TRAVEL AGENCIES IN BAGUIO CITY: THEIR STATUS, PROBLEMS, AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to establish a status profile of the travel agencies operating in Baguio city, their problems, and prospects. Using descriptive-survey with informal interview and the questionnaire as means of data gathering, it was revealed that most of the travel agencies are owned by sole proprietors, have few staff members, with passport processing, reservation and ticketing the primary services offered and traveling businessmen as their main clients. Their most common problem relate to the inadequacy of the papers or documents of their clients and the confirmation of bookings from their suppliers. The travel agents agree that to be able to gain competitive advantage, continuous tourism-related skill training and investing on technology are necessary.

I. INTRODUCTION

Traveling in ages past was troublesome, and the idea of tourism – travel for pleasure and enjoyment – was virtually nonexistent. However, in today’s world, travel does not conjure up images of hardship and pain. People travel great distances in speed and comfort. Journeys that took months by horse and carriage, weeks by ship, and days by car or train now take only hours by air. Vacations that once cost a fortune, in terms of time and money, can now be enjoyed by people of more modest means. Sales people travel to get more business; young couples save for vacations, families visit relatives and friends; and retired people travel the world for enjoyment and relaxation.

The travel industry today is characterized by dynamic growth and many opportunities. Major companies are building hotels, expanding travel services, and opening new air routes to places they have never been before. Advanced communication technology makes it easier, faster, and more economical to plan trips (Landry, 1994).

Travel, whether for business or pleasure, requires arrangements. The traveler usually faces a variety of choices regarding transportation and accommodation, if the trip is for pleasure, destinations, attractions, and activities. The traveler may gather information on prices, schedules, characteristics of the destination, and available activities on his own, investing considerable amount of time and possibly money on long-distance telephone calls.
to complete the trip arrangements. Alternatively, the traveler may use the services of a travel agency, obtaining all of these arrangements at minimal cost.

A travel agency is a middleman – a business or a person selling the travel industry's individual parts or a combination of the parts to the consumer. Fletcher (2003) defines a travel agent as an agent-middleman, acting on behalf of the client making arrangements with suppliers of travel – airlines, hotels, tour operators – and receiving a commission from the suppliers.

A travel agent is thus an expert, knowledgeable in schedules, routing, lodging, currency, prices, regulations, destinations, and all other aspects of travel and travel opportunities. In short, a travel agent is a specialist and a counselor of travel (Cruz, 2006).

Besides selling prepared package tours, a travel agency also prepares individual itineraries. It arranges for hotels, motels, accommodation at escorts, meals, sightseeing, transfers of passengers and luggage between terminals and hotels; furthermore, it can provide the traveler with a host of other information which would normally be hard to get. Such travel enterprise saves the customer's time and money (Mc Intosh and Ritchie, 2005).

Baguio City, known as the “Summer Capital of the Philippines”, is one of the country's premier tourist destinations. The city is approximately 250 kilometers north of the country's capital, Manila. Its pine-covered hills and fresh mountain air – a stark contrast to the warm humidity of the capital – create an atmosphere that is hard to resist (Asiatype, 2001).

The 2008 records of the Department of Tourism (DOT)- Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) show that tourist arrivals in the city continue to rise. Gabriel Keith of the City Tourism Office said that the arrival last year (2007) compared to year 2006 represents an increase of 9.16 percent (personal communication, April 3, 2008). The City Tourism Office declared that a total of 559,515 local and foreign tourists have visited Baguio City in 2007. Of this number, 544, 161 or 97.25% are Filipinos. Keith (2008) claimed that the tourism office does not count on persons who visit the city for less than 24 hours because they are only categorized as excursionists. If all the excursionists will be counted, then the number of people who had visited the city would be in a million. Among the foreign visitors, South Koreans topped the list with 7244 or 1.29%. This followed by the Americans (1.29 %) and the Japanese (.73%). Other foreign visitors include the Chinese and the Australians. Traveling to Baguio City is not very different from visiting other cities in the Philippines in terms of available facilities. All modern conveniences are also available in the city.
Traveling is one of the most important social and economic activities today. The number of domestic and international travelers is steadily increasing and many areas are now seeking to develop tourism for its many benefits. The role of the travel agencies in the marketing is very important as the tourists plan their stay. In the city, travel agencies entertain inquiries regarding hotel accommodations, tours, and transportation. They encourage travelers to visit tourist spots like Burnham Park especially the “lake”, Mansion House as president’s residence in Baguio, Wright Park for horseback riding, PMA as Asia’s finest military academy, Camp John Hay as the very first American base, and the Maharlika Livelihood Center for native products of the Cordilleras. But given all the above mentioned tourist spots, what a travel agent always advises to tourists is to experience how Cordillera culture touches their stay.

The importance of the travel industry could not be underestimated. The success of tourism-related establishments provides much to the earnings of the province or city which in turn can play a vital role in the national economic recovery of the country. Therefore, it is very important that strategies for better marketing management must be utilized by travel agency entrepreneurs, who are the subject of this study. Appropriate assessment of status, problems, and prospects of travel agencies in Baguio City is relevant to ensure continuous improvement and maximize quality service to travelers. In this light, the study aims to determine the following.

1. Profile of travel agencies in terms of nature of ownership, employees’ educational attainment & trade trainings, services, customer-travelers service preferences, and agencies’ network;
2. Problems encountered during its operation; and
3. Priorities in attaining competitive advantages, and technology application.

II. METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research method was used in this study. The researcher considered the assertion of Leedy (1993) that descriptive method is a purposive process of gathering, analyzing, classifying, and tabulating data about the prevailing conditions, procedures and operations of a certain phenomenon – such as the status, problems, and prospects of travel agency enterprises – and then making adequate and accurate interpretation of such data.

The survey questionnaire was the primary instrument used in gathering the needed data. During the preparation of the questionnaire, various sources were consulted such as
travel agents, customers, and faculty members of UC-CHRMT. Furthermore, results of informal participative observation by the researcher during her previous work experiences had helped her formulate the questionnaire.

After the questionnaire was finalized and printed, it was distributed to the 31 travel agency enterprises in Baguio City. The respondents are the managers or the owners of the travel agencies. Also, the researcher conducted informal interviews on the day of retrieval of the questionnaire for further validation of the data.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The status of the subject travel agencies pertains to the nature of their ownership, the profile of the personnel, the services which the business enterprises offer, the characteristics of their customer-travelers, and their linkages with travel and tourism organizations within and outside the country. For the purpose of this chapter, the pertinent data on each status indicates are presented in appropriate tables.

PROFILE OF THE TRAVEL AGENCIES

Nature of Ownership. The travel agencies under consideration were classified according to ownership either sole proprietorship, partnership or corporation status. The gathered data reveal that 25 out of the 31 or 85.65 % of the travel agencies are operating under sole ownership. These travel agencies can make their own decisions. Chand (2003) describes a sole proprietor as the ‘chief’, the main man in command of the business, the big boss. Sole proprietorship can steer the business into whatever direction you see fit and, like an artist using a canvass, makes whatever strokes using any hues

There are 4 or 12.90% of the respondents who claimed that their travel agencies are corporations. Compared to sole proprietorship, a corporation’s decision making process is more tedious as it undergoes more scrutiny from the board of directors and officers. One reason why owners prefer corporation is that there is bigger capital and wider client linkages resulting in better financial support and better profit.

There are only 2 or 6 % percent of the respondents who said that their agencies are under partnership. Unlike the corporation, the partnership is regarded merely as an aggregation of persons doing business under a common name and not as a legal entity separate and apart from its shareholders. The implication of this is that the earnings of the
partnership will be taxed only as personal earnings of the partners. Although corporations are usually organized to have perpetual existence, partnerships may be dissolved at any time upon the withdrawal of a partner or upon the death of a partner. Dissolution may be avoided by issuing transferable shares, but this device is not feasible except by a large organization, in which, as in the case of a corporation, operating control can be centralized in a board of managers (Britannica Deluxe Edition, 2007).

Chand (2003) claimed that the selection of suitable form of organization is based on various factors such as capital requirement, legal formalities, tax incentives, limited liabilities, professional requirement, location, nature of business, size of business, stability and continuity, financial and non-financial incentive availabilities, economic considerations, market factors. Whether sole, partnership, or corporation, an organization of a travel company largely depends upon the size and type of business handled by it. Generally, in a small and medium scale travel agency / tour operator, one will find a simple organization structure being limited in terms of operation, size, division of labor and so forth.

**Personnel.** The gathered data show that 24 or 77.42% of the 31 travel agencies have been operating with less than five (5) staff members, 5 or 16.13% have 6-10 staff, and only 2 or 6.45% percent have more than 11 staff. This implies that travel agencies do not need intensive manpower in order to operate the business.

A small-sized travel agency would have no more than ten (10) employees, with the manager supervising all the departments of the agency. On the administrative side, the back-up staff would be made up of a secretary, a bookkeeper, a cashier, and the utility staff for janitorial and messenger services. Operations would have a travel counselor or counter staff, backed up by a ticketing and reservation staff, and a liaison officer. The manager also acts as the marketing person, backed up by an account executives to perform the sales functions. To reduce the staff costs, the accounting functions would be contracted to an outside individual.

Part-time workers are also welcome in this kind of business especially those that concerns jobs related to sales and marketing. A part-time worker or freelancer as they call it is a person who acts independently without being affiliated with the organization. Freelancers do the selling and their income relies on their sales performance in terms of commissions and rebates.
Another reason why freelancers are hired is that they can expand the capabilities and capacity of the organization and give it flexibility to scale up and down the number of employees according to the organization’s needs (Allen, 2007). Todd & Rice (2002) stressed that an independent travel counselor works for a travel agency selling its services to businesses, groups, and individuals and gains its compensation in the form of commission on products sold.

Travel related companies rely on customers’ wants and needs. Direct contact with these customer-travelers is really vital to enhance their sales & marketing outcomes. Very often, the more sales consultants an agency has, the more sales force is needed in its employ. If freelancers can pursue the sales, it means more clients and possible income for the company. Juden (2005) said that freelancers can be the perfect complement to a permanent workforce, especially when competition for staff is tough.

**Hiring Employees.** The travel agencies under study have their own criteria in the hiring of personnel. All of the travel agencies employ college graduates. The data show that 14 or 45.16% of the respondents prefer business-tourism graduates as employees. Since the business is highly related to the tourism industry, it is expected that graduates of tourism-related courses like BS Tourism and Foreign Service which concentrate on geography, tourist spots, and customer service are preferred.

Nine (9) or 29.03% of the respondents hire graduates who are specialized in business related courses like BS Commerce with professional concentration on Marketing, Management, or Accounting. This implies that the respondents choose employees who possess basic business knowledge and skills. Eight (8) or 25.81% of the respondents are not really particular with the college degree obtained by their staff as long as they are college graduates. Tourism manpower planning does not aim to determine quantity of human resources. It aims to determine quality, estimate demand for the future, anticipate specific jobs, and determines the sound recruitment of potential employees (Chand, 2003).

The fields of travel, tourism, and hospitality are constantly growing and changing. An individual who has the necessary motivation, education, and experience will have the opportunity to enjoy a highly satisfactory career or several careers if he or she is willing to continue to learn and explore new challenges. He may have a challenging and exciting future in one of the positions described previously or in a position which is not yet designed. Individuals who want mobility have a variety of careers from which to choose. Not only great
mobility within given field such as travel agency, but also among several career fields. A well-trained professional can provide the same kind of competencies for airlines, cruise lines, bus companies, state or local tourist agencies as well as a variety of hospitality-related fields (Cruz, 2006).

**Travel Trade Trainings.** The gathered data show that the staff members of the travel agencies attend four major trade trainings. There are 28 or 90.32 % of the respondents who allow their employees to attend intranet training, and basic travel & tours operations. Intranet trainings like Abacus, Amadeus, and PACERS are computerized systems which are connected to all suppliers, travel agents, and tourism related providers. These systems make the operation access sites that provide basic information on possible destinations, lodging, hotel accommodation, and travel agencies among other things.

Before the advent of the intranet system, basic travel and tours operations already exist. But the operations were done manually in terms of reservations, ticketing, and documentations, using pen & paper, calculator, and manual typewriters.

There are 20 or 64.52% of the respondents who said they send their staff to attend sales and marketing training. This kind of training is also one concern of a travel agency because it deals with customers’ behavior. A travel & tours marketer should be aware of the different moods and wants of travelers that shape the travel demands.

Only 10 or 32.26% of the agencies have their employees exposed to frontline & customer service training. Frontline and Customer Service is part of sales & marketing as it is concerned with the daily walk-in clients who visit or call the agency and ask for assistance.

Trainings for travel agents are provided by many vocational schools and colleges & universities that offer full-time tourism courses. Some employers prefer agents who have a background in computer science, geography, communication, foreign languages, or world history, because these backgrounds suggest an existing interest in travel and culture and help agents develop a rapport with clients (Cruz, 2006). Courses in accounting and business management also are important especially for those who expect to manage or operate a travel agency (Horner, 1996).

**Services Offered by the Travel Agencies.** Travel agencies can offer as many travel-related services as they can; but agencies have the so-called specialty service which makes them known to clients. The respondents were requested to rank the services individually,
with rank 1 reflecting the most common service rendered and with rank 5 the least common. The ranks given by the respondents for each service were added to come up with the total. The over-all rank was based on the total.

The gathered data show that passport processing & documentation and reservation & ticketing lead the services offered by the agencies. These are followed by students' educational tour assistance, tour packages and visa assistance. Claravall (2008) mentioned that in order to increase an agency’s revenue, additional product line such as students' eductours, travel insurance, tour guiding, and events management services are also offered. As published by Home Travel@Agency (2007), the travel agency today is vastly different from the early agency operating out of a bus station or café. Agencies offer many services that no one even dreamed of forty years ago.

**Preferred Tourist Destinations.** The gathered data reveal that 24 or 77.43 % of the respondents claimed that Hongkong is the most preferred international tourist destination of their clients. This is followed by Bangkok in Thailand and then Singapore. It is interesting to note that these destinations are all located in Asia. Hongkong is considered the shopping paradise of Asia. It also has the Disneyland World Park, its newest tourist attraction. Also, Bangkok, Thailand is also preferred because of the oriental nature of its culture. Thailand offers diverse culture - tourists love to visit Bangkok for the aesthetic appreciation of its culture & heritage – a touch of Buddhism. Singapore is called the “Little America of Asia” because of its advanced technology and breakthroughs in its buildings and highways. Other international tourist destinations mentioned by the respondents are, Jakarta, Indonesia, the USA, United Kingdom, Europe, Macau, Australia, China, and Canada.

As for domestic travel destinations, Boracay in Aklan ranks first with 25 or 80.65 % of the respondents claiming that it is the most preferred destination of their clients. An isolated island in Aklan, Boracay was voted as the best beach in the world by ASTA Spots in 1995, 1997, and in 2000. Almost all Filipinos love to visit this eco-tourism spot all year round. Boracay is known for its refined sugar-like sand and its clear quiet waters. Palawan is also popular choice of the travelers according to 22 or 70.97% of the respondents. Palawan is the choice of adventurous tourists. Cebu referred to as the “Queen City of the South” is also preferred by the travelers. It is attractive because of its history, beaches, exotic foods, and the hospitality of the Visayan people. Tagbilaran in Bohol, Davao, Bacolod, and Camiguin are also in the list. In Northern Luzon, travelers prefer Banaue, Ifugao and Sagada of the Mountain Province, Vigan City of the Ilocos Region and the Hundred Islands of
Pangasinan. The capital city of Manila and the provinces of Laguna and Cavite are also some of the choices.

The most obvious sellers of destinations are the travel agents. To be effective, the travel agent must be aware of the various aspects of the places that the travelers favor (Mancini, 1995). Selling a place is a genuine art. It requires knowledge of the destination and of the traveler’s needs. The object is not simply informing people about destination, but to motivate them to visit the tourist destination.

**Occupation and Residence of Customer-travelers.** In terms of occupation of the travelers, businessmen lead the rank with 41.92% of the respondents answering that they are their number one clients. Businessmen often attend meetings and conferences in different places; hence, there is a need for them to travel. Next are the private employees. Apparently, these employees often travel to relax and have a break from the monotony of their jobs.

In terms of clients’ residence, local residents are the most common clients of the travel agencies as revealed by 24 or 74.19% of the respondents. This implies that local travelers avail of the services of a travel agency that is already within the locality or community. Foreigners also avail of the services of the travel agencies. Some foreigners consider availing the services of a travel agent in the processing of their papers and other travel necessities for their convenience. Balikbayan also avail of the services of the agencies in the processing of their papers and when touring the country.

**Reasons for Traveling.** Seventeen (17) or 54.84% of the respondents claimed that the reason why their clients travel is business-related. The travelers are businessmen who attend conventions, business conference, or some other kind of professional activity. Other clients travel for personal reasons such as seeking for medical treatment, relaxation and exploration, and relaxation or recreation. Some people visit a particular place for sightseeing and recreation. They spend their leisure time engaging in various activities like sports, sunbathing, talking, singing, taking rides, touring, reading, or simply enjoying the environment. Some also travel for educational purposes or for conducting some kind of scientific research or study. Visiting friends or relatives is also a reason given by the respondents as a reason for their clients’ travel.

**Linkages with Tourism Industry.** Since tourism is a diverse industry made up of many different segments, there is a need to interrelate and share information. This has led to the
establishment of several public and private organizations at the international, national, regional, state, and local levels (Cruz, 2006). Basically, a travel agency serves two (2) types of clients: business travelers and leisure travelers. The requirements of these tourists are different and an agency has to assemble or purchase related components from the principal suppliers to cater their needs. Essentially, travel agencies, maintain close ties with the airlines, hotels, car rentals, banks, insurance companies, government, trade associations, tour operators, travel agents, and tourism educational institutes (Chand, 2003).

Travel companies provide business to organizations and in return receive commissions. Such travel company can not work in isolation but is interdependent with other related enterprises.

Nineteen (19) or 61.29% of the travel agencies in Baguio city are members of the Baguio City Travel & Tours Association (BCTTA) while 12 or 38.71% are members of the National Association of Independent Travel Agents (NAITAS). Both BCTTA & NAITAS are regional associations based in the city. Some of the agencies are members of the Baguio Tourism Council (BCT), Baguio City Visitors Bureau (BCVB), Hotel and Restaurants Association- Baguio (HRAB) and others.

It is also noted that some agencies are members of national organizations like the Philippine Travel Agencies Association (PTAA), the Philippine Conventions and Visitors Corporation (PCVC), and the Philippine Tour Operators Association (PhilTOA). These professional tourism organizations work closely with the government to promote the development of the tourism industry. Some of the travel agencies are also accredited by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

The International character of modern tourism and growing influence of international agencies in various fields are shown in the growth of international cooperation and organization in tourism. In the city, one (1) travel agency is a member of the International Air Traffic Association (IATA) while another is a member of the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) and another is a member of the Philippine-Asia Travel Association (PATA).

It also noted that 3 travel agencies have no affiliations in any regional, national or international organization in its based industry. Claravall (2008) said that a travel agency can not isolate itself from associations that are actively involved in the trade.
PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY TRAVEL AGENCIES

Based on the gathered data, the problems encountered by the travel agencies in Baguio City are (1) lack of appropriate papers or documents, (2) demanding clients, (3) booking, (4) limited skills of the staff, and (5) expensive tours.

Lack of Papers/Documents. There are 14 or 45.16% of the agency-respondents who claimed that lack of appropriate papers/documents/information is a common problem in their operations. These papers pertain to birth certificates (discrepancy of details or no records), marriage contracts (legal or commonly married), school and/or employment certification, properties’ documents, and even bank statements. Embassies, and government agencies like the DFA, Bureau of Immigration (BI), and the POEA, are so strict in their authentication of documents, hence the processing of papers often becomes a problem.

Confirmation of Bookings from Suppliers. Eight (8) or 25.81% of the respondents claimed that their most common problem pertains to confirmation of bookings. Most of the travel agencies in the city do not have direct access to suppliers (airlines, hotels, resorts, and other tourism-related establishments) hence they have a hard time asking for confirmation of bookings because they only rely on the slots of their wholesalers, and it’s up to these wholesalers to confirm the bookings. Only 1 or 3.23% of the travel agencies is a member of IATA which means that only one agency has a direct access to suppliers to make reservation and request for tickets online. This problem underscores the importance of affiliating with national and international organizations.

Demanding clients. Seven (7) or 22.58% of the respondents claimed that a problem they usually experience relate to the behavior of their clients or the travelers. They claimed that some clients insist on what they want and they want it to be given quickly. Such behavior they said is irritating and can hinder the smooth operation of the agency.

Price. Since all services and products of tourism should be quoted in terms of the US Dollar as declared by the World Tourism Organization, the rates appears to be expensive for travelers for they have to convert the Philippine Peso to the US Dollar in paying the services that they have availed of. Rates in packages actually are inclusive of all government taxes and insurances. This problem however is one of the least mentioned difficulties encountered by the respondents.
Limited Knowledge and Skill of Staff. Lack of adequate skill and knowledge of the staff is also one of the least mentioned problems of the travel agencies. Although, this is not so much of a problem to the agencies, there is still a need for a continuous training program for travel consultants and other staff members in order to update them with latest strategies and technology on how to improve their service and enhance the satisfaction of their clients.

PROSPECTS OF THE TRAVEL AGENCIES

Although travel is an important and constant force in world economy, it is a volatile field and travelers can be very fickle. There are hundreds of destinations and companies competing for travelers’ attention and their money. Many, many things can affect the popularity and acceptability of destinations to the world’s travelers (Fletcher, 2003).

Tourism industry today is the product of many forces that have shaped both its structure and the manner in which it functions. A large number of factors have consistently influenced the growth of tourism including economic prosperity, availability of leisure time, higher levels of education, and increase in the number of retirees, credit availability, growth of cities and improvement in transportation (Cruz, 2006).

Competitive Advantages. These are issues that include changing demographics, market segmentation, frequent-guest programs, continuous staff career advancement, and role of tri-media in marketing strategies. Of these issues, continuous training of staff is a top priority of thirteen (13) or 41.94% of the agency-respondents, seven (7) or 22.59% agency-respondents favor the designing of attractive packages, and another six (6) or 19.35% want to employ market segmentation as top priority to keep their business competitive. Promoting services through tri-media campaign is also suggested by five (5) or 16.13% of the agency-respondents. These findings imply that to be competitive in the industry, the travel agencies acknowledge the importance of improving their services through trainings, advertising, and other promotional programs.

Technology. At the travel agent’s fingertip is the ability to access information quickly. E-commerce invites competitive purchasing of services from either local suppliers or directly from global-site sellers. The ability to negotiate without one-on-one, intimidating personal interaction, using web-based services, is changing the rules of commerce.

Based on the gathered data, twenty (20) or 64.52% of the agency-respondents prefer to acquire latest equipments & gadgets for faster and better operations; additional
intranet system is secondary, and applying e-commerce to their business is the last priority. Home Travel Agency (2007) averred that the small agency of today is computerized and has immediate access to worldwide travel information. It can issue a ticket and printed itinerary in less than ten seconds. It can fax a hotel on the other side of the globe and have a confirmed reservation for a client in a matter of hours, if not minutes.

It is also revealed in the study that the respondents concentrate on customer-traveler convenience more than the internal prospects of the business. Marketing strategies and technology play a vital role in making travel agency operations updated on business trends. Although the customer is regarded as the “heart of marketing”, still internal forces like human resources and marketing strategies make the business cells “go, grow, and glow.” Technology is the name of the game today – Digital Revolution of Business. E-commerce is evolving to keep business wireless, touching the world in just a click of a finger, and see & talk to suppliers, clients, and have video-conference through intranet transaction. The agency-respondents realize the value of modern technology for their business advantage.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the travel agencies in Baguio city are under sole proprietorship, operated by a few staff, prefer to hire graduates of tourism-related courses, send their staff to attend Intranet trainings and basic travel and tours operations, offer passport processing, ticketing, and reservations as their primary services, and are members of local/regional and national tourism-related organizations. Very few are members of international organizations.

The clients of the travel agencies are mostly businessmen who attend meetings and conferences in different places. The most preferred international tourist destination of their clients is Hongkong while Boracay in the province of Aklan in the Visayas is the most preferred Philippine tourist destination.

The most common problem encountered by the travel agencies relate to the processing of the necessary papers/documents of their clients. Continuous training, acquisition and use of modern technology and designing attractive tourism-related packages are necessary strategies for competitive advantage in the field of the travel and tourism industry.

As recommendations, travel agencies should develop a continuous training program for their employees to update and enhance their knowledge and skills in performing their
functions. Attendance to travel trade trainings and customer relations workshops is necessary for the staff to gain expertise thereby promoting quality service.

Networking should be considered as a marketing strategy. The travel agencies should apply for more membership in national and international organizations. They should invest on modern technology to help them keep abreast with latest trends and techniques in the tourism industry.

Travel Agencies may adopt market segmentation and tri-media approach as promotional strategies and conduct market researches to know the needs, problems, and preferences of their clients.

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