



Your Future...

in Travel & Tourism



Tour Operations Manager - Holiday Representative -
Groups Manager - Tourist Guide - EFL Teacher

Your Future in Travel & Tourism is the second volume of the
The “Your Future” series published by the
Malta Tourism Authority.
For more information on the “Your Future” series,
please contact the Malta Tourism Authority.

The Malta Tourism Authority would like to thank the following
tourism industry practitioners for their cooperation in the
compilation of information for this booklet:

Mr Joe Diacono - Best of Malta Travel & Tourism Ltd
Mr Joe M Bondin - Arrigo Group Ltd
Mr Hugh Von Brockdorff - A & V Von Brockdorff Services Ltd
Mr Iain Tonna - United Travel Agency Ltd
Mr Mark Busuttil - St Andrew's Divers' Cove

Special thanks go to the Federation of Associations of Travel and
Tourism Agents (FATTA) and the Federation of English Language
Teaching Organisations of Malta (FELTOM), as well as the
numerous other tourism industry practitioners who gave their
valued input towards this initiative.

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Foreword

The Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) has a diverse role, but one which in essence is about creating and fostering relationships. The Authority was formally set up by the Malta Travel and Tourism Service Act (1999). This defines our work as the tourism industry's regulator and business partner as well as promoter of the Maltese Islands as a tourism destination.

We work closely with the tourism sector on the Islands and help strengthen the industry to ensure the quality of our tourism product.

One area which is key to the tourism industry's success is the development of human resources. This booklet is part of our initiative to encourage more young people to take up careers in the travel and tourism industry. Here, we outline the various job roles, the career paths you can follow, the skills and attributes you will need and the rewards on offer if you choose a career in hotels and catering. If you have any queries or require further guidance, feel free to contact the MTA's Human Resources and Support Services Directorate. You will find our contact details at the back of this booklet.

So what is the travel and tourism industry about?

This sector operates mainly as a facilitator, sourcing a number of different services from other sectors within the industry and combining

them to deliver a complete package to the customer. Therefore, by its very nature, the travel and tourism sector provides the basis for an interesting and varied role.

All the roles within this sector are complementary to each other giving you the possibility of mobility between roles in any such organisation.

Therefore, this sector can offer you a life-long career in which you can make your mark as a team player in the industry which is known as the main pillar of the Maltese economy.

The job roles compiled in this booklet have service values at their core. Whether this client is a visitor to Malta or a Maltese person travelling abroad, contributing to his/her holiday experience will surely offer you a great deal of job satisfaction.

A job in this sector is intrinsically stimulating and certainly not routine, which renders it highly challenging. Every role essentially provides ample opportunity for individuals to exercise initiative and very often to demonstrate creativity. Each situation is unique and you will therefore constantly be gaining experience which can help you progress in your career.

Working in the travel and tourism sector requires that you keep abreast with developments both in the type of services being offered and in the improvements in the product offer. This implies a need for continuous learning and training, in itself a highly motivating need.

Being a service industry, customer contact is always a key factor. Thus an in-depth understanding of customer expectations is important. Any job within this sector necessitates interaction with people of different cultures, be they consumers or suppliers. Good communication skills are thus of paramount importance to all roles in order to be able to satisfy clients' needs and meet their expectations.

Nevertheless, the secret of success of any organisation lies within the harmony among its people. Organisations within the travel and tourism sector offer no exception. Working in this sector, you will be in constant interaction with your colleagues and inevitably you will be part of the team. You must always be ready to offer your support to your colleagues but also to receive it whenever the need arises. Such attributes will definitely help you move ahead in your chosen career in the travel business.

Careers in Travel and Tourism Management

The main components of the travel industry are the tour operators and the retail travel agents, although the very nature of the work requires considerable interaction with the transport, leisure and tourism sectors. Being so wide, the industry offers various opportunities to move from one section to another, providing you with a flexible set of skills you can use to widen your horizons beyond your area of specialisation. This means that whichever route you take you have a lot of scope to excel, even to management level.

Managing Director - Travel Agency

Definition

Travel agencies are the starting point for most holiday makers and business travellers. Travel agents act as front-line sales persons as well as liaisons between the customer and the tour operator.

What does a Managing Director do?

As Managing Director, chances are that you would also own the company. A Managing Director of small organisations (which rarely employ more than 10 people) has multiple roles. Your three main functions would be marketing, selling and managing daily business operations. You would have to try to attract new clients and increase your business not only by offering competitive prices but also by offering good value for money. To retain your clients' loyalty, you would have to make sure you offer a personalised service and maintain high standards. You must constantly make your staff conscious of the fact that making a booking is part of

the holiday experience and it needs to be special. You would also be responsible for recruiting staff and offering them training opportunities in order to keep them motivated. You would need to take decisions relating to the administration and day-to-day

"WORKING IN THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY MEANS SETTING OUT ON AN ADVENTURE. YOU MUST BE PREPARED TO TAKE RISKS!"

running of the organisation that may include purchasing of equipment and so on. Besides, you will need to keep in touch with what is happening in the travel industry to keep abreast of changing trends in tourism and to be able to adopt innovative business methods.

What skills do you need to do the job?

As in any other business, it is important to build your client base and to build well, you need to build carefully. The beginning is always tough and the experience gained over the years is priceless. Most people come into the travel industry, starting off in junior positions. Therefore, if you are going to succeed in this industry, you must be willing to do mundane, routine, work

particularly at the beginning of your career. The experience gained from taking on these junior roles will give you a greater insight into your subordinates' responsibilities and make you more of an all-rounder in the future. To excel in this job, you need a strong personality and good communications skills. You need to be able to take informed decisions and stand by them. As Managing Director, you would be expected to deal with multiple tasks simultaneously and prioritising. You need to develop the ability to delegate responsibility to your staff. You would be expected to have a good level of education and solid computer literacy because there is a wealth of information waiting to be tapped into via the Internet.

What's in it for me?

If you have an insatiable love for travel, then this could be the job for you. Travelling overseas will also give you the opportunity of meeting your counterparts in the industry and to make new contacts with whom to build business relationships. You will feel a deep sense of satisfaction whenever you manage to turn a threat into an opportunity and return a profitable bottom-line.



Becoming Qualified? See Page 25



Becoming Qualified? See Page 25

Director - Destination Management Company

Destination Management Companies (DMCs) usually handle Conference and Incentive Travel (CIT). This type of tourism usually involves short stays with special tailor-made programmes. Incentive travel usually comprises a package holiday given by a company as a reward to employees for the achievement of set goals. Conference travel groups are usually also on an invitation basis. A particular company would invite a number of delegates to a conference organised overseas, in this case, Malta. Delegates attending the conference may also be offered a pre-set programme at a special package price.

What does a DMC Director do?

Primarily, you will be responsible for ensuring that your company's standards are maintained at the highest levels in order to meet the expectations of CIT business. Two main factors will convince people to work with you: your ability to draw up tailor-made

programmes for the right price and the confidence you inspire. You would have to be constantly on the look out for new business: once a client has organised a conference in Malta one year, it is unlikely that the same client will send another group to Malta before another couple of years. As Director, you will have to balance between marketing your business and the administration aspect. You have to evaluate your clients' wishes before devising a programme for them. Working in destination management means that you have to be geared to win over not only your overseas counterpart but possibly his entire board of directors! You would also need to give the package you are offering a competitive edge because, more often than not, another four or five DMCs would be in the running for the same business. However, DMCs are not always in competition with each other - on the contrary, there are numerous instances when business is actually passed on to each other.

Therefore, it is very important to work on establishing and cultivating good working relationships with DMCs overseas.

What skills do you need to do the job?

You will require leadership and public speaking skills to succeed in this environment. You need to be confident with, as well as knowledgeable about

"NOTHING BEATS THE CHALLENGE OF SUCCESSFULLY ORGANISING AN ACTIVITY FOR ONE THOUSAND PEOPLE AT ONE GO!"

the product you are selling. You need to be multi-lingual and have a way with people. You have to be creative as there are no limits to the different formats a client's programme can take. You must



be prepared to adopt a hands-on approach to work. Teamwork plays a very important role in this industry. Each individual will have his/her own particular strengths, ranging from skills in a particular language, experience of working with people, decision-making and diplomacy. You are leading a good team when each member knows when it is time to take the lead and gain the support of the others. The scout's maxim of "be prepared" is also crucial in this industry where you need to think ahead and develop a plan that you can fall back on for each programme you organise.

What's in it for me?

If you decide to take up a career in Destination Management, you need to be prepared for plenty of travelling. This job will not find you in the limelight, but rather working actively behind the scenes making critical last-minute changes to the programme. Working in Destination Management puts you in direct contact with your clients and feedback is therefore more immediate. Knowing that you have contributed directly towards making a foreign company's conference or incentive programme a success will give you great satisfaction and will work wonders for your reputation in the industry.





Becoming Qualified? See Page 25

General Manager

What does a General Manager do?

As General Manager, you will have to look after the day-to-day running of the business. In smaller organisations, this role may be handled by the Managing Director himself. A big part of the job is managing the people who run the organisation's departments. If the organisation handles incoming business, you will be working closely with the Contracts Manager and the Sales and Marketing Manager. Whereas your sales person focuses on roping in business, your contracts person concentrates on finalising the deal. You have to be on top of all ongoing activities, whether it is a day-trip to Gozo or a conference for 500 people at the Mediterranean Conference Centre. You will be expected to strike a balance between giving your clients value for money and guaranteeing acceptable financial returns for your company. The job carries a lot of responsibility but it also allows you to use your initiative. Remember, you are the driving force behind the business and you will have the opportunity of implementing the ideas and standards that you believe will improve your business. You will need to travel overseas often to keep in touch with your foreign partners, to retain

your old clients and to attract new ones. Long working hours are part and parcel of this job but there is no doubt that client satisfaction is more important than the company's profits.

**"IN OUR BUSINESS,
THE BEST FORM OF
ADVERTISING IS A
GOOD WORD FROM ONE
OF OUR SATISFIED
CLIENTS"**

What do I need to do the job?

Flexibility, organisation, and cool-headedness are the keywords to describe what it takes to do this job. You will have to keep abreast of global trends, changes and developments in the tourism market and will have a good idea of socio-political affairs. You must be an ambitious person with a sense of vision. You don't become a General Manager overnight - you need to work your way up the ranks and that takes determination and charisma. You need to be energetic to motivate your

employees to give their best and to share your enthusiasm for the job. You are expected to have a sharp sense of what is taking place in the industry and of current trends to remain on the cutting edge. A keen mind for numbers is also an asset.

What's in it for me?

The working hours are long and this is one of the most demanding positions in the travel industry. But if you are looking for a challenge, this must be one of the jobs to aim for because many companies in the travel and tourism industry promote from within. Travelling overseas will broaden your horizons both on a business level as well as on a personal level. A large part of the success of your company's operations depends on your ability, as General Manager to gain the respect of your employees and to increase your client base. It is gratifying to know that your ideas and business methods play a large role in shaping your company's future. As General Manager, you are in the driving seat, steering your team towards exceeding your clients' expectations. The sheer sense of reward and satisfaction is hard to find elsewhere.





Sales and Marketing Manager

Larger companies in the industry can afford a person working specifically in Sales and Marketing, so that the Managing Director or General Manager can dedicate more time to strategic issues. Sales and Marketing persons are either involved in CIT, mentioned previously, where the travel programme would be a blend of business and pleasure or in leisure package holidays or leisure holiday groups or even in Special Interest Travel. Leisure holiday groups also known as “sun and sea” groups, are usually a number of people who decide they wish to go on a relaxing holiday and travel together. Special interest groups could also be leisure holidaymakers but this kind of tourist is more selective in his/her choice, perhaps going scuba diving or to some archaeological site. The spending power for Conference and Incentive Travel is usually higher than that of a leisure group and therefore a choice of more upmarket locations is the norm.

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What does a Sales and Marketing person do?

As Sales and Marketing Manager, you will be responsible for targeting all prospective markets to attract leisure holidays and special interest tourism that could be brought to Malta. Naturally, if your business lies in CIT, you will then be responsible for identifying possible Conference and Incentive Travel (CIT) business that can be brought to Malta. In CIT, you are always looking for new business opportunities because the cycle of repeat business in this sector is less frequent. To source new clients, you will have to travel overseas to meetings and fairs and make presentations to agents about the facilities available in Malta.

What do I need to do the job?

Sales and Marketing is a ‘people’ business so you must like working with and meeting different people. You have to be a creative person to constantly come up with new ideas that will give you an edge over other companies competing for the same business. You also have to keep your ears to the ground to get wind of any new services and products launched locally that could interest your prospective client. To do this job effectively you need to be multi-lingual and possess sharp negotiating skills. In marketing, you will be working one to two years ahead, researching market trends in the travel

industry. This role requires a confident, smart, well-groomed and articulate person, adept at addressing crowds and using audio-visual resources to convey ideas. You must be able to convince potential clients that you know your product well and that the choice you are offering is the best one for them.

What’s in it for me?

Working in Sales and Marketing is one of the most exciting, and challenging roles in the travel business. You will be involved in countless promotional and advertising activities. Travelling plays a major part in this business and you will be able to build contacts with people in the travel industry from all over the world. Working in Sales and Marketing means working odd hours. But if you are dedicated to your job, you will benefit from the very attractive salary packages in the field.

Becoming Qualified? See Page 25



Becoming Qualified? See Page 25

Tour Operations Manager

What does a Tour Operations Manager do?

A tour operator designs and sells travel packages for an all-inclusive price.



The package normally includes chartered flights, accommodation and transfers to and from the hotel together with a couple of excursions.

As a Tour Operations Manager working in the outgoing business, your main job will be making sure that your agency remains high on the preferred list of local holiday-makers who opt for package tours. The design of original, interesting and cost effective tours will give you an over aggressive competition. This means that you would have to travel to make inspections and visits at hotels and sites to ensure that they will meet your prospective clients' expectations thus delivering your service promise. Working in the

incoming business, you would have to attend fairs and travel markets overseas to keep in touch with old contacts and make new ones with representatives of upcoming holiday destinations. You will also be responsible for finalising contracts with overseas tour operators, making bookings, confirming flights and organising airport transfers, many months in advance. You will have to oversee the production of brochures that will feature the holiday packages you have put together. You could be dealing with companies that send many hundreds of holiday-makers, mostly on charter flights to Malta every week.



What do I need to do the job?

You will need strong selling skills and must be able to communicate with people of all ages and backgrounds. Knowledge of foreign languages is vital in this line of business to help you communicate with your clients in their native languages. You must be a patient person with a great deal of self-control. Some clients are more demanding than others and you must be prepared to tackle problems on the spot. This is probably close to being an eight-to-five job but you would have to be flexible as this could involve longer hours during peak season.

What's in it for me?

With this job, you can rest assured that every day will bring new challenges. You will be working in a fast-moving environment with specific deadlines and targets. Your greatest satisfaction is receiving positive feedback on a job well done. Tour operating depends greatly on repeat business - if your clients are satisfied, not only will they use your services again but they will also recommend you to others.

**"KNOWING THAT YOU
HAD SOMETHING TO
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**"EVERY DAY IS
DIFFERENT. YOU
NEVER KNOW
WHAT TOMORROW
WILL BRING!"**

Excursions Manager

What does an Excursions Manager do?

As Excursions Manager, you would be responsible for handling the organisation of local excursions for incoming passengers. You would have to prepare a choice of multi-lingual programmes for your clients. In the case of business from cruise-liners, bookings for different tours often come in at the last minute. In the cruise-liner business, you would usually be expected to coordinate a set of half-day excursions over a limited period of time to coincide with the cruise-liner's stay in Malta. Once confirmations are in hand, you

broader range of work to work your way up.

What do I need to do the job?

Without a shadow of doubt, you have to be well-organised and capable of anticipating possible scenarios. As Excursions Manager, you have to think on your feet and need to be persuasive in order to put a tour together in short order. Inter-personal skills are indispensable for managing the people working with you as well as other service providers. You would need to be knowledgeable about what is being

would also need to be imaginative and creative in order to come up with interesting facets of Maltese life that tourists may be interested in viewing: a Maltese *forn* (bakery) in Qormi, for example, or oil-pressing in Bidnija. It is also important for you to be sensitive to your clients' needs so as to customise tours according to their wishes. You must lead by example and be flexible in your approach. Like any other manager, you need to be fair and consistent in your dealings with clients and co-workers.

What's in it for me?

The fact that service providers are so obliging when working with you is a clear sign of the respect they have for you personally. And at the end of the day, it is also a guarantee that your clients will be well-served and your reputation therefore safeguarded. However, your main reward does come from seeing satisfied customers. Providing overseas tour operators with excursion packages can involve early starts and late finishes. Positive feedback be it through a phone call or an email, is clear recognition that your planning efforts have paid off.



would have to take the necessary steps to action what has been requested, be it a guided tour to the Hypogeum or a ride into Valletta by *karozzin*. At this stage, liaising with tour guides is essential. In this business it always pays to gain experience by being involved in a

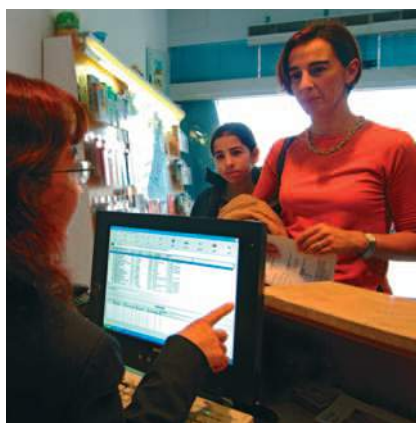
organised locally throughout the year to be able to include it in your excursion programmes. These events could include the Malta Fireworks Festival at the start of the summer season or the Historic Cities Festival when the weather starts getting cooler. You

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Reservations Manager / Executives / Clerks

Individuals involved in reservations departments have different roles to play, depending on whether they form part of incoming tourism agencies or outgoing travel agencies. In the case of incoming agents, staff would be expected to record and process reservations for local hotel accommodation, excursions, transfers and other services. This would involve liaising with the relevant service providers and the processes which are either automated through tailor-made software packages or done manually. In the case of outgoing agents, this role requires more specialised training in one of the Global Distribution Systems (GDS) available on the local market. The GDS would distribute reservation and information services to travel agents around the world and enable the booking of airline seats for customers.



What does the Reservations staff do?

Manager

As Manager, you would be responsible for the staff handling reservations but you would also have to supervise incoming bookings to ensure that there are no over-bookings and that the service is operated smoothly. You would negotiate with hotels to obtain the best rates possible. Acquiring a working knowledge of the various rules governing the market of the industry offers advantage of ascertaining that your clients get what they asked for. You would also be expected to liaise with other overseas handling companies sending holidaymakers to Malta. Holidaymakers are focusing on a source

of pleasure in their lives and it is your responsibility to encourage that “feel good” factor.

Executive

As a Reservations Executive, you would handle telephone calls from travel agents and sometimes the general public, as well as providing detailed information about the inclusive holidays on sale. You would be responsible for accepting all the booking requests that reach your organisation. You may receive individual requests from overseas as well as group bookings with particular requests.

Clerk

You would need to be very well informed about what is currently on the market and what is being offered because this will instil a sense of

confidence in your caller and you will be able to tackle your telephone enquiries more effectively and efficiently.

What do you need to do the job?

This job requires its fair share of determination. Sometimes you will need to persevere to satisfy your clients' request, which, admittedly, may be unusual. Perhaps a particular group may wish to follow the activities relating to the celebration of the feast of St. Paul in Valletta. You need to build your network of contacts within the industry because actually knowing the people you work with makes your job easier. You have to be a positive person and try to be as helpful as possible.

You would need to have good telephone manners because most of your interactions with potential business contacts would be over the

Becoming Qualified? See Page 25



phone. Holidays are booked through computerised systems so you must be computer literate and have good standards of numeracy and literacy to complete booking forms and cope with the general form-filling required. You need to action requests and secure the necessary bookings promptly. You cannot receive a request and sit on it for a couple of days. If you do that, you will lose the business to your competitors. Most importantly, you need to be very thorough in your work - you need to double-check what has been agreed.

What's in it for me?

In the travel and tourism industry, rewards can be very tangible. It is standard practice that reports are filled in about the service received from a particular resort. And it is always reassuring when positive reports are

posted about the agency you work for. Such feedback encourages you to try even harder. Since reservations offices are often open for long hours, staff may be asked to work shifts so if this suits your life style, this could be the job for you. The job in itself can be very demanding because there are often last-minute changes, which need to be seen to by a calm and composed person who will need to remain focused in order to be effective. But if you are dedicated to the job, there is a lot of satisfaction to be had.

"YOU DO NOT WORK IN ISOLATION: YOU ARE PART OF A TEAM WORKING TO GET A JOB DONE AND GETTING IT DONE WELL!"



**"FIRST IMPRESSIONS
COUNT BUT LAST
IMPRESSIONS ARE
LASTING.
THE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE
BOTH, GIVES YOU A SENSE
OF UNMEASURED
SATISFACTION"**



DMC / Holiday Representative

What do Company Representatives do?

DMC

A DMC representative would already have been involved in the preparation of a conference or incentive programme. The representative's role is to liaise with all the service providers laid down in the pre-established schedule of the conference or incentive programme. Usually the representative is therefore managing the "Welcome Desk" at the hotel where the conference delegates are being hosted or out and about with the guests all day. The service given is highly personalised and the representative would be expected to accompany delegates for most of the day.

Holiday Representative

The holiday representative was formerly known as the courier. The main responsibility of the representative is to see to clients' needs from the moment they arrive in Malta until their departure. You represent the tour operator to the holidaymaker and your main role would be to make sure that everything runs smoothly. With incoming flights, you would be expected to greet and assist guests with arrival procedures and escort them to their transport. You would also conduct welcome meetings for incoming passengers who have not yet booked any local tours. With outgoing flights,

you would make sure that all the passengers on your list are present at the airport and then you would assist with the check-in procedures. During their stay in Malta, clients will look at you as their point of reference: they will turn to you if they've booked a sea view room but were given an inland room or if they've over-indulged in *qubbajt* (Maltese nougat) and need medical attention!

What skills do you need to do the job?

If you are an outgoing person, this could be the job for you. As you are constantly in contact with the public, a high premium is placed on looking smart and professional at all times. Some organisations may provide uniforms but all organisations expect their staff to be well-groomed. You have to be a very friendly person capable of putting clients at ease immediately. You need to work hard at building a good relationship both with airport staff and with your clients. You must be able to instil a sense of trust so that your clients feel that they can relax and leave things in your hands. Knowing the native language of your clients, at least at conversational level is also an asset. If unexpected situations arise, you need to remain calm and collected to be able to find the best solution. You must listen patiently to clients' complaints even when they sound absurd. You need to be flexible and make yourself available to

cater for clients' requests. With time, the experience you will have gained can give you a better insight into what needs to be done.

What's in it for me?

Communication and organisational skills are key to achieving success in this field. The job is very fulfilling due to the direct contact with clients throughout their stay in Malta. Meeting new people and seeing to their needs is a rewarding experience. The only downside of this job is that it involves a lot of driving around the island all year round and at odd hours. As a representative, you will be the first and last contact point of your company with the client. It is up to you to ensure that tourists start their holiday on a good note and that they round it off in style. When you manage to successfully turn around potentially disastrous situations, in a calm and professional manner, the inner sense of satisfaction you are left with is hard to describe.

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Travel Consultant

What does a travel consultant do?

A travel consultant is the starting point of any overseas journey. One of your main duties would be helping the agency's clients to plan their trips abroad. You would be responsible for booking airline flights, hotel accommodation, train connections, and perhaps even tickets for a rock concert or a special tour. Your clients will be a mixed lot: they could be walk-ins, looking out for a bargain holiday, but they could also be business clients, travelling overseas to conclude an important deal on behalf of their companies.

Clients are not always sure of what they want. Once you know your client's intended destination and budget (the amount of money they are prepared to spend), you must be able to guide them in their choices.

What do I need to do the job?

You don't need to be an authority on geography or fluent in a dozen languages, but an awareness of the world outside your front door is essential. You must like working with and meeting people. You need to be a good communicator. This does not just mean that you are able to speak clearly and explain well but it also means that you really listen to your client's needs.

Remember that you will be coordinating travel arrangements with your clients on the one hand and your service providers (the airline or hotel) on the other. Therefore, you need to be absolutely certain that you have understood your client's requests and that the reservations booked with your service providers are confirmed.

Although many clients will appreciate the service you are giving

airlines and hotels offer special packages from time to time and you would need to know about these offers to be able to give your clients the best deal. It is also important to keep abreast of what is happening worldwide in order to be better placed to offer your clients advice on any precautions that they need to take such as vaccinations or the seasonal weather conditions.

What's in it for me?

If you enjoy travelling, then this is the job for you. One of the perks of working for a travel agency is the occasional chance to travel, expenses paid! It is standard practice within the industry to periodically organise familiarisation trips to exotic destinations to enable travel consultants to find out more about the facilities tour operators offer to their customers. You may also be eligible for flight tickets at reduced prices.

Every holiday and business trip you organise for your clients will give you more experience in becoming a better travel consultant. The organisation of any overseas trip is a challenge in itself and its success brings along with it a deep sense of satisfaction. Equally important, a well-organised trip will mean that you have satisfied your client. And a satisfied client will come back!

"REMEMBER THE FEELING OF SATISFACTION YOU GET AFTER AN EXAM YOU WERE WELL PREPARED FOR? WELL, THAT IS WHAT YOU FEEL EVERYTIME YOU ORGANISE A SUCCESSFUL TRAVEL PACKAGE FOR YOUR CLIENT!"

them, some others may be very demanding and may feel that you are not trying your best to assist them. In these cases, you also need to have the patience and self-control to handle these clients so as to restore their confidence in you. You would also need to keep abreast of developments in the ever-changing travel industry. Both



**"HANDLING GROUPS
MAY DOUBLE OR TREBLE
THE VOLUME OF
WORK... BUT, HEY, THEN
THE SAME THING GOES
FOR YOUR LEVEL OF
SATISFACTION!"**



Groups Manager - DMC

It is only in the larger companies that this role is a position in its own right. Many local companies use this position to include two roles: that of incoming leisure and DMC.

What does a Groups Manager do?

A Groups Manager handles two different types of groups: leisure groups and conference and incentive groups. Your job would start the moment you receive an enquiry from your clients. You would have to compile a quotation that includes all the activities that the groups would want to do. This job is a very varied one: the activities you may need to organise in a week may range from a visit to St. John's Co-Cathedral for a leisure group of German senior citizens, to a jeep treasure hunt for a Swiss pharmaceutical conference and incentive group. More often than not, a group representative from overseas would pay a visit to Malta to ensure that the locations and activities identified in your proposals meet expectations. You would be expected to accompany these representatives on such field trips.

What skills do you need to do the job?

If you pride yourself on being a quick thinker and a good organiser, this job may be the one for you. You naturally need to enjoy working around people. Fluency in a number of foreign languages is always useful. You have to be very practical and you need to be very well-prepared to tackle problems that may crop up at the last minute. You gain experience as you go along and your handling of each group teaches you something different every time. Sometimes individual clients can have expectations that are not always easy to live up to. You must remain calm and think straight even when objectives seem impossible to achieve. In cases where clients' expectations are difficult to meet you must be ready to offer attractive alternative solutions which may suit your clients just as fine. You must also learn how to handle constructive criticism that can ultimately help you improve your performance. A number of years in the field will furnish you with enough experience which will help you deal more confidently with such situations.

Nevertheless, whatever area you choose, you must be committed to take advantage of opportunities that come your way.

What's in it for me?

This is a varied, interesting and challenging role. You are constantly meeting new people from very different walks of life who are travelling to Malta with different objectives. People on holiday in Malta have often worked all year to afford the holiday so they are spending hard-earned cash. Your satisfaction at a job well done stems from your capability to give clients the best value for money. Remember that from this kind of work you can develop invaluable experience which can widen your professional expertise and personal knowledge.

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Diving Instructor



What does a Diving Instructor do?

As Diving Instructor, you will be responsible for taking holiday-makers to dive sites. You will need to prepare the dive trucks and organise pick-ups from various hotels. You would normally manage to hold two dive sessions every day, depending on whether you would be diving with a group of experienced divers or with a group of beginners

(taster dives). The kind of group you will be leading will determine your dive plan. This would include the objectives of the dive as well as the role and sequence of the divers within the group. You would also have to organise courses on the basics of diving at regular intervals. Teaching diving is a seasonal job. Whereas in summer, one would be diving every day, winter work would also involve dive equipment and boat maintenance. Depending on your instructor's qualification you may also be given a licence to work for short periods of time in some of the prime diving sites in the world, such as the Great Barrier Reef in Australia.

What do I need to do the job?

As Diving Instructor, you will need to be certified by one of the professional international bodies of scuba diving. Locally, diving instructors must possess

a diving instructor licence, issued by the Health Division on presentation of a suitable diving instructor qualification, with a diving medical certificate issued by a Maltese specialist in diving medicine. All diving and instructor licences must be renewed annually. International diving bodies, which issue these qualifications, also organise refresher training courses which you would be expected to attend. These courses target specific issues like buoyancy control, communication techniques and navigation. A number of inter-related skills have to be learnt, such as boat handling, navigation first aid and life-saving techniques. You must be a healthy individual with a lot of energy and stamina. Being in charge of a group of divers means that you are responsible for taking them to an appropriate dive site and showing them all it has to offer. It also means ensuring



their safety at all times. To complement your diving abilities and teaching skills, you would also be expected to be a patient individual, capable of tackling frequent questions, with a positive attitude. A thorough knowledge of Malta's leading diving sites would be required.

What's in it for me?

A diving instructor's job sometimes sounds like a life-long holiday and there is a great deal of truth to this. The job is indeed fun-packed, giving the instructor the opportunity of doing many great dives and coming across the untouched fauna of the Maltese islands. If the underwater world fascinates you, you should consider this job. It is a seasonal job, which means that you could have a lot of time on your hands each year. Diving offers many possibilities. Qualified divers do not only work in the

tourist industry but also in fish farms, special civil protection units, marine research and also ship repair. Like every other job, this one too, has its downside. Although teaching can be a very rewarding experience, teaching the

means diving in cold, rough seas or in the rain, is also hard work. But if you are an individual who loves the sea and being in touch with the underwater environment, then the pleasure you will derive from this job knows no limits.

**"DIVERS ARE RARELY
EARLY RISERS: WHILE
OFFICE WORKERS ARE
STUCK IN TRAFFIC JAMS,
THEY ARE STILL WAKING
UP!"**

same courses over and over again may get boring unless you are versatile enough to adopt new and different approaches to the course material. Diving sessions off-season, which

Becoming Qualified? See Page 25





**"TODAY A TOURIST
GUIDE HAS TO BE A
"SHOW PERSON" - YOU
NEED TO CREATE AN
ATMOSPHERE AND KEEP
YOUR CROWD
ENTERTAINED!!"**



Tourist Guide

What does a tourist guide do?

A tourist guide is an important liaison with incoming visitors to Malta. You will be the contact person for tourists during their sightseeing trips. Often, you will be meeting tourists who have already formed an opinion about Malta, leafing through a travel brochure, or browsing the Internet. You must gain insight into your group's preconceptions and offer them another perspective. You may have to take tourists on walking tours around a town or village, pointing out and explaining items of historical, social or local interest. Or perhaps you may be asked to accompany your group on a coach tour of a particular area and would be asked to give a commentary over the public address system. You could be asked to show visitors around a museum or art gallery. As a tourist guide, you have a responsible role to play in exposing the oft-hidden beauties of the Maltese Islands to your sightseeing groups while at the same time remaining objective and not shying away from talking about the shortcomings of the Maltese Islands.

What do I need to do the job?

A ready smile helps! Working as a tourist guide means constantly being with people and therefore you have to be a sociable. You would be expected to adjust to the group you are with and

work on building a comfortable rapport with them for the duration of the tour. You have to be alert and sensitive to cultural backgrounds and would need to tailor your schedule and your tour accordingly. Groups will vary in size, ages and interests and you need to be prepared for different requests. As a tourist guide, you must be very well-versed in history and must have the ability to research commentaries and make them interesting. You must keep abreast of restoration works that are underway at sought-after sites, and of changes in the opening hours of the Museum of Fine Arts.

What's in it for me?

If you are after a job on the move, this could be the job for you. One of the advantages of being a tourist guide is that the nature of the work is very seasonal and this may give you more flexibility with managing your personal life. Very often, guiding is a learning experience for all - visitors are different and some may ask interesting questions to which you would also need to learn the answers. This kind of job may also give you the opportunity to share any new ideas you may have on how to attract more visitors to historic sites. The greatest challenge, however, is when you successfully manage to give your visitors an insight into Malta's hidden charms.

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Animator

What does an animator do?

The main responsibility of an animator is to entertain holiday-makers. The type of entertainment offered could vary depending on the time of day, the group you are entrusted with and the environment you are working in. Day entertainment could include different types of water sports at the pool area in summer, whereas evening entertainment could take the form of sketch shows or karaoke nights. You could also be asked to organise games for the guests of a hotel and you would be expected to take care of the planning and organisation that this entails. If you

are working with children, you would tailor activities to their age. When travelling overseas, you will automatically find yourself on the lookout for similar shows in order to raise your own performance levels and possibly inject new ideas into your own productions.

What do I need to do the job?

You need to be an energetic individual, with a cheerful disposition and a good sense of humour. You need to have first-rate communications skills that would also include knowledge of a number of foreign languages at least to

conversational standards. If you have strong stage presence and are also a talented all-rounder, that is, you can sing, dance and act, then this job could be for you. As an animator, you would mostly be involved in producing original performances, always working within

**"ANIMATION IS GREAT
BECAUSE YOU ENJOY
HELPING YOUR
AUDIENCE -
HAVE FUN!"**



the parameters of time and space that are available. Preparation time for any show needs regular rehearsals and you need to be committed and disciplined to keep up with new acts. Being an animator means being part of a team.

What's in it for me?

Performing in front of an audience tends to serve as a great ego-booster, if the show is a success, that is! Working with people and taking part in live shows will build your self-confidence and develop your personality. In the course of your work, you will meet many people and will have a great social life.

However, it is important to keep in mind that although it is a fun job, a lot of preparation and hard work goes on behind the scenes, working on props, designing costumes, rehearsing dance sequences and so on. But, ultimately, working as an animator is definitely a golden opportunity to develop your artistic talents while having fun watching your audience having fun.



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**"AS SOON AS I WALK
INTO THE CLASSROOM, I
STEP INTO THE LIMELIGHT
AND BECOME A
SHOWGIRL PAR
EXCELLENCE: I'M AN
ORATOR, CONDUCTOR,
ACTRESS, STAND-UP
COMEDIAN... ALL ROLLED
INTO ONE!"**



EFL Teacher

What does an English teacher do?

As a teacher of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), you will be expected to facilitate the acquisition of language skills for your students. The productive skills (speaking and writing) are harder to master than the receptive skills (understanding and reading) and call for different teaching methods. Your students will have varying degrees of language skills and will often belong to different age groups. It is crucial that lesson plans are prepared beforehand. It is an acknowledged fact that language learning cannot lead to genuine acquisition if there is no entertainment element. Therefore, it is important to use a variety of teaching aids during your lessons like charts, videos, CD-ROMs, etc, and to try different teaching methods, depending on the language skill that is being learnt. Role play, dramatisation, use of games and songs, and topic work are prime examples of different teaching methodologies. The focus of your lessons must always be your students - interactive and varied lessons will invariably stimulate your students and ensure a high rate of participation. School policies encourage teachers to take students out of the classrooms to hold lessons on particular sites which may be of interest to the students. In this way, English is practised in meaningful situations. Sometimes, you may need to set homework or tests for your students which you would naturally also need to correct and grade. Constructive feedback here is key to reaching your teaching objectives. Periodically, you



will also be expected to attend teachers' meetings in order to exchange ideas with your colleagues and also possibly discuss any problems that are being encountered.

What do I need to do the job?

To teach English as a foreign language, you would need to possess a satisfactory "A" level in English and a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certificate. Most English Language Schools also organise ongoing training for their teachers, which you would be expected to attend. In addition to these academic requirements, you would need to be an excellent organiser who can manage time well and so ensure that your lessons are well paced. You will need to be patient, ready to listen and appreciate that different people learn at a different pace. At the same time, you will have to inject a sense of enthusiasm into the lessons you will be delivering and will need to inspire confidence that you are knowledgeable about the subject matter you are teaching. Assertiveness is also a key asset that will determine the degree of language learning that goes on in your classroom. You are a point of reference for your

students and it would therefore be useful for you to make sure that your general knowledge about the Maltese Islands is sufficient and that you keep yourself abreast of activities organised locally.

What's in it for me?

Other than the occasional strained voice and some leg fatigue from being on your feet for hours at a stretch, being a teacher has much in its favour. One of the main benefits of being a language teacher is that the job is very flexible that is offered on either a full-time or a part-time basis. Your salary will be based on the number of contact hours spent with your students and the hourly rate that is paid is a favourable one. Being an English language teacher automatically means that you will be exposed to different cultures and you can therefore also make a lot of contacts from all over the world. Being a teacher means empowerment and autonomy because although there is a curriculum and syllabus to be followed, the teacher is responsible for planning and choosing how to deliver lessons. Another advantage of being a teacher is the fresh faces regularly in the classroom as new student groups arrive, so there is definitely no monotony. Job satisfaction for EFL teachers is relatively high because most of the students are inherently motivated to learn English and therefore the rate of their progress is usually visible for all to see!

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Becoming Qualified

There are a number of entry routes into the Travel and Tourism industry. The Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), the University of Malta and the various Schools of English as a foreign language all offer courses at various levels.



What courses does the ITS offer?

Certificate in Travel Agency Operations

Leads candidates to become agency clerks, couriers and reservation clerks

Course Duration: Two years (four semesters) and an additional fifteen-week Local Industrial Trade Practice between Semester 2 and 3.

Certificate in Tour Guiding

Leads candidates to become Tour Guides

Course Duration: Two years (four semesters) and an additional fifteen-week Local Industrial Trade Practice between Semester 2 and 3.

For further information check out the Institute of Tourism Studies website at: **www.its.gov.mt**



What courses does the University offer?

Various Degree courses at the University of Malta can lead to related careers in Tourism. Courses offered include:

Tourism Studies

Management

Anthropology

Geography

History

Archaeology

Languages

For further information check out the University of Malta website at: **www.um.edu.mt**

Schools of English as a foreign language

TEFL induction course

Leads candidates to become Teachers of English as a Foreign Language

Course duration : a minimum of 60 hours, the large part of which will cover the syllabus and the rest may be dedicated for teaching practice.

For further information check out the Ministry of Education, Youth & Employment website: **www.education.gov.mt**



Your Future in Travel & Tourism Vol. 2

ISBN 99932-623-3-1

The “Your Future...” series covers a large number of occupational areas.

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