Travel/Tourism

What career options will your degree in Travel/Tourism Management afford you? The Career Paths outlined in this Career Track Guide, with information on job titles, brief job descriptions and industry segments, will provide you with an overview of your options. Review each to determine which Career Path is right for you.

Job descriptions were compiled from actual online job postings and from Johnson & Wales’ DACUM (Developing a Curriculum) process (when we ask practicing professionals to details the duties, tasks, skills and required work behaviors associated with their positions). Now is the time to collect all the information you can and make informed decisions about your career path. The information assembled here is a great place to start.
Career Paths in Travel/Tourism
The following Career Paths and supporting titles/descriptions are provided in this Career Track Guide

Destination

Land
• Reservation (Sales) Agent
• Guest Services Representative
• Reservation Manager
• Convention Sales Manager
• Convention and Visitors’ Bureau Representative
• Product Development Manager

Accommodations
• Concierge
• Sales Manager

Cruise Lines
• Assistant Purser/Purser
• Chief Purser
• Reservation Sales Agent
• Cruise Director (Cruise Staff)
• Youth Counselor
• Group and Convention Sales Manager

Passenger Transportation

Airlines
• Reservation (Sales) Agent
• Reservation Manager
• Customer Service Representative
• Flight Attendant
• Station Manager
• Account Executive

Ground Transportation (Automobile and Rail)
• Rental (Sales) Agent
• Corporate Account Manager
• Assistant Manager
• Branch Manager
Career Paths in Travel/Tourism *continued*

**Distribution Channels**

- **Tour Operators**
  - Tour Guide
  - Tour Director
  - Tour Sales Consultant
  - Product Development Manager

- **Travel Counselors**
  - Travel Counselor
  - Incentive Travel Specialist
  - Corporate Travel Manager
  - International Travel Manager
  - Travel Broker
Career Track Guide

2 Job Descriptions

Career Path #1: DESTINATION

There are many reasons why people travel, including health interests, scenic beauty, sporting events and culture. But whatever the reason, it is the destination that matters. Travel is considered to be recreational when the destination is to places such as Foxwoods Casino, the Grand Canyon, a luxurious spa in Beverly Hills, or the host city of the annual Super Bowl.

Land

Reservation (Sales) Agent
On the front line, reservation agents are responsible for answering incoming calls from travel agents and customers regarding the booking of reservations. Agents work on a shift basis, and must possess excellent customer service and telephone skills, for they are in constant communication with the public.

Some responsibilities of the reservation (sales) agent are:
- Answering inquiries from travel agents and customers regarding travel schedules, booking assistance, etc.
- Coordinating services for customers requiring special assistance.
- Being able to multi-task and prioritize duties.

Guest Services Representative
As the title suggests, this position is representative of the hospitality field as a whole. In the travel sector of this industry, the guest services representatives assist customers with various needs to ensure their travels are a success.

Guest service representatives are required to:
- Aid customers in ticket and baggage check-in.
- Assist customers in the event of lost baggage.
- Maintain cleanliness of all equipment at the reception station/front desk.

Reservation Manager
This position, which is similar to the front office in a hotel, is responsible for overseeing all reservations made by customers, as well as overseeing staff members of the department. In addition, reservation managers work with the sales department to ensure flights are booked to the fullest capacity.
Reservation Manager continued
Other responsibilities of the reservation manager are:

- Delegating tasks and assigning responsibilities to reservation agents.
- Ensuring everyone within the department is adhering to company standards and working towards achieving company goals.
- Creating a team environment.

Convention Sales Manager
A convention sales manager is responsible for opening new markets for meetings, conventions and trade shows for convention centers, convention and visitor bureaus, recreational facilities and other venues.

Convention sales managers usually:

- Sell conventions through personal sales, calls, telemarketing, direct mail and trade show participation.
- Are actively involved in public relations activities for the property, venue or agency.
- Implement sales promotions to develop leads and help to close group business.
- Serve as liaisons between meeting planners and members of the local hospitality industry.

Convention and Visitors’ Bureau Representative
A Convention and Visitors’ Bureau Representative provides a vital link between local business and the travelers who visit a city or region.

A representative’s responsibilities may include:

- Helping organizations arrange meetings.
- Telemarketing.
- Inspecting potential sites for meetings and events.
- Organizing and participating in familiarization tours.
- Developing and delivering sales presentations.
- Handling media inquiries.
DESTINATION CONTINUED

Product Development Manager
A product development manager creates tour packages, starting with research on destinations.

A product development manager's duties include:
- Logistical planning for group tours.
- Site inspections and qualification visits.
- Negotiating for space and rates with suppliers.
- Participating in the production of brochures and other marketing materials.
- Training agents and supervisors at destinations.

Accommodations

Concierge
The concierge is a host, in the sense that he/she caters to the hotel's guests and makes them feel important as customers of the property. Concentrating on customer service is the main responsibility of the concierge, and the position requires outstanding listening and verbal communication skills.

A few of the responsibilities of the concierge include:
- Displaying knowledge of the local attractions, and offering suggested sights for the guests to see.
- Responding to each guest's needs in a prompt and professional manner.
- Delivering an outstanding level of customer service and representing the hotel in the most professional way.

Sales Manager
The accommodations sales manager is responsible for organizing, managing and coordinating an entity's accommodations marketing efforts to increase accommodations sales.

A sales manager is responsible for:
- Promoting the venue's accommodations to groups of all sizes.
- Assisting in the booking of large blocks for rooms for events.
- Coordinating the activities of the venue's sales and marketing personnel with group booking personnel.
DESTINATION CONTINUED

Cruise Lines

Assistant Purser/Purser
Just like a front office manager, the purser aboard a cruise ship oversees the operations of the purser's office while maintaining excellent guest and employee relations. With previous hotel or cruise ship experience, the purser will be able to ensure efficient operations. Good communication and decision-making skills are a must.

The purser's job entails:
• Supervising the operations of the purser's office.
• Delegating responsibilities and tasks to fellow shipmates.
• Handling guest requests and complaints in a professional manner to ensure guest satisfaction.
• Monitoring accounting and implementing budgets to ensure operations are profitable.

Chief Purser (smaller ships)/Hotel Manager (larger ships):
Similar to a general manager of a hotel, leadership skills are imperative when overseeing all operations of departments (with the exception of the deck and engine), and delegating tasks and assigning responsibilities to the pursers. The chief purser is in constant communication with the hotel services coordinator and/or the director of hotel operations, ensuring policies are being followed aboard the vessel. This position, also considered the shipboard chief financial officer, keeps in constant communication with ports of call, clearing the ship with the proper authorities.

The chief purser is in charge of:
• Implementing policies and services.
• Monitoring the budget, and assisting in budget development and implementation.
• Handling employee scheduling and training.
• Ensuring all departments are maintaining high standards.

Reservation Sales Agent
A reservation sales agent is responsible for selling and booking cruise packages to individuals and groups for a cruise line or lines.
Reservation sales agent responsibilities include:
- Handling booking requests from potential clients.
- “Upselling” clients to generate increased revenue.
- Handling guest requests and complaints in a professional manner.
- Having an outgoing personality with excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

**Cruise Director**
The cruise director is among the most important jobs onboard any cruise ship and is responsible for the social activities and events offered to cruise passengers.

The cruise director is responsible for:
- Taking charge of all onboard entertainment, including the supervision of all cruise staff.
- Overseeing and ensuring the quality implementation of all social activities offered to clients on the ship.
- Creating, organizing and making sure that each day’s activities run smoothly.
- Attending all social events, and serving as the master of ceremonies for many such events.
- On some cruise ships, managing and coordinating the offshore excursions for passengers.

**Youth Counselor**
Youth counselors coordinate, implement and encourage participation in a wide array of fun and interesting onboard activities for children ages two to 17, usually divided by age groups. Activities may include games, contests, scavenger hunts, sports and fitness instruction, arts & crafts and kids’ parties.

Youth counselors may also:
- Provide supervision in designated areas while parents are enjoying activities.
- Assist with social activities and events as determined by the cruise director.

**Group and Convention Sales Manager**
The group and convention sales manager packages and promotes group cruiseline bookings for companies, business organizations, associations and other groups of all sizes. They are responsible for coordinating the cabin bookings, arranging special social events and offshore excursions, and addressing any other special needs of these specific groups.
Career Path #2:

PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION

This segment of the travel industry is responsible for transporting vacationers, professionals, and others to their destination. Some examples of Passenger Transportation include airlines, railways, ships, buses, cars, taxis and limousines.

Airlines

Reservation (Sales) Agent
On the front line, reservation agents are responsible for answering calls from travel agents and customers trying to book reservations. Agents work on a shift basis and must possess excellent customer service and telephone skills, as they are in constant communication with the public.

Reservation (sales) agents are responsible for:
- Answering inquiries from travel agents and customers regarding travel schedules, booking assistance, etc.
- Coordinating services for customers requiring special assistance.
- Being able to multi-task and prioritize duties, especially during peak hours.

Reservation Manager
This position, which is similar to the front office in a hotel, is responsible for overseeing all reservations made by customers, as well as overseeing staff members of the department. Leadership and decision-making skills are required when resolving customer complaints forwarded by reservation agents. In addition, reservation managers work with the sales department to make sure flights are booked to the fullest capacity to ensure profitability.

Other responsibilities of the reservation manager are:
- Delegating tasks and assigning responsibilities to reservation agents.
- Ensuring everyone within the department is adhering to company standards and working towards company goals.
- Creating a "team" environment where all agents can work together productively.
PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION CONTINUED

Customer Service Representative
Customer service representatives assist customers by answering questions, resolving complaints, and generally helping travel customers have a good experience. It is imperative that customer service representatives answer customer questions in a knowledgable, friendly and professional manner.

Customer service representatives are required to:
• Aid customers in ticket and baggage check-in.
• Assist customers in the event of lost baggage.
• Maintain cleanliness of all equipment.

Flight Attendant
Flight attendants’ primary responsibility is the safety of airline passengers, but most of their time is spent providing for the comfort of air travelers.

Flight attendants are responsible for:
• Attending pre-flight briefings and writing post-flight reports.
• Checking the cabin prior to each flight to ensure that all necessary food and supplies are available.
• Providing food and beverage service to coach and first class passengers.
• Providing basic first aid to injured or ill passengers.
• Taking care of unaccompanied children.

Station Manager
An airline station manager is responsible for the efficient and courteous management of the airline’s station at an airport to ensure the on-time and orderly departure of every scheduled flight.

Station managers are responsible for:
• Ensuring the safety of every flight by following all defined procedures, including monitoring the compliance of other airline staff with FAA, airline and local airport safety operating regulations.
• Monitoring and ensuring that all appropriate customer service procedures are followed by station staff.
• Recruiting, hiring and training new station staff.
• Preparing monthly reports and attending airport, airline and FAA meetings.
PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION CONTINUED

Account Executive
An airline account executive markets airline services to companies within a specific geographic or industry area, negotiating volume-based agreements.

Account executives also are responsible for:
- Helping corporations prepare Requests for Proposal from travel agencies.
- Working with meeting sales and group sales to increase airline revenue.
- Coordinating arrangements with those car and hotel vendors that are the airline’s partners to provide a comprehensive solution to a client’s corporate travel requirements.

Ground Transportation (Automobile and Rail)

Rental (Sales) Agent
On the front line, car rental reservation agents are responsible for answering incoming calls from travel agents and customers regarding booking reservations. Agents work on a shift basis. They must possess excellent customer service and telephone skills, for they are in constant communication with consumers.

Some responsibilities of the reservation sales agent are:
- Answering inquiries from travel agents and customers regarding travel schedules, booking assistance, etc.
- Coordinating services for customers requiring special assistance.
- Being able to multi-task and prioritize duties, especially during peak hours.

Corporate Account Manager
A corporate account manager for a car rental company is responsible for developing and maintaining corporate rental contracts through travel managers, travel agents and corporation executives.

A corporate account manager is also responsible for:
- Promoting one or more car rental company’s products and services to corporation clients in assigned territories or industries.
- Developing and implementing sales strategies that result in corporate rental contracts.
- Negotiating rental rates and contract terms with corporations.
- Ensuring that corporate clients receive the services for which they have contracted.
PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION CONTINUED

Assistant Manager
As well as monitoring the team, the assistant manager is required to set performance objectives for all employees regarding company expectations, as delegated by upper-level management. A clear understanding of the company’s goals is crucial to the success of the property. Assisting management in defining those goals will open the door to future growth.

Some responsibilities of the assistant manager are:
• Implementing and enforcing company policies at all times.
• Delivering an outstanding level of customer service.
• Possessing decision-making and leadership skills to be used in the event a problem should arise.
• Communicating clearly and regularly with management regarding issues and concerns pertaining to operations.

Branch Manager
The branch manager is responsible for overseeing all operations within the property, and is required to utilize all available resources to increase profitability of the company. Additionally, the branch manager must ensure that company standards are being followed. With the help of the assistant manager, the branch manager develops standards and objectives to be applied to the property that will facilitate future success for everyone involved.

Other responsibilities of the branch manager are:
• Hiring, training and developing employees.
• Fostering a customer service oriented environment to ensure customer satisfaction with the goal of generating repeat business.
• Monitoring financial performance; developing and implementing plans to improve and maintain it.

Career Path #3
DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

Connecting travel suppliers and travel consumers are Distribution Channels. This segment contains everything from travel agents to tour operators. Acting as an agent for the consumer, the distribution channel segment of the travel industry is responsible for identifying client travel needs and matching various packages offered by various providers. Additionally, the distribution channel of the travel segment plays a vital role in promoting other hospitality organizations such as hotels, resorts, casinos, etc.
DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS CONTINUED

Tour Operators

Tour Guide
Capitalizing on their knowledge of diverse cultures, tour guides host groups interested in visiting and learning about a particular country or state or city. They will provide an overview of natural, cultural, historic and other aspects of a destination. It is the tour guide’s job to ensure tour members have a pleasant experience.

A tour guide typically:
• Has specific knowledge of certain types of destinations.
• Reports to the tour director.
• Has special knowledge of activities such as mountain climbing, scuba diving, white water sports, etc.
• Speaks more than one language.
• Is certified in First Aid and CPR.
• Can solve various logistical problems or issues.

Tour Director
A tour director serves as a source of information for the passengers on the tour. A tour director must possess knowledge of the destinations visited in order to give the passenger a better understanding of the culture and the local sights and sounds.

A tour director is responsible for:
• Creating a high level of enthusiasm within the group, while managing expectations.
• Serving as a "friend" to the passengers on the tour, making them feel comfortable in a new environment.
• Acting as the company representative, ensuring that the passengers receive the level of customer service that they expect.

Tour Sales Consultant
A tour sales consultant works closely with individuals, groups, and business organizations to sell and organize group travel programs, often for domestic or international tour companies.

A tour sales consultant is responsible for:
• Making telephone and personal sales calls to potential group tour clients.
• Working closely with clients to design a travel itinerary that meets the needs of their group.
DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS CONTINUED

Product Development Manager
A product development manager creates tour packages, starting with research on destinations.

A product development manager’s duties include:
• Logistical planning for group tours.
• Site inspections and qualification visits.
• Negotiating for space and rates with suppliers.
• Participating in the production of brochures and other marketing materials.
• Training agents and supervisors at destinations.

Travel Advising

Travel Counselor
Customer service and personal selling skills are essential to being a good travel counselor. Counselors are required to research travel destinations and products in order to determine the appropriate travel packages for their client.

A travel counselor is responsible for:
• Determining how willing and able the client is to make a purchase.
• Defining the client’s needs and determining the appropriate travel package to suit those needs.
• Making travel recommendations based on research of various locations.
• Motivating the client and “closing the sale.”
• Ensuring the client is satisfied, thereby generating repeat business.

Incentive Travel Specialist
Incentive travel is defined as a “management tool that uses an exceptional travel experience to motivate and/or recognize participants for increased levels of performance in support of organizational goals.” Incentive travel specialists work with top corporations to reward personnel, often salespeople, for high performance and to improve employee morale and relations.

Incentive travel specialists typically:
• Use customer relationship management to determine the proper travel package for a client.
• Assist organizations in creating and managing group incentive programs.
• Define and understand the company’s goals in order to “foster” corporate loyalty.
DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS CONTINUED

Corporate Travel Manager
Usually an in-house position, a corporate travel manager handles all the logistics of corporate travel. He/she works directly with suppliers. This position handles all of the travel arrangements for the company, including business travel, recreational travel, personnel relocation and meeting/convention planning.

The corporate travel manager is responsible for:
- Establishing and implementing a travel budget.
- Negotiating discounts with vendors.
- Preparing reports on travel expenses.
- Determining corporate travel policies and procedures.
- Attending regular industry meetings in order to stay up-to-date with industry trends and procedures.
- Utilizing effective customer relationship management skills to maintain superior customer service.

International Travel Manager
An international travel manager serves as both an agent and a consultant to clients. The main responsibility of the travel manager is to develop international itineraries within an established budget.

The international travel manager is responsible for:
- Possessing an understanding of airline rules and regulations.
- Disseminating the appropriate information to the appropriate people in a clear and concise manner.
- Understanding international airline rules and regulations.
- Advising clients on visas and other legal aspects of international travel.

Travel Broker
This position is essentially a travel agent that works for a travel broker, or wholesaler. The difference between a travel broker and a regular travel agency is that the broker will purchase a vast number of travel packages and tickets at a discounted rate in order to sell them at a reduced price to their clients.
WHERE THE JOBS ARE

Airlines/Airports
The airline industry is still recovering from the effects of the September 11 terrorist attacks. This is a highly competitive and regulated market. Over the past several years, a number of new regional airlines offering faster and less expensive services have entered markets across the U.S., providing a wider range of career opportunities in the air travel field.

Convention and Visitors’ Bureaus and State Tourism Offices
Working hand-in-hand, the Convention and Visitors’ Bureau and State Tourism Office in a region collaborate to promote the various sights throughout their region or state. It is the responsibility of these offices to promote and increase tourism within their region.

Destination Management Organizations
Destination Management Organizations are local companies that are hired by event planners to plan events and activities. These organizations work side by side with local event planners to ensure that guests of the event are fully entertained.

Destination Marketing Organizations
Destination Marketing Organizations are usually non-profit organizations whose purpose it is to actively market, advertise and promote to the public the full range of destination assets for recreational, cultural, environmental, business and visitor travel that are available in a certain geographic location, such as a city, county, or state.

Ground Transportation - Motor
This industry segment includes automobile and bus transportation, including taxis, limosines, charter vehicles and buses.

Rental Car Agencies
This industry segment includes automobile rental companies such as Avis and Hertz, which provide automobiles and other vehicles for rent by the hour, day, week and for longer periods for both leisure and business purposes.

Travel Agency
A Travel Agency is a business enterprise that helps travelers reserve plane tickets, learn about various destinations, and choose among numerous vacation packages or packaged tours. The travel counselors at the agency act as intermediaries between the supplier of the travel and the travel consumer.
WHERE THE JOBS ARE CONTINUED

Travel Wholesaler
A Travel Wholesaler provides the same services that a Travel Agency would offer, but at a much different price. Because the Travel Wholesaler, or Broker, buys various trip packages and tickets at a higher volume, they are able to sell to the consumer at a lower rate. Today, many Travel Wholesalers also can be found online at websites such as Orbitz, Cheap Tickets, Expedia, etc. Travel Wholesalers sell to individual consumers and to retailers, including Travel Agencies.