

Picking the Best Travel Company: Ask the Right Questions

I. Educational Content

- a. What types of educational activities are included in the itineraries offered?
- b. What is the learning style? Is it lecture/classroom based or experiential?
- c. Is the company accredited?
- d. Does the company have a reputation in the world of education?
- e. What kind of training do the tour directors have?

II. Quality

- a. What type of hotels does the company use—ask for a list of samples.
- b. Are the meals local or American style? Are they in the hotel or in the city?
- c. Where are hotels located? Are they in the city center or further out?
- d. Are their itineraries strategically planned? i.e. How much bus time is there? Does the sequence of the itinerary make sense logistically
- e. How do they pick their tour directors? Are they local or American?

III. Benefits

- a. How will your center benefit from working with this company?
- b. What is their free place ratio?
- c. What commission options are available to generate revenue for the center?
- d. Do they have a loyalty program for Group Leaders?
- e. Do they reward repeat travelers?

IV. Price

- a. How does their price compare to that of other companies?
- b. Do they include flights or just land?
- c. Do they allow online payments or does the center need to collect payments?
- d. Do they accept credit cards?

V. Resources

- a. What type of materials do they provide to help you promote your trip?
- b. Will they provide electronic resources like a website?
- c. Do these resources cost extra?
- d. Can someone come to your meeting from the company?

VI. Safety

- a. How much experience do they have?
- b. What kind of emergency training do their tour directors have?
- c. Do they have local offices abroad in case of an emergency?
- d. Do they have 24 hour emergency support?
- e. Do they have medical and accident insurance for travelers? How much does it cost?

VII. Liability

- a. Does the company have liability insurance?
- b. Is the company financially stable? Can they prove it?
- c. Are they a member of the USTOA?