

A Travel Maximus – Travel industry pet hates



After too many years doing what I do, these things still annoy me, and on discussions with many other travel industry veterans, others as well! - TRAVEL INDUSTRY PET HATES! Part 1 of 2.

- *Max Najar, Director and Manager, Axis Travel Centre*

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They are not in any order and may be politically incorrect, but that is not my concern as an opinion remains an opinion and does not need to be generically acceptable by anyone!

1 – I hate so-called interior designers of hotel rooms who place electrical input plugs in weird positions, like under a table or bench, placing bathroom magnifier mirrors that do not extend to face levels or bathroom lighting that does not shed light where it should be to logically illuminate your face when shaving or putting on makeup, or even having interior room lights that cannot be dimmed or not having accessible on/off switches near your bed.

2 – How dumb are so many countries Customs and security teams when they enforce the illogical policy to not allow more than 50 or 100 ml of liquid per person to board an Aircraft. Maybe they forgot the fact that multiple liquids carried by multiple travellers can easily be merged into one volume onboard. An illogical, badly executed and failing security concept that is only now in 2023 becoming deleted in some airports.

3 – I dislike it when a restaurant or café or airline or cruise chef floods the main course of say a delicate fish, with heavy chillies or wasabi, only to destroy the essence of the main course! Small dishes of condiments on the side are the answer so the guest can do as they wish. Stop forcing tastes on us!

4 – I am constantly annoyed when so-called Airline partnership schemes disrespect and fail to share their required complementary common Membership attributes, via untrained staff, embarrassing the so-called valued traveller!

5 – I dislike attending a webinar, doing a web survey or receiving a video link that does not pre-advise me on the time length of the proposed video or webinar, so as to allow my staff or self the ability to schedule our timings and allocate quality time. Time is a life component that can never be replaced.

6 – I am always baffled and annoyed when stupid, short-sighted Hotel and Resort Managers offer a one-off rate to pacify a one-off or irregular traveller that easily negates a long term, established relationship or contract with a travel agency that delivers hundreds of sales per year, then they have the gall to complain to the agency network that they want more sales!! Total stupidity in long term management skills.

7 – Many travel suppliers have a “non-refundable” policy when paying for their service or product. This is sometimes OK but the problem is that if that supplier does not deliver the advertised product or service after being paid then why should this policy still apply? Tighter Consumer laws need to be applied to protect the agency and traveller.

8 – I hate travellers who specifically rely upon blogsites and then challenge the professional advice or facts given to them from a bonafide professional travel agent/advisor. You cannot question, challenge or get compensation from an anonymous cloud-based blogsite-but you can from a professional human travel agent/advisor who is also bound by strict consumer laws and their integrity is at stake!

9 – Irresponsible Security checks annoy me when I place my cabin bag and items on an airport or Cruise security belt that is under surveillance by security cameras, only to see that the security Officer – who is paid to watch the screen – turn their head away without watching what is on the screen or they

remain chatting to another person. I am happy to pay a fee to maintain security checks but dislike this inattention that can jeopardize my safety.

10 – I find it unprofessional when I check into a hotel or resort, to be left alone at the front desk without being directed to where the elevators or room directions are. This simple courtesy of logic and common-sense still happens. Where do I walk to? To the left, to the right, along which path? More directions please!

11 – I know it is how most airports are designed, but I dislike the limo transfers that do not materialise at many airports or my need to notify by phone the limo driver that I have arrived – then await them to turn up or follow directions to a specific EXIT area only to drag bags to that point. You waste time, must use your phone to phone that driver via slow or no airport connections, hopefully communicate in English, and have some local coins to grab an airport luggage trolley!

12 – I hate the unvalidated blame game, when an airline or hotelier or others blame the travel agent when it is clearly not the agent's fault – especially when facts have not been checked. Many times, these suppliers are wrong but unfortunately immediate initial damage has already been made in the minds of innocent clients until they return home or after a passage of time. A more validated approach with a direct sincere apology should always be issued by these suppliers. Logically, if the agent is wrong then that agent must rectify and compensate.

13 – Why is it that a Politician or a Government employee can lie, deliver incorrect or unopposed statements, have their legal cases paid by the very same people who pay their salaries with the ability to (possibly) apologise verbally then walk away, with a salary or bonus, or deflect any accountability or responsibility. We cannot do this when in private business as we are challenged, pay fines, lose monies, lose our businesses and homes. Totally unfair.

14 – I see RED when an airline that uses a red colour in its logo expects a professional travel agent to sell that airline's products after cancelling any financial incentive to the travel agency community, then uses creative bullshit marketing spins to convince consumers that they are an honourable company, leaving the travel agency to waste agency time, expertise and energy in fixing that same airline's errors or self-created mistakes. Buyer beware!

15 – I think it is time that International Apathy Towards Agents, lets call it IATA, adopts rules to allow travel agents to issue an ADM – Agency Debit Memo – to any airline to pay monetary compensation to that travel agency and also update its compensation payments to clients when that airline is at fault for delays, cancellations, re-routing or errors that they make that could have been avoided, communicated better or rectified quickly, rather than walk away from the problems. Our current ASIC/ACCC/Consumer Laws are inadequate. Consumers should revolt!

16 – After chatting on radio talkback segments since 1980, I was asked by an ABC announcer what were the most common travel problems that I have had to respond to on air. I said that they were:

- the misuse of a travellers credit cards,
- travellers who incorrectly or fail to book flights or hotels in correct chronological sequence,
- travellers who accept and work on accepting fake GOOGLE reviews and blogsite opinions,
- travellers who complain about the illegal use of their data that they placed online or via a phone chat,
- those who do not read the PDS of a travel insurer before buying insurance,
- those who use their ego and status to override the professional advice and opinions given to them by a professional human travel advisor
- and lastly those consumers who waste so much time on phone-holds or bad email communications instead of respecting the advice of a professional travel agent.

My initial pleasant attitude on-air has changed from a previous stance of being too nice and conciliatory to an attitude of being more assertive and blunt and challenging listeners. Sometimes I retort “...you deserved what you got” or “....drop your ego and desire to control things and go and pay a fee to get a travel agent to advise, assist, book your travel for you....” is now my common response .