



TAKE 5

WITH FLEMMING FRIISDAHL

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1. What tips can you offer for helping to build loyalty and repeat business amongst clients?

It's a combination of many key items and I believe it is the same no matter the business you are in:

- ▶ Value for money, whether your client is booking a one-star or five-star.
- ▶ Empathy: Everyone wants to have someone who is there for them no matter what, even when the answer is, 'No, we cannot do this.'
- ▶ Consistency: Many agents don't offer the same service over and over, no matter what the client is buying; give everyone the same service or don't take them on.
- ▶ Honesty: Tell them how it is, no matter the news. Make it as positive as possible, but don't BS them. Most of all, be yourself!

2. Do you focus more on ensuring past clients return, or seeking new ones?

Both. Clients by nature will drop off, move, they may pass away, have a bad experience with you, or simply stop travelling. So, you always need to be a sales person. But a great travel agent will always ask their customers for referrals and get them.

3. Do you encourage your members to solicit organizations as well as individuals, such as schools, clubs (sports, arts, etc.), associations, etc.?

Yes, yes, yes! You work within your circle of influence and proudly go and ask, "How can I help?" People love to travel in groups as it gives them a sense of safety, and they particularly love to travel in groups to far away places that sell at a higher price point. But, most importantly, you offer things that OTAs cannot: knowledge and service!

4. Do your agents use e-mail or social media (Facebook, Twitter) to help build a following and post regular news/offers?

It is very important to use free media platforms to get the word out; and it is so easy if you have a little idea of how to do it. We train agents on how to use hash tags and how to post effectively on social media. All agents have their own personal website that allows them around 8,000 pages of content; they can post their own blogs and product.

5. Do you give a gift to returning clients or arrange something special in destination (flowers, bottle of champagne, etc.)?

Everyone loves to get a huge thank you. The reality is, it does not have to be a lot; but, who does not like to receive a personal note from their travel agent?