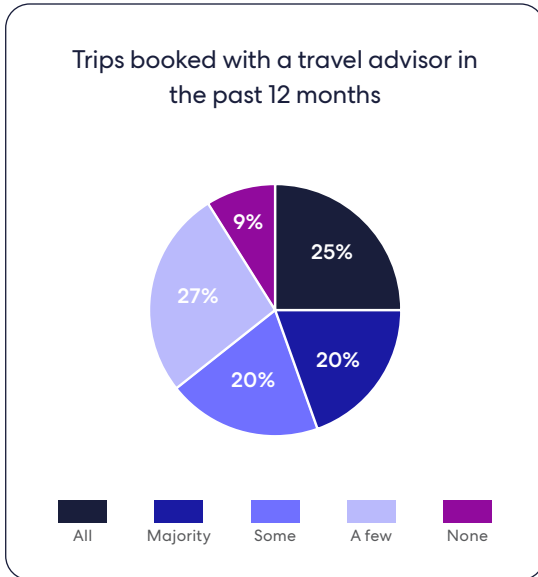
of Gen Z travelers took five or more trips.



28%

of millennials took five or more trips.

But are they using travel advisors to book every trip or only a few? In the past 12 months, **45% of respondents used a travel advisor to book most or all** of their trips.



Digging deeper into trips booked with a travel advisor, most are less than one week long. Nearly one-third of travelers used an advisor to book a trip that was four days or shorter, illustrating that **many travelers use advisors for quicker getaways** and not only for long trips or special occasions.



In addition to taking more trips, younger generations are also taking shorter trips. For 66% of Gen Z and 61% of millennials, their last trip booked with a travel advisor was less than one week long, while 65% of boomers tapped an advisor to book a trip that was longer than one week. Travelers from Mexico, India, Brazil, and the US are also more likely to use a travel advisor to book shorter trips.

Length of last trips booked with a travel advisor

1-2 days — 9%

3-4 days — 22%

5-6 days — 25%

7-9 days — 22%

10-14 days — 14%

15+ days — 9%

Why travelers use advisors

To help travel advisors better understand their clients, we uncovered why travelers use advisors, specifically, their **primary drivers and what they care about most.**

Most respondents said that expert advice and time savings were top

reasons for using a travel advisor. Travelers also believe that **travel advisors are better at finding the best deals**, handling unexpected issues, and ensuring a stress-free and enjoyable experience compared to booking a trip on their own.

Top reasons to use a travel advisor

Multi-select question



50%+

of respondents said expert advice and time savings are why they prefer using an advisor.



TRAVEL ADVISOR TIP

Set yourself apart as an advisor and hone your expertise by understanding what travelers value, how they behave, and what they're looking for in their travel experiences.

Check out our [research and insights](#).

Types of trips booked through an advisor

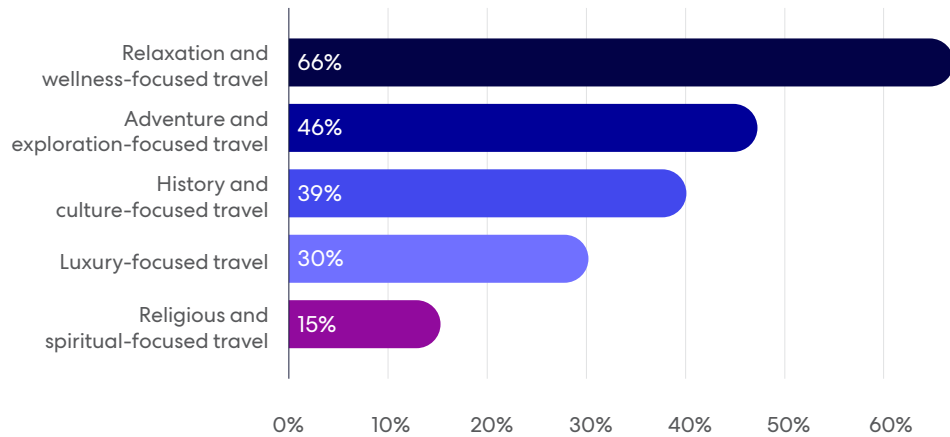
Beyond understanding the foundational details of their trips and why they use advisors, we also wanted to uncover the specific types of trips that travelers turn to travel advisors for.

Travelers typically use advisors to book relaxation and wellness-focused travel, which underscores travelers'

desire for a stress-free experience. Adventure and exploration-focused travel was the second most popular type of vacation booked through an advisor. Travelers take advantage of an advisor's expertise and ability to help with itinerary building and activity planning.

Kinds of trips typically booked through a travel advisor

Multi-select question



Trip types booked with an advisor vary by country:

52% of Spanish travelers book culture-focused travel.

43% of Indian travelers book religious travel.

41% of UK travelers book luxury-focused travel.



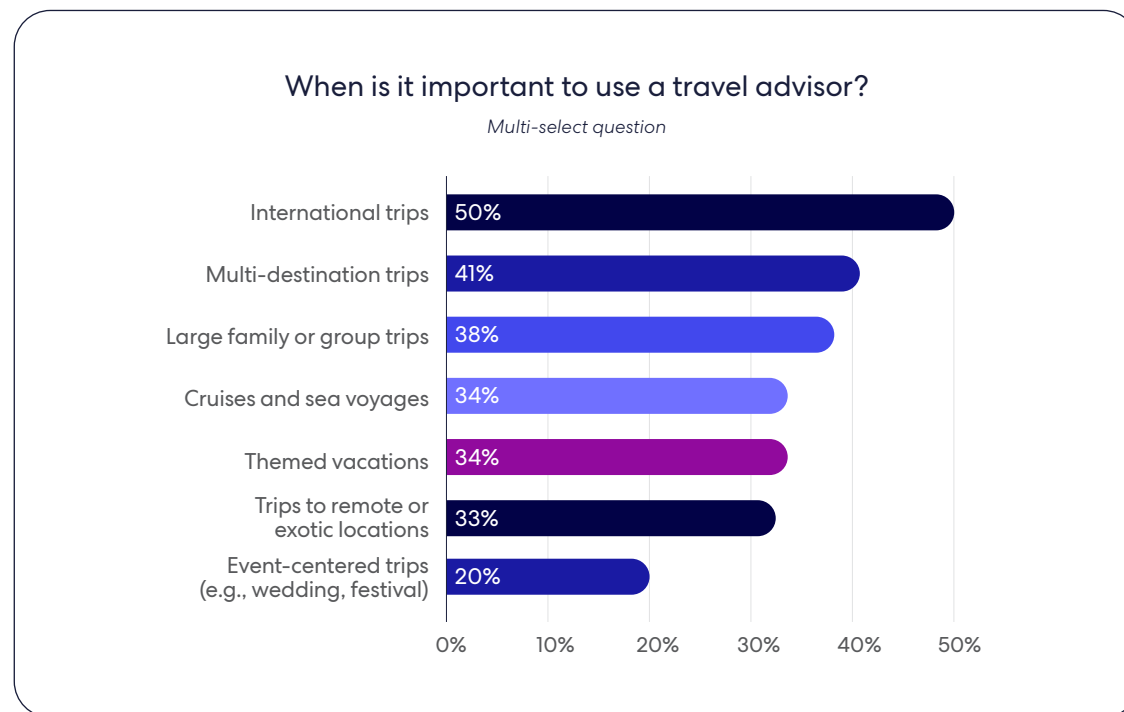
TRAVEL ADVISOR TIP

One way to help provide your clients with a stress-free vacation is to recommend all-inclusive options, which are growing in popularity, especially with younger travelers. Our **Unpack '25** data revealed a 60% year-over-year increase in usage of the "all-inclusive" filter on Hotels.com.



When travelers are asked about the specific types of trips that are most important to use a travel advisor for, it's clear that **the more complex the trip, the more likely travelers are to use an advisor.**

International (50%) and multi-destination (41%) trips are considered travel advisor territory, and **34% of respondents said it's important to engage an advisor for themed vacations** like a culinary trip, theme park adventure, or historical tour.



Using a travel advisor for large family or group trips is important to travelers from India (55%), Mexico (55%), and Brazil (49%), while those in Canada (58%) and the UK (57%) look to advisors for international trips.

Engaging a travel advisor

Travelers are most likely to engage an advisor early in the trip-planning process, but most do destination research ahead of any conversation.

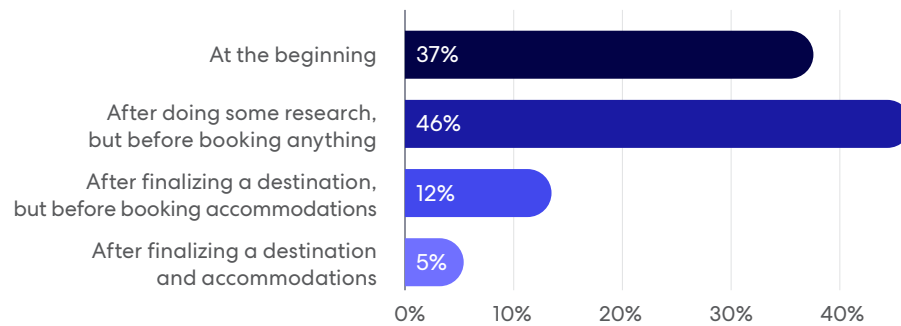
However, **37% engage travel advisors at the very beginning**, providing an opportunity for advisors to suggest travel plans and influence destination decisions earlier.

Regardless of when an advisor is brought in for trip planning, the types of services and trip elements travelers typically have their advisors book are wide-ranging.

Most travelers have their advisors book hotels and flights, but many also look to the experts to book tours and activities, car rentals, and travel insurance policies.

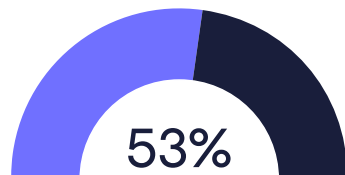
When travelers contact an advisor during the planning process

Multi-select question

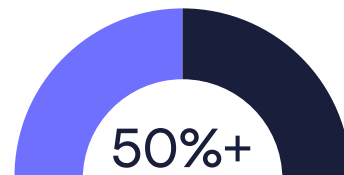


Which travel-related services do you typically use a travel advisor for?

Multi-select question



of travelers from **India** have travel advisors book car rentals.



of travelers from **Brazil, India, Mexico, and the US** have travel advisors book tours, activities, or excursions.



TRAVEL ADVISOR TIP

Traveler needs and preferences for booking assistance often go beyond typical hotel and airline reservations. Help set yourself and your clients up for success by providing **end-to-end trip support** and services.

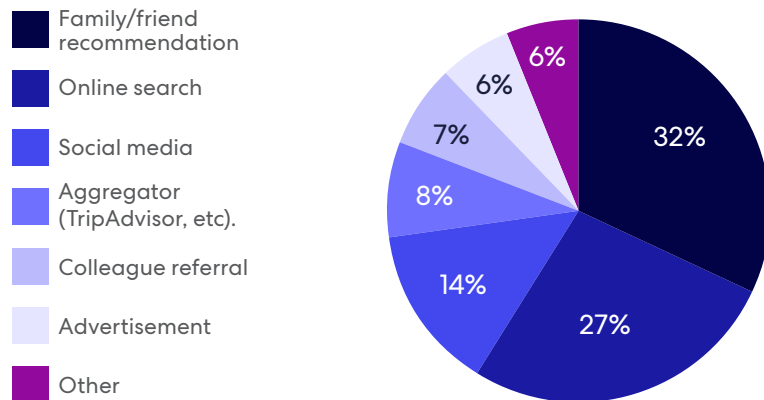
Further differentiate yourself by creating recommendations for activities and tours, curated for their specific needs and travel style. Go the extra mile by ensuring every part of the trip is planned, from car rentals and train tickets to assistance with passports or visas. And **ensure your travelers are prepared** for the unexpected by facilitating trip insurance policies.

How travelers select an advisor

Building trust and a lasting relationship with your clients is essential. While **44% of respondents only used a single travel agency** in the past two years, **25% used three or more**. This shows that travelers are exploring their options, highlighting the need for travel advisors to stand out and create meaningful connections.

And **28% of respondents said they made inquiries with three or more agencies** for the last trip they booked. But how do they find their travel advisors? And what are the top influences when selecting an advisor? Nearly half (49%) found their most recent travel agency through online search, social media, or an aggregator. Nearly half (49%) found their most recent travel agency through online search, social media, or an aggregator.

How did you find your most recent travel agency?



Shopping around is evident in younger generations, as one-third of millennials used three or more agencies in the past two years. Conversely, 68% of boomers, 54% of Gen X, and 55% of travelers with children only used one travel advisor in the past two years.



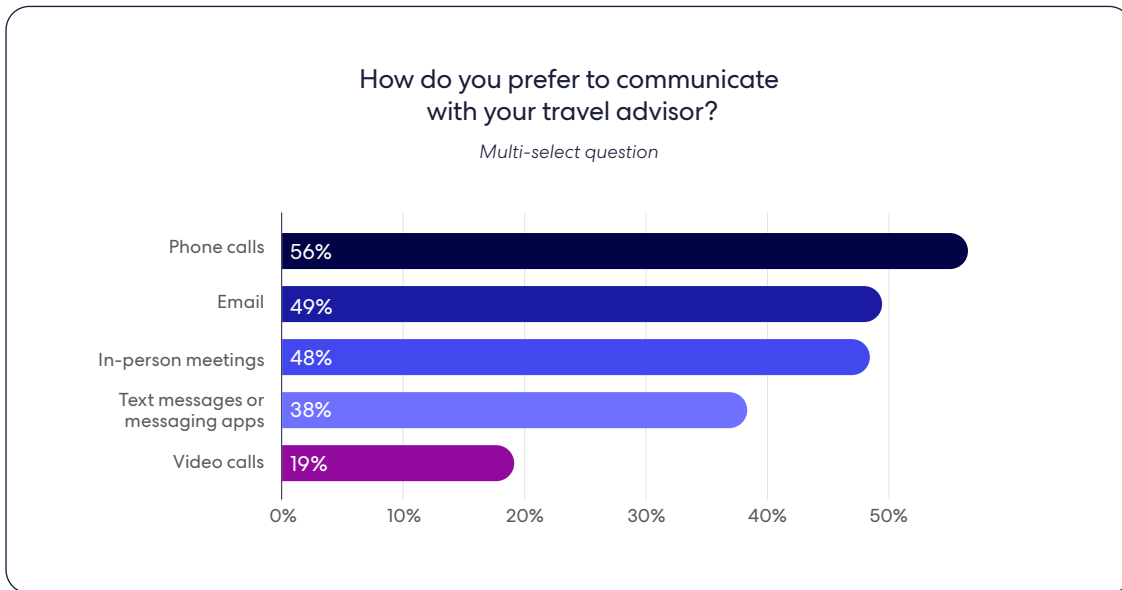
TRAVEL ADVISOR TIP

Recommendations from friends, family, and colleagues have a strong influence when it comes to finding a travel advisor. Tap into the power of word of mouth by trialing a referral program with your existing clients and offer incentives for referring a new client.

You can also stand out from the crowd by updating your online presence to highlight your expertise and specialization. Are you an expert in family-friendly adventure travel? Spotlight this across your website and social channels and bring it to life through photos, client reviews, and personal anecdotes.

While travelers use a variety of channels to communicate with their advisor, phone calls and emails are most preferred, followed by in-person meetings. This speaks to the importance of personal connections and relationship building between advisors and clients.

The findings indicate that most travelers like to communicate with their advisor in multiple ways, depending on the situation and timing.



When it comes to how travelers choose between advisors, expertise again emerges as an important aspect, but so does price.

Top influences when selecting a travel advisor

- 1 Expertise or specialization
- 2 Price for services
- 3 Special offers or incentives
- 4 Flexible payment options
- 5 Reviews or recommendations

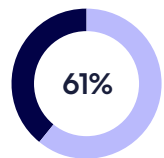
Support travelers look for in a travel advisor

Beyond valuing their expertise, travelers are eager for their advisor to get them a great deal in the booking process.

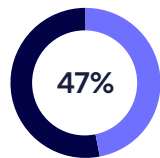
Other priority areas include destination and activity recommendations, and support for things like last-minute changes and trip preparation.

Most helpful support areas when booking travel

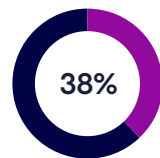
Multi-select question



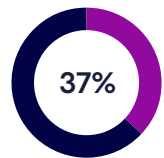
Finding best deals



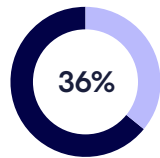
Destination and activity recommendations



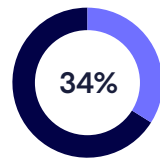
Last-minute changes



Itinerary coordination



Unexpected events and emergencies



Travel insurance policy selection



Travelers from Brazil (68%), India (62%), and the US (47%) are more open to texting with their advisor, while travelers from Germany (57%), Australia (55%), and Spain (53%) are more likely to opt for in-person meetings.



6 in 10

travelers said it would be most helpful to have additional help from travel agents in finding the best deals.



TRAVEL ADVISOR TIP

Communication is essential when it comes to planning a trip — for you and your clients. Ask them about their communication preferences from the start and set their expectations on update frequency and response times to ensure you are meeting their needs.

Given how much travelers prioritize a great deal, it's critical that travel advisors find the best deals and offer competitive pricing. **More than half (51%) of respondents said they compare the prices their travel advisor provides with what they find online.** These travelers don't inherently trust the quotes they receive are the best price, so it's important to provide them with the best deals for their trip.



91%

believe travel advisors have the best access to deals and promotions.



57%

of US travelers trust travel advisors are getting the best deals, while those in Mexico (59%) and Spain (56%) often compare prices online.



TRAVEL ADVISOR TIP

When presenting travel options to your clients, be transparent about the research you did, including explaining the deal you're offering and pricing you saw elsewhere. This will help instill confidence so your clients don't feel like they have to search for deals and discounts on their own.





How travelers become loyal to their advisors

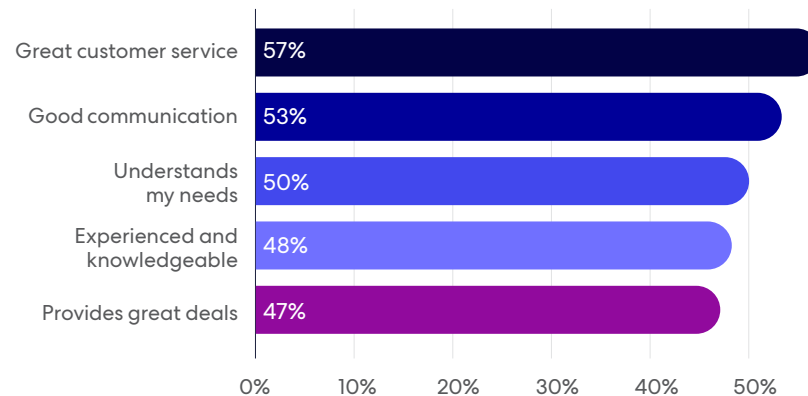
Client retention is important to any successful business strategy, so creating positive experiences and building loyalty is key.

So, **what makes a traveler stay with their advisor** or why do they change agents?

Great customer service and good communication are the leading reasons travelers stay with an advisor, along with expertise and great deals. Those who changed advisors in the past five years did so due to limited offerings, lack of deals, and poor value.

Top reasons for staying with a travel advisor

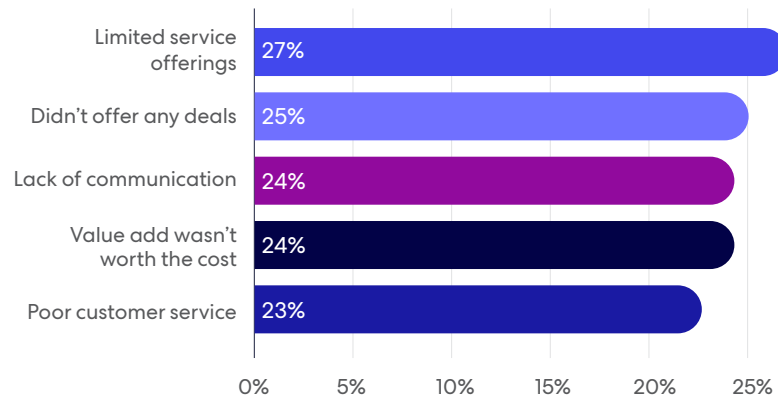
Multi-select question



Boomers are much more loyal to their travel advisor, with 61% staying with the same advisor for the past five years. Similarly, 50% of Canadians and 44% of travelers from Italy and the US have worked with the same travel advisor for the past five years.

Top reasons for changing travel advisors

Multi-select question



62%

of travelers have changed their travel advisor in the past five years, while 38% have stayed loyal to one travel advisor.



78%

are extremely or very satisfied with services provided by a travel advisor for their most recent trip.



TRAVEL ADVISOR TIP

To keep your business top of mind with existing clients, create an automated system to follow up with those who haven't booked with you in six months or more.

And keep communication open after a trip. Ask your clients for feedback to understand where you are meeting or exceeding expectations and where you may be falling short.



The bottom line

The research confirms travel advisor clients have unique needs and preferences that vary based on their trip type, age, and geographic location.

Understanding these nuances will help you expand your expertise and develop more targeted recommendations for your clients.

5 key recommendations for travel advisors

1. Display your expertise

Specialist knowledge is a main factor for why travelers use agencies and how they select an advisor. Communicate your years of experience, specialization, and successful trips to potential and existing clients.

2. Foster a stress-free experience

Travelers want an advisor to save them time and limit stress. Make sure you are thinking through what your clients need before the trip as well as planning for anything that may go wrong.

3. Provide end-to-end support

Travelers are looking for support beyond hotel and flight bookings. Make sure you

understand the elements that your travelers want to make the perfect trip, from activities and destination transportation to visa and passport support.

4. Focus on strong communication

Customer service and communication build loyalty with customers. Ensure you understand your travelers' communication preferences and keep them up to date throughout the planning process.

5. Leverage deals

Discounts are the top area travelers want support with. Make sure you are providing clients with competitive rates by leveraging [Expedia TAAP](#).

Discover the Expedia TAAP advantage

The findings of this report, combined with Expedia TAAP's powerful features, will let you to offer your clients an exceptional experience at every stage of their trip — from planning and booking to managing — all while deepening your relationship with them and providing robust support.

Easy booking platform built for advisors

Expedia TAAP offers flexible cancellation policies and features that empower you to provide seamless traveler service directly in the booking platform:

- Modify online reservations in less than one minute with the **self-service Booking Manager**.
- Create and send traveler vouchers in under 20 seconds with the **Itinerary Builder**.
- Reserve a trip now and pay later with **deferred payments**. This helps ensure your clients can use flexible payment options without needing to sacrifice your cash flow.



Broad inventory

By using these findings across multiple types of travel, competitive rates, and last-minute availability, you can provide the right trip options to your clients at the best prices.

Expedia TAAP travel supply includes:



3M+

accommodations in 200+ countries/territories



35+

types of accommodation, including vacation rentals



120+

car rental companies in 3,000+ locations



220K+

tours, activities, attractions, and adventures



500+

airlines, covering 6,500+ airports





Trustworthy reviews and product listings

Property ratings and reviews are essential to understanding other travelers' experiences with a hotel, vacation rental property, transportation provider, or activity. They're ideal for helping you make informed recommendations for your travelers.

- Our **58 million user-generated reviews** give you insider context and insight that can help you decide whether a property is the right match for your traveler.
- Our **property detail pages** include rich content, expansive photo galleries, and cancellation policy details to ensure you find the right match for your client.
- **More than 20 sort and filter features** allow you to surface the most relevant search results for the unique needs of your clients, like EV charging stations, accessibility, LGBTQ+-friendly, family-friendly, payment options, and more.

Deals and discounts

Our global team works with supply partners to negotiate and secure B2B rates that are available exclusively through Expedia TAAP, so you can be confident you're giving your clients the competitive rates.

With Expedia TAAP, you have access to more than 650,000 promotional rates, and competitive package rates that are, on average, 20% less than rates on consumer sites.

Grow your travel business

As an advisor, you know your time is valuable and should be spent focusing on your clients and understanding their needs to build their ideal trip. Using a simple platform that **sets your business up for success** is essential, which is why we built Expedia TAAP.

The platform provides:

- Instant access to **accurate, real-time reporting** that improves your operational efficiency.
- **Easy onboarding** to get started as quickly as possible, with step-by-step guides and helpful tutorials, all housed in our Expedia TAAP Academy.
- A library of **ready-made marketing campaigns** to help boost revenue.
- **Account manager support** for Gold and Platinum partners to help develop a customized growth strategy and optimize your business.
- **Flexible payment options**, including deferred payments. With deferred payments, payments aren't due until closer to the travel date. That means you can book in advance without sacrificing cash flow.

Join Expedia TAAP today

Already an Expedia TAAP member? [Log in](#) to your account.





Methodology

This consumer survey was conducted by Wakefield Research among 5,000 travelers who have used a travel agent in the last 18 months, excluding those who use a travel agent primarily or only for business travel. The survey included 500 respondents per market in Canada, Germany, Spain, Italy, Australia, India, Mexico, Brazil, and the UK and US. The survey was fielded between Sept. 19-Oct. 13, 2024, using an email invitation and an online survey.