



Agent Workbook



What you'll get today:

(Estimated 20 Mins)

- An understanding of what travel agents are and why you should partner with one.
- A strategy to find the best agents for your business.
- An understanding of how you can get agents to partner with you.

How to use this workbook:

- Work through each of the items in the index on the following page.
- Optional: Print out the index as a checklist, use it as you work through each step.
- Mark off each item in the space provided when you're done.
- Fill out the forms as you make your way through this workbook.

Pages

**(x) if
done**

Introduction

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What's a travel agent?

To put it simply, they're a reseller. They find interesting tours and activities from travel businesses such as yourselves and resells them to the public in exchange for a commission. They're kind of like the Walmarts or your local electronic stores that resell products from Apple or Samsung but instead of products, they resell tours.

It's a great way for you to increase your distribution/ sales network without taking any risks. You might receive a lower profit margin for your tours and activities. However, considering that these might be additional tours you might not have otherwise sold, it's a **win-win** for everyone.

Why partner with an agent?

Obviously we all know the main benefit. More money! But we thought it'd be best to break down the main benefits you get from partnering with a travel agent that leads to more sales.

1. **A quick way to access new markets.**

Many travel agents are focused on specific markets. For example, Musement has a key focus on Europe while Ctrip focuses on China, depending on your tour or activity and the languages you can provide, travel agents are a quick & easy way to access markets relevant to you!

2. **Greater Visibility**

Online travel agents like Klook, GetYourGuide and Tripadvisor have millions of travelers browsing their website every month. Which means working with these travel agents would put you in front of ALOT more people.

3. Productivity

After partnering with online travel agents, you'll spend less time worrying about marketing and sales. This will free up your time to focus on other aspects of the business such as new tours or more partnerships!

4. Better customer experience

Some online travel agents allow customers to book their accommodation, transport and activities all in one place, it makes it a lot easier for your customer to book and pay for their entire trip. Good travel agents will also have their own internal customer service team who will help deal with your end customer. Happy customers translate to more repeat customers and referrals.

5. Trust

You gain the trust of the customer by working with a travel agent. Most people have not heard of local tour operators. However, they will know about Tripadvisor and Booking.com. Most of the time, they already trust these travel agents. Customers who have not heard of your business will be more likely to book your tours through these travel agents because these travel agents act as a guarantor for your business.

Finding the right agent to partner with.

Whenever someone starts looking for a travel agent to partner with, they start with the big guys like Expedia, Booking.com, and Viator. But when choosing a travel agent to partner with, you need to consider what the travel agent will gain from the partnership. After all, it needs to be a win-win situation.

Ask yourself this question. If you were the travel agent, would you want to partner with your business? Look through the travel agent's website, do they already have similar products? What markets do they cater to?

Fill up the form below to figure out which agents you should partner with:

Pro-tip: Think Small.

There are hundreds if not thousands of businesses trying to partner up with the larger travel agents. Because there's a long list for them to work through, partnering with them could take a while. In the worst cases, it could be months before you manage to list with them.

In the meantime, look for smaller as well as local resellers/ agents. They will usually get back to you a lot quicker, allowing you to start receiving bookings much quicker!



<p>Who is your largest customer base?</p> <p>(Where are they from, how old are they and What languages do they speak?) Try to be as specific as possible</p>	
<p>Who would you like to sell to?</p> <p>Knowing who your current base is, who else would you be able to sell to. For example, if your largest customer base is Spanish, what are the other Spanish speaking countries?</p> <p><i>Note : In Rezdy, you can filter agents by the locations they want to sell to. Eg. If a Spanish agent specialises in selling Australian tours.</i></p>	
<p>Travel agents to consider.</p> <p>Knowing this, which travel agents suit your business?</p> <p><i>Note: Rezdy's marketplace allows you to filter agents based on these requirements.</i></p>	

Why should agents partner with you?

Great! You found the agents you want to partner with. Now, think again about the question: “Why would an agent want to partner with you?” Remember, the travel agent may already have a product similar to yours.

Fill up the form below and you’ll be able to easily convince an agent to partner with your tours & activity business:

Do you offer instant Confirmation?

Will the agent need to wait for you to confirm the booking or does it happen right away. Instant is the best, but a low book ahead time is great as well (24 hours minimum notice or less) . If you’re a Rezdy customer, you’ve probably got this covered.

Does your business seem trustworthy?

The agent needs to feel confident sending their customers to your tours.

1. Do you have a quality assurance program?
2. How many customer reviews do you have?
3. What can you do to increase their confidence?

<p>Is there an International fit?</p> <p>1. Do your tours and activities appeal to the agents' market? For example, if you were partnering up with C-Trip, you need to offer Chinese/ Mandarin on your tours.</p> <p>2. What changes can you make to your tour to appeal to this market?</p>	
<p>What is your commission rate?</p> <p>Consider what your competitors are offering.</p> <p>1. Is it competitive?</p> <p>2. Is it a win-win situation for both you and the agent?</p>	
<p>What is your Unique Selling Point?</p> <p>If there is already a tour operator offering a similar tour with the travel agent:</p> <p>1. What do you do differently?</p> <p>2. What makes your tours better?</p>	
<p>Content</p> <p>Make it easy for the travel agent to list your tours on their website. Ensure you have:</p> <p>1. A detailed itinerary ready.</p> <p>2. High-quality images of your tour.</p>	

China-ready checklist?

With the huge rise in Chinese outbound travelers, many tour operators are looking to partner with Chinese travel agencies. However, Chinese travel agencies are slightly different in the way they work, and if you want to work with them you will need to cross off the items on the following checklist.

Can you or someone in your business communicate in Chinese?

While many Chinese can speak English, they still prefer to communicate in their native language.

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Do you have a WeChat account?

Most people in China prefer to communicate through WeChat rather than email.

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Is your website optimized to rank on Baidu?

In China, Google is banned. Baidu is the #1 search engine there.

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Are you on Chinese Social Media?

Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are also banned. So you'll need to be on WeChat, Weibo and LittleRedBook.

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The Taster! Try organizing a free tour for some agents.

It might take time for a travel agent to trust that you can deliver a great tour or activity. A great way to fast-track your relationship is to invite them out to try your tours. Once they've been on your tour, they will KNOW it's good. Furthermore, they will know what being on your tour is like, which means it'll be a lot easier for them to sell your tours. They'll be able to better describe and recommend your tours and activities to their customers.

If you're worried about it taking too much time and money, try organizing a travel agent tour. Invite a few potential travel agents and put them on the same tour. If all goes well, that single tour could convince all those agents to resell your tour. Imagine that, one tour might convince 6-7 organisations to start reselling your tours. It's a small investment for a potentially huge return!



Maintaining the Relationship

Congratulations, you've partnered up with your first travel agent, maybe even a few. However, this is just the first step. Maintaining a good relationship with your travel agent partners require just as much effort. Here are some things you should keep in mind when working with your partner travel agents:

1. Trust

Remember, they're sending one of their customers to you and trusting you to take care of the customer. Your agents need to be able to trust you. You need to ensure they know that you have their company's interest in mind too, not just your own. At the end of the day, you have the same goals, a returning customer. Many tour operators even try to undercut the agents (eg. asking customers to cancel their bookings and make a direct booking online.) but remember, at the end of the day it is a partnership and **both sides** need to win.

2. Communication

You need to keep your communication lines open and respond as quickly as possible. Remember, the agents are the ones facing the customers, and if you don't reply, they're the ones who will be facing the customer in awkward silence with no reply.

Have you heard the phrase "burning the messenger?". Quite often you see customers yelling at customer service reps and retail workers, even though these workers are just the messenger, they have no control over the situation. If you don't reply promptly, your agents will be the ones getting yelled at.

Even if you don't have an answer right away, at least respond and tell them you're looking into it and how long it might take. In this case, your agents will then at least be able to provide updates on the situation!

Responding promptly will also allow your agents to better sell tailored or group tours and activities which will increase sales for both of you!

3. In-destination support

Certain situations will be beyond the agent's control. For example, if the customer booked the wrong tour or forgot to include their allergies. In these situations, it will be up to the tour operator to quickly adjust and cater to the customer's needs. Taking charge of these situations and ensuring the customer has a good experience will reflect positively on the travel agent. It's good business for everyone and it'll boost the confidence your travel agent has for you. Remember, the more they trust you, the more customers they'll send you.

4. Looking beyond the partnership

You're in this partnership to grow together. So look beyond your partnership. Your travel agent sending you customers in exchange for a commission is not the only way you can work together.

Look for opportunities to do some co-marketing, recommend to your travel agent other local tours or activities people love doing. Do you know anyone else they could partner up with? Put them in touch.

Don't worry, it's not a one-way street. When they see the extra effort you're putting in, they'll reciprocate with new opportunities for you. Growing together is easier than growing alone

