

At travel agency: advising customers

KEY POINTS

When giving advice to customers make sure you:

- listen carefully to the customer's needs and wishes;
- gain the customer's complete trust by offering valid advice;
- have up-to-date information on the particular areas your customer is interested in;
- have carefully researched all the possible options available;
- give fair and balanced professional advice and suggestions (the customer will understand if you are trying to promote one particular service or area above all the others for commercial reasons);
- explain all the terms and conditions of what you are proposing;
- point out any potential difficulties e.g. building or restoration work at the hotel proposing, political /social problems in the area.

KEY LANGUAGE

Destinations

- *Why don't you try the Brecon Beacons National Park in Wales / Picos de Europa in Spain / Sibillini Mountains / ...?*
- *You could try Spain / France / the Maldives ... for a change.*
- *You definitely / really should visit ...*
- *My personal recommendation would be to visit ... / You definitely / really should visit ...*
- *I can't recommend the Bahamas / USA / ... strongly enough.*
- *... definitely worth a try this year.*

Transportation

- *In my experience, the fly-and-drive option works really well.*
- *One idea is to book flights now and change them later on.*
- *In this (kind of) situation, I (would) always recommend / advise buying an open ticket.*

- *The sooner you book the flights the better.*
- *Your only option is to book an open ticket and get a return when you're out there.*
- *You have no choice but to change flights in ...*

Booking

- *It is usually a good idea to book well in advance.*
- *My suggestion / advice is to wait for a few months to see if prices come down a bit.*
- *Make sure you don't need to cancel at the last moment.*

Accommodation

- *The best / most important thing to do is to look at several accommodation options in the same place.*
- *How about trying a self-catering holiday?*
- *One way to spend less is to have self-catering accommodation.*

PRACTICE

1. Read and complete the dialogue with the words given.

help • thought • suggestions • Why • recommendation • try • advise

A: Could you **(1)** me with my holiday plans?

B: Sure. Do you have any idea where you would like to go?

A: Not really – I am open to **(2)** at this point. Maybe a beach holiday, ideally somewhere quiet and relaxing.

B: Would you like to go to a warm climate or somewhere with a cooler climate?

A: Somewhere cooler I think.

B: Have you **(3)** about visiting the Greek Islands? They're really nice out of season, say in early June.

A: Well, I hear they're a bit expensive and crowded even in June. What about somewhere quieter?

B: (4) don't you try Portugal? My personal **(5)** would be to stay near the beaches on the coast above Lisbon. I can give you some brochures for those places.

A: Sounds interesting. Do you recommend any places in particular?

B: Well, you could **(6)** Peniche. It's really nice. It's a small resort with a great beach and good for surfing, too.

A: I see. I'll keep that in mind.

B: By the way, what's your budget for this trip?

A: I think that I can spend about two thousand euros in total for the four of us.

B: Well, one **(7)** to save some money would be to book the flights now while they're cheap and then sort out the accommodation. I would **(8)** taking an open ticket so you can change the departure time if necessary.

A: OK thanks for your advice. I'll have a look at the brochure and then get back to you.

2. Put the client's replies in the correct position in the dialogue.

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. OK, apart for the casinos and restaurants, are there any others activities I could do? | e. Good morning, I would like to book a hotel in Las Vegas |
| b. What about flights? | f. The last two weeks of July |
| c. I'm not sure. Can you give me a few options? | g. Looks good, but what facilities has it got? |
| d. Could you help me with that? | |

Agent: Good morning! How can I help you?

Client: (1)

Agent: OK, when would you like it for?

Client: (2)

Agent: OK. What type or accommodation are you looking for?

Client: (3)

Agent: Well, if I were you I'd book a room in one of the casinos. They have great accommodation. Here's a brochure, this is the luxury Hotel Mirage, what do you think?

Client: (4)

Agent: It has a casino obviously, three discos, a lot of restaurants and it has a swimming pool too.

Client: (5)

Agent: If I were you I'd book them quickly as there's a lot of demand in that period.

Client: (6)

Agent: Sure, I can book those for you.

Client: (7)

Agent: Yes, you can do bungee jumping, for example, or you can do an excursion to the Grand Canyon by coach.

3. Role play the following situation with your desk mate in a travel agency. Follow the instructions provided.

Caller

- You are interested in a holiday in ...
- You would like to see/do ...
- You have ... (duration) free in (period) ...
- You would like to stay in (type of accommodation) ...
- Your budget is around ...

Travel agent

Welcome the client and ask questions to find out his/her preferred destination and options. Give the person advice on the best options available (use Internet where required) and if necessary encourage him/her to modify the original plans/destination if you feel you have better alternatives.