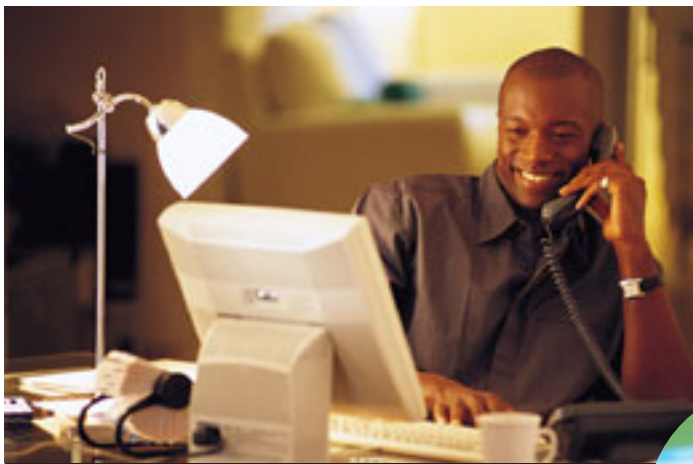


# Why Your Agency Should Be Online



Your clients buy travel online.



Are they buying  
from *you*?

**Sabre**



# Travel and the Internet ... a perfect marriage

Travel is one of the largest online commerce categories, with projected bookings of \$10.9 billion in Europe in 2002.<sup>1</sup> It's an intangible product (at least until it's enjoyed) that requires a lot of information in order to purchase. The typical overhead and warehouse costs of physical retail products are not an issue for travel products and services. And, with online commerce, products and services can be fulfilled electronically.

The multidimensional features of the Internet enable you to sell additional products and services, personalise messages to consumers, host chat sessions among travellers, and expand into a variety of other travel businesses as well as diversify your offerings.



There's no time like *today* to start building an online presence for your travel agency — particularly in light of the airlines' changing commission structure.

### **Internet Booking Engines**

Over the past seven years, Internet booking engines have proved to be an integral business tool for successful agencies. Today, cost-effective, pre-built booking solutions complement the various market

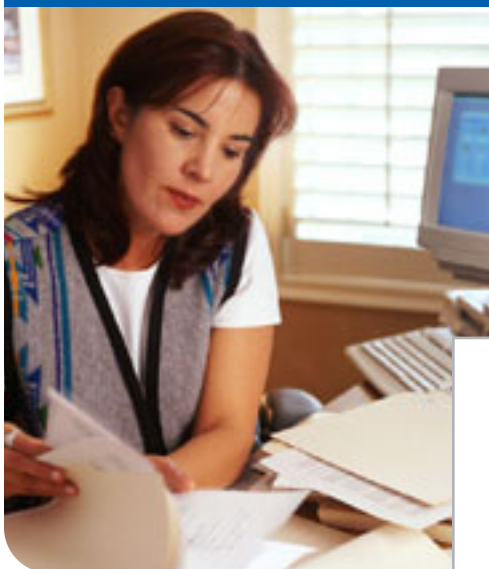
segments in the agency community — some of these even provide robust customisation capabilities.

For instance, if you are a small agency looking to increase your presence on the Internet and provide your clients with online booking capabilities, booking engines are available for a nominal price. Travel technology leaders like Sabre are ensuring that there is something for everyone, regardless of the size of your agency.

<sup>1</sup> According to a 2001 report by PhoCusWright, a travel industry research company.

“On a regional basis, Europe had the world's second largest Internet user population in 2001. With its user population growing considerably faster than that of the Asia-Pacific region, *eMarketer* predicts that this year, Europe will be home to the world's largest contingent of web users.”

— *eMarketer - The Travel Market Worldwide 2002*



### Consumer Buy-In

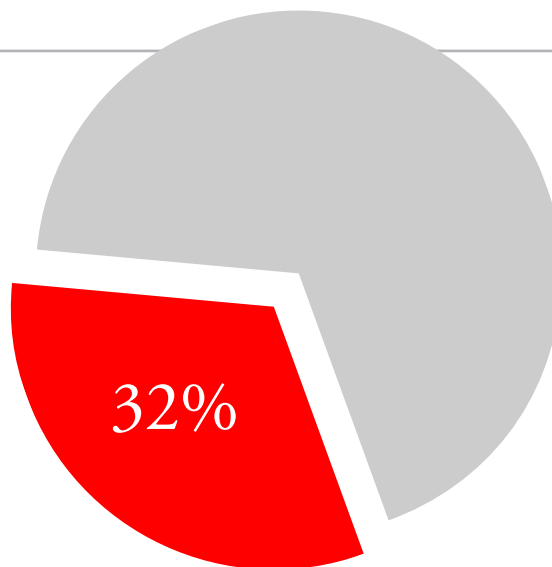
Consumers are more Web savvy than ever when it comes to researching and shopping for travel online. Travel is the fifth “stickiest” category on the Web (i.e., has the greatest appeal or ability to secure consumers’ attention and behaviour), with Web users spending an average of 11 minutes and 57 seconds shopping for travel in January 2002.<sup>2</sup>

Consumers are using the Internet to purchase travel because it is

convenient; they can compare travel options; and they can save money. The shift in consumer preference to planning and booking travel online has increased tremendously.

Your customers are going to the Internet on a frequent basis, so it’s important that you’re online as well. If you’re not online with a booking engine, your customers may well go elsewhere. It’s time to grab your share of Internet browsers and travellers!

<sup>2</sup> According to Nielsen Net Ratings.



32% of all online sales will be travel related this year.  
It's time to get your share.

More than 80 percent of online travellers say they feel local travel agencies provide reliable personal service, and 60 percent say that online companies offer such service.

— *2001 PhoCusWright report*



# 10 reasons travel agents should be online

## **1. Your Customers Are Online**

More and more customers are using the Internet to research and book travel reservations. Your agency site should be your customers' favourite site for researching and booking travel reservations.

## **2. Retention, Retention, Retention**

Why let another site fulfill your customers' travel needs? You have the relationship with them and have provided them exceptional service over time. By placing your agency online, you are extending the services that you offer. Even if your customers look online and then come to buy from you offline, it is business retained and gained.

## **3. Customer Service (Information Accessibility) 24 x 7**

Customers can reach your agency anywhere, anytime to search, research, price and book travel reservations through the online booking engine on your site. Your existing customer service is transformed into round-the-clock offerings of preferred payment, languages, currencies and delivery.

## **4. Cost Control**

Going online can help you control costs by reducing your distribution and staff training expenses. And you can easily add or change any feature on your site (not only to suit your budget, but also to complement your needs and those of your customers). Going online can also improve productivity. It frees agents' time so they can interact with customers on more complex transactions and increase the quality of time spent with customers.

## **5. Going Global**

Your Web site will enable customers to find travel information even when they are in a foreign country. This is particularly valuable in these times of heightened security. Many tools and sites already pre-package information relative to new security guidelines, airport check-ins, travel advisories and more (e.g., *Sabre*<sup>®</sup> *Virtually There*<sup>®</sup> Travel Bulletin Central). You may want to add links to these resources to your site. And you can even power your Web site with multilingual capabilities to speak your customers' language of choice.

## **6. Competitive Advantage**

Differentiate yourself from the competition with customised site features, such as negotiated rates and a unique "look and feel." The perception among shoppers is that they get lower fares online. This belief will bring customers to your site. Then you can make the initial contact with them. With existing customers, you can solidify the relationship through services that keep them coming to you rather than going to your competition.

## **7. Customer Loyalty**

Your Web site is a vehicle for understanding and creating a database of consumer preferences so you can target your customers with specific offers tuned to their interests. This will help personalise your customer service and increase your customer retention. An Internet booking engine will help solidify your brand name in the online arena and ensure that your existing customers have a place to shop.

## **8. Advertising and Promotional Tool**

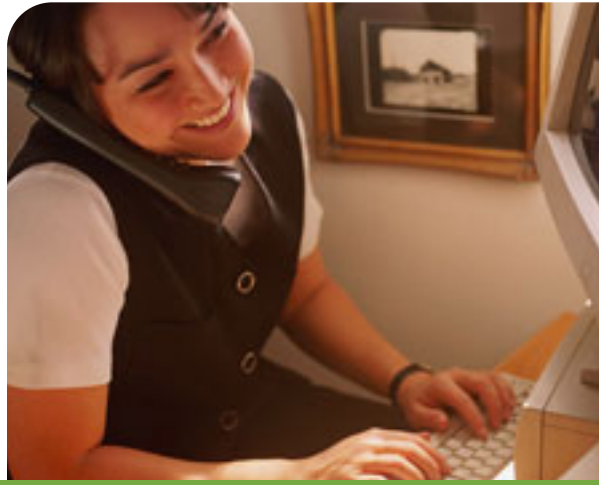
An Internet site serves the dual purpose of being a revenue-generating tool and a promotional tool to display information about your products and services. For instance, you can generate revenue by selling banner advertising or use banner ads on your site to display your own specials. Your site can also add value by providing links to other related sites (e.g., travel-related clothing and accessory stores). A programme that includes reciprocal links will bring a wider range of customers to your site and additional revenue to your business.

## **9. Increased Target Audience**

You can get your name and value messages in front of more people on the Internet than in the offline world. Plus, the Internet is a level playing field where small businesses may look no different in an Internet user's eyes than a large business.

## **10. Internet business is here to stay!**

Recent studies show that online retail revenues are growing at a fast pace. So it's no surprise that the Web is the fastest growing retail chain. According to Jupiter MMXI, 32 percent of all European online sales this year will be travel related.



While the Internet is helping agencies grow their business online, implementing an Internet booking engine also helps grow the traditional agency business. Today's travellers are more informed because they are investing more time researching travel options via the Internet. As a result, approximately 22 percent of bookings are researched online and procured offline.

— Travel Weekly 2001 U.S. Consumer Survey

## The value of an online booking engine

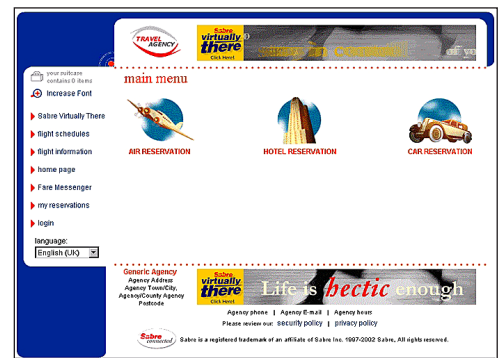
Many agencies have positioned themselves to better serve their customers by implementing an Internet booking engine that complements their traditional agency.

Agencies that have decided to market and distribute their travel products and services online realise the value of having an Internet booking engine:

- Extends travel expertise to travellers in both offline and online distribution channels
- Takes customer relationships to multidimensional levels — offline and online

- Saves agency time and resources by having a virtual agent processing travel reservations via the Internet
- Diversifies revenue streams (e.g., service fees, commissions from non-air business)
- Generates additional revenue through banner advertisements and service fees
- Provides customers access to all the air, car rental and hotel options maintained in major global distribution systems
- Addresses the global needs of travellers by displaying content in multiple languages and currencies
- Secures transactions through encryption
- Ensures cutting-edge technology for reliability and scalability by partnering with a technology leader

Travel agencies have found Internet booking engines to be an integral part of their day-to-day operations. While they are working with customers one-on-one at their physical location, they are also servicing numerous customers through their online storefront.



Generate additional revenue streams through banner advertisements and service fees.

## Success showcase

Travelbag, founded in 1979, is an independent travel company located in the United Kingdom. The agency specialises in trips to the South Pacific. Travelbag has nine offices, including two in London and two in Alton, with more than 600 employees. To enhance its existing business model, the company decided to expand its current distribution channel to address the following dynamics in the travel industry:

- Continuous change in travel distribution channels
- Essential to expand into new markets and to increase customer base
- Need to implement a booking solution that provides quality information in a user-friendly manner
- Must be able to update information frequently and at low cost

To address these dynamics, Travelbag implemented an Internet booking engine that has had an astounding affect on their business:

- Produces six times the number of bookings as one telephone agent
- Accounts for more than 6 percent of bookings each month
- Generates 6,000 sales calls a month
- Grows online booking by more than 100 percent, month on month

**TRAVELBAG**  
WORLDWIDE TRAVEL SPECIALIST

## Your travel expertise coupled with technology

As travel experts, you are always looking for ways to improve the service that you provide to your clients. The agency-client relationship enables you to proactively provide your clients with travel services for those much-needed vacations and/or special occasions. Your knowledge of the travel industry gives you the ability to recommend and provide your customers with the best airfares, lodging, tours and other amenities that add that special touch to their travel experience.

By taking your travel expertise to the Internet, you are letting the world know about your business and the value you add to your clients' travel experience. Agencies are realising that to take their business to the next level they need to embrace the Internet for its revenue-generating attributes. Giving your customers 24-hour access to your inventory will help you increase your revenue, reduce costs, and allow your customers to research and shop at a time that suits them.



"An important reason for choosing Sabre was because the company has a long track record of innovation and technical expertise in the field of online travel booking technology."

— Andy Mills, Operations Director, Travelbag

# Your agency online, your brand extended

The first step to taking your agency to the next level is to implement a robust, customisable booking solution. Regardless of the size or technological capabilities of your agency, Sabre has invested in the technology that you need to enable your agency to process air, car rental and hotel reservations via the Internet.

A booking engine can be easily integrated with your existing Web site. Your customers will be able to access your agency's negotiated fares for air, car rental and hotel, which is a virtual extension of your agency's travel expertise.

Most importantly, global distribution systems continuously invest in technology to ensure credit

card security and compliance with global privacy acts, both of which protect your clients' personal data.

And because your agency's branding and personality are reflected in the look and feel of your revenue-generating Web site, your customers never lose sight of the customer care you provide.



## Sabre .Res ... the solution at every step

Sabre is dedicated to transforming the business of travel so you can better serve your customers. As your marketing partner, we ensure that our solutions enable you to touch customers during every aspect of their travel experience.

This is achieved with new technologies to stimulate demand, with solutions that enhance the post-travel experience, and with continued innovation at every point in between.

Knowing that providing great customer care is essential to your business, we offer the *Sabre*® .Res Internet booking engines. They are designed to ensure that you provide exceptional customer care to your clients throughout their travel experience.

- **Stimulate Demand.** Integration with your agency's Web site and *Sabre Virtually There*. Also, Fare Messenger allows clients to be notified when their flight requests meet their price requirements

- **Shop and Sell.** Enables travellers to shop for air, car rental and hotel rates online, and to book reservations online or offline
- **Confirm/Fulfill.** Confirms travel purchase via e-mail and integrates with agency fulfillment system
- **Experience.** Provides travellers with event notification for flight schedule changes via mobile devices
- **Post-Travel.** Maintains an archive of past trips for easy reference

# Ready, set ...

The reasons to be online are clear! And the tools to get you there are at your fingertips. The bottom line is that going online will help *your* bottom line! So get ready, get set and ...



## Go!



### 1. Create a name for your agency

Web site and register it with one of the following:

- Network Solutions  
[www.networksolutions.com](http://www.networksolutions.com)
- Register.com  
[www.register.com](http://www.register.com)
- Verio.com  
[www.verio.com](http://www.verio.com)

### 2. Coordinate with a local Web design agency

to create your Web site. Pricing should range from \$1,000 to \$5,000. (The amount of content desired will determine the cost.) Below are ways that you can begin selecting a Web design agency:

- Look in your local Yellow or Golden Pages for these key words: Web Design, Web Sites, Internet.
- Ask friends, colleagues, relatives and other local business owners for recommendations.

### 3. Consider these points when

briefing the Web design agency:

- What services will their company provide for the designated fee?
  - Number of unique pages
  - Registration with major search engines
  - Unique domain name registration

– Number of images

– Web styles and colour combinations

- Does the price include maintenance? If not, can they maintain the site or can they show you how to make small changes to the site?

• Can they provide references?

• Get their advice on content.

Limit graphics. Graphics increase download time. Include up-to-date information (change it regularly). Any differentiating features of your agency should be prominently displayed. **Note:** Our advice is to keep it simple. Don't clutter your Web site.

- Start thinking about how you are going to market this new and evolving solution to your clients (for example, e-mail, business cards, search engines).

• For more information on designing and marketing your Web site, e-mail [marketing.res@sabre.com](mailto:marketing.res@sabre.com).

### 4. Contact your Sabre eCommerce development manager or account executive

to learn more. We'll work with you to identify the Internet booking engine solution that will best meet the needs of your agency. And we'll help you integrate that solution into your Web site. You'll be online in no time!





**Worldwide Headquarters**

Sabre Inc.  
3150 Sabre Drive  
Southlake, Texas 76092 USA

Tel: 1 682 605 1000  
[www.sabre.com](http://www.sabre.com)

**United Kingdom Main Office**

Sabre UK Marketing Ltd.  
23-59 Staines Road  
Hounslow  
Middlesex  
TW3 3HE

Tel: +44 20 8814 4200

**Dublin Regional Office**

Sabre  
Ormonde House  
12 Lower Leeson Street  
Dublin 2  
Ireland

Tel: +353 1 240 0500