

# The Escorted Tour Operator Report Card for Travel Agents

*The Resource for Agents on Escorted Tour Operator Policies*



2018-2019

**travelmarket**  
*Voice of the Travel Professional* report



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### PARTICIPATING SUPPLIERS



# LETTER *FROM THE EDITOR*

2018-2019

## **DEAR TRAVEL AGENT,**

Welcome to the first edition of Travel Market Report's Escorted Tour Operator Report Card, and the fourth in our series aimed at providing travel agents with the policies and practices of the suppliers you work with on a daily basis.

To date, we have produced two annual Ocean Cruise Report Cards and one River Cruise Report Card and both have been well-received in the market. Following the Escorted Tour Operator version, we will release an FIT Operator edition in October of this year.

As you will see, all of these report cards seek out information about how the major suppliers in each sector of our industry interact with their most important partners, the travel professionals.

It is our intention that these report cards provide you with a resource you can use when dealing with your clients for all of their booking needs. We want you to know which suppliers truly have your best interest in mind.

We invite you to take a look and to keep a copy at your desk during your day-to-day dealings with clients and suppliers. Not all of the escorted tour operators we invited to participate chose to do so, but we're still very excited to show you just how valuable you are to the biggest companies in travel.

We also encourage you to write us if you experience a different policy than what is outlined in the pages that follow.

Sincerely,

Kerry Tice  
*Managing Editor*

Jess Montevago  
*Hotel/Tour Editor*







chart01

### SALES PERCENTAGE

Despite an increase in online bookings in other segments of the industry, travel agents continue to be the most important distribution channel for tour operators everywhere. Here's what escorted tour operators had to say about how much of their sales come from agents:

## sales percentage

Escorted Tour Operator	What percentage of your sales are from travel agents?
African Travel	90%
Brendan Vacations	90%
CIE Tours International	80%
Collette	Vast majority
Contiki	30%
G Adventures	70%
Globus family of brands	Vast majority
Insight Vacations	96%
Intrepid Travel	A good majority
Luxury Gold	96%
Mayflower Tours	75%
Perillo Tours	35%
Sceptre Vacations	95%
Tauck	A big percentage
Trafalgar	85%





chart02

# commission percentage

Escorted Tour Operator	What is your base commission percentage?	Is there a maximum commission percentage you pay? If so, what is it?	Is your commission range different if an agency belongs to a marketing group or consortium?
African Travel	10-15%	15% on land	YES
Brendan Vacations	10%	15%	YES
CIE Tours International	10%	N/A	YES
Collette	10%	Commission levels vary based on partnership level	YES
Contiki	10%, airfare is maximum 5% commission	Dependent on other aspects of the preferred agreement, including co-op marketing agreement, fam seats, etc.	YES
G Adventures	Varies	Dependent on the contract signed with consortiums	YES
Globus family of brands	10%	18%	YES
Insight Vacations	10%	Varies	YES
Intrepid Travel	10%	Varies	YES
Luxury Gold	10%	Varies	YES
Mayflower Tours	10%	15%	YES
Perillo Tours	12%	15%	YES
Sceptre Vacations	10% land, 5% air	15% land, 5% air	YES
Tauck	10%	15%	YES
Trafalgar	10%	Dependent on the contract signed with consortiums	YES

# ESCORTED TOUR OPERATORS OFFER NEW 2018 ITINERARIES

*by Jessica Montevago*

*From Africa to Ireland, Italy to the U.S., new guided tours with well-known companies are available to match with virtually every traveler's taste and budget.*

## **AFRICAN TRAVEL**

Among new itineraries offered by African Travel, this year, is the culinary-focused A Taste of South Africa. Over the course of 10 days, travelers meet bakers, grocers and fine food purveyors, as well as visit farmers' markets in "The Mother City." They explore the oldest wine regions of Stellenbosch and Constantia and experience wildlife encounters on safari in the Sabi Sabi Private Game Reserve.

The Ultimate South Africa itinerary kicks off with privately guided sightseeing tours, including a spectacular helicopter flight along the sparkling coastline, during four nights in Cape Town. Travelers go on twice-daily safari game drives through Kruger Private Reserve before making their way to a two-night stay at the exclusive Victoria Falls River Lodge Island Treehouse Suites in Zimbabwe.

The third new addition, Enchanting East Africa, takes guests on safari in the rich grassy plains of Kenya's Maasai Mara and Tanzania's

Serengeti in search of the Big Five. The tour is capped off with three luxurious nights in Zanzibar.

## **BRENDAN VACATIONS**

During the new tour operator's Taste of County Cork, travelers visiting Ireland go to the medieval Old Town, the university, City Hall, Shandon Bells and the English Market. They also experience the famous Jameson Whiskey headquarters and their largest distillery; have a chance to kiss the famed Blarney stone; and enjoy a full-day excursion around the Beara Peninsula, taking in the magnificent landscapes of the southwest coast.

The new nine-day Golf on the Emerald Isle Travel stops in Dublin, Wicklow, Killarney for tee time and sightseeing. Each day offers the option to either play an iconic golf course — like Portmarnock, Ballybunion, The Royal Dublin, and the newly renovated Adare Manor golf club — or see Ireland's breathtaking sights. Scottish Kilts and Clubs offers a golf tour through

Glasgow, Inverness, St. Andrews and Edinburgh at courses such as the Prestwick or Muirfield.

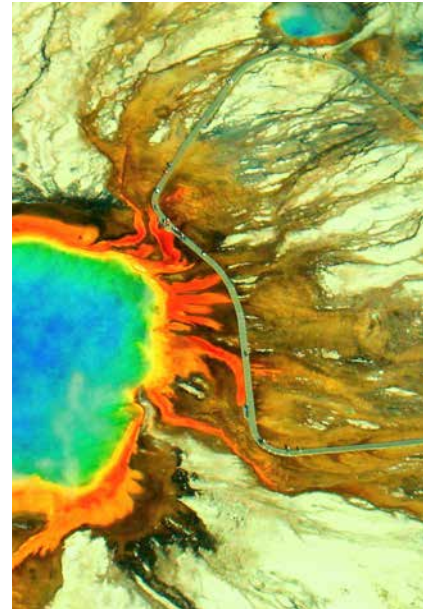
## **CIE TOURS**

Family Collection Guided Vacations has been introduced by CIE Tours, featuring activities for the entire family ages eight and up. New tours in Scotland include an off-the-beaten-path journey to Scotland's remote Outer Hebrides islands, with local experiences such as a Harris Tweed weaving demonstration, learning about gin and whisky production at the Isle of Harris Distillery, and a Scottish evening with live entertainment and traditional foods. A five-star luxury tour with castle stays, Scottish Supreme, was added as well.

## **COLLETTE**

Collette will begin incorporating more than a dozen culinary experiences on select itineraries. The tours feature meals hosted by a local family, cooking classes and demonstrations with local chefs, and sampling regional cuisine.





The operator is also launching three new tours: The Northern Lights of Finland; The Novelties of Northern Spain; and Switzerland, Hidden Majestic. Highlighting Finnish culture in Helsinki and the wilderness in Lapland, during the eight-day Northern Lights of Finland tour, guests go on a reindeer safari, lead a dog sled team, and set out on nightly searches for the best views of the northern lights.

#### CONTIKI

For 2018, Contiki introduced more than 26 new and improved itineraries, along with a partnership with EatWith. Based on consumer demand, the new advancements focus on flexibility and local immersion. They expand across the trendiest destinations for Millennials, including Nice, Copenhagen, Budapest, Mykonos, Amalfi Coast, Iceland, Ibiza, Porto and more.

Contiki also just rolled out a new voluntourism trip extension on their Eternal India itinerary. Travelers can extend their trip for four days to immerse themselves deeper into the Indian culture, volunteering and exploring the Rajasthan's rural countryside.

Additionally, a new Independent

Insider travel style replaces the Easy Pace style and allows travelers to delve deeper into a destination for three nights. The itineraries are designed for flexibility, allowing travelers to curate their trips to their personal preferences and passion points.

#### G ADVENTURES

New small-group tours from this adventure operator include the six-day Southern Tanzania Safari, which takes travelers off the usual safari track to the southern circuit of Tanzania, where the reserves and national parks are remote and much less frequented by tourists.

Along the southern coast of Sri Lanka, the Sailing Sri Lanka itinerary stops at the old trading fort of Galle, remote beach towns, and the fishing village of Kudawella before heading back to Mirissa.

The Hawaii Multi-Island Adventure tour visits four islands over two weeks, with activities such as watching surfers on Oahu's North Shore; visiting Kualoa Ranch, where Jurassic Park was filmed; and attending a luau in Maui.

#### GLOBUS

This year, Globus and Cosmos introduced eight vacations exploring

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*...new guided tours with well-known companies are available to match with virtually every traveler's taste and budget.*

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"undiscovered Italy." The nine-day Hidden Treasures of Southern Italy ventures from the caves of Castellana Grottem to the streets of Alberobello and through Old Town Bari. A leisurely day in Sorrento provides a gateway to the scenic Amalfi Coast.

Venturing to an island in the heart of the Mediterranean, The Sicily itinerary includes visits to Palermo's markets, the Valley of the Temples (dating back to the 6th century B.C.) in Agrigento, Ragusa's oldest district called the IBLA (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), and the majestic Mount Etna in the Taormina Riviera.

#### INSIGHT VACATIONS

Eight new 2018 European Discoveries trips range from 9-19 days, with engaging experiences, including

*continued on page 10*



either Dine-at-Home or Farm-to-Table dining and opportunities to meet locals. The Taste of Europe journey, for example, introduces guests to a Swiss Ranger on top of Switzerland's soaring Mount Stanserhorn and a gondolier in Venice.

On Discover Europe, guests meet a castle owner in the Rhine Valley and enjoy dinner at a family home in beautiful Budapest; while on Flavors of Europe, they go on an intimate gourmet walking tour of a local Parisian neighborhood.

Travelers on European Dream join a local expert for an excursion to the Vatican Museums before it opens

to the public, and enjoy a private tour of the Bramante Staircase with spectacular views over the Vatican Gardens. Other new itineraries include European Flair, Splendid Europe, European Discovery, and Mediterranean Journey.

#### **INTREPID TRAVEL**

The new Real Food Expedition in Taiwan gives an in-depth tour of one of the most exciting culinary scenes in Asia. Travelers roll their own Xiao Long Bao (steamed soup dumplings) in Taoyuan and sample a spread of local produce in Yilan, from spring onion to organic tea to boutique whiskey.

They also dine at legendary Taipei institutions, including the Ding Fung Restaurant and long-running Shin Yeh.

#### **LUXURY GOLD**

Luxury Gold introduced nine new itineraries this year, including its debut in South Africa, as well as in trending destinations such as Scandinavia, Croatia, and Montenegro. The company also added Japan to its portfolio.

The brand also introduced the Chairman's Collection, available for 12 departures on six itineraries in France, Italy, and Austria. Curated by Stanley Tollman, the selection of



new experiences provide exclusive, one-of-a-kind excursions. It includes experiences like lunch with an Italian count at his grand Tuscan villa; a visit to the gardens of Alnwick Castle with the Duchess of Northumberland; dining with a French noble at Paris's oldest cafe; and a cocktail reception with Princess Anita von Hohenberg at Artstetten Castle.

#### **MAYFLOWER TOURS**

Mayflower Tours is rolling out several new products for 2018/2019, including Taste of Spain, Essence of Panama, and Japan – Land of the Rising Sun itineraries. Domestically, the tour operator introduced Spring Blooms in the Historic East, with seats at Washington, D.C.'s, National Cherry Blossom Parade and tours of other historic sites. Winter in Yellowstone features the National Elk Refuge and Jackson Hole; and Alaska the Great Land explores the region's mountains, glaciers, and abundant wildlife. Other new tours include Journey Around Lake Michigan, Florida Adventure, Christmas in Williamsburg, and Canada's Golden Triangle.

#### **PERILLO TOURS**

Perillo began offering escorted tours to the Mediterranean island nation of Malta this year. The three-night Perillo Tours Malta Extension touches on Malta's landmarks on guided excursions, including The Blue Grotto, a popular swimming and scuba-diving spot with azure water and luminescent coral; the capital city of Valletta, a UNESCO World Heritage Site; and the "silent city" of Mdina — the island's capital from antiquity to the medieval period.

Among the new itineraries added to Perillo's bread-and-butter Italy portfolio is Deluxe Roman Holiday. The eight-day journey includes a day in Tivoli to explore

the historic town and Hadrian's Villa, a hands-on cooking class, and accommodations at the five-star Grand Hotel Via Veneto.

#### **SCEPTRE VACATIONS**

Sceptre continued to develop its golf and private chauffeur offerings this year. On Ireland's West Coast Gems, the golf vacation package has five-star accommodations in Killarney and tee times at the Killarney Golf & Fishing Club, Lahinch Golf Club and Ballybunion Golf Club. Or, on England and Wales Chauffeur, a trained professional drives guests through the busy streets of London to the purity of the Snowdonia National Park in Wales.

#### **TAUCK**

Three new land tours are being offered this year in North America: Mythic West: Montana, Yellowstone & the Tetons; Canadian Rockies, Whistler & Victoria; and One Nation: The Washington, D.C., Event. The latter is an expansion of Tauck's partnership with filmmaker Ken Burns, who gives the keynote address during a cocktail reception inside the National Archives. Other evenings include a lecture by noted Abraham Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer and a farewell black-tie gala with music, dinner and dancing inside the National Building Museum.

Tauck and Burns are also launching a new co-crafted Mythic West: Montana, Yellowstone & the Tetons. During the eight-day itinerary, guests visit the Western Heritage Center, tour the historic Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, explore Yellowstone National Park, and attend an exclusive tour and reception at the National Museum of Wildlife Art.

The 12-day Canadian Rockies, Whistler & Victoria journey includes

a special excursion atop Athabasca Glacier, a float trip down the Bow River, a guided walk around Lake Louise, a private whale watching cruise, and a visit to a wildlife park (home to wolves, a cougar, grizzly cubs, moose and other local residents).

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*Culinary remains a popular trend for travelers.*

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#### **TRAFALGAR**

Trafalgar bolstered its offerings for its top two selling destinations, Europe and the U.S., respectively. Travelers tour Western Europe on the five-night Madrid Explorer or the eight-night Great Iberian Cities — stopping in Barcelona, Madrid, Toledo and Seville. The new nine-day journey through Norway's natural splendor and majestic fjords includes an exclusive Be My Guest dinner with the Øvre-Eide family at their home, which has been a working farm since the time of the Vikings. The company also introduced the five-night Berlin Explorer.

Stateside, travelers discover the West's natural beauty on the Geysers and Glaciers itinerary, including taking in majestic mountain scenery in Grand Teton National Park; spouting geysers and turquoise hot springs in Yellowstone; the Rocky Mountains; and ancient glaciers in Glacier National Park. Adventurers can also explore the Golden State on the nine-night Coastal California with Yosemite National Park; or venture down south on the seven-night Heart of the South with the Great Smoky Mountains and 16-night Spirit of the South journeys.



chart03

# tour affiliations

Escorted Tour Operator	ASTA	USTOA	IATAN
African Travel	YES	YES	YES
Brendan Vacations	YES	YES	YES
CIE Tours International	YES	YES	YES
Collette	NO	YES	YES
Contiki	YES	YES	YES
G Adventures	N/A	NO	YES
Globus family of brands	NO	YES	YES
Insight Vacations	YES	YES	YES
Intrepid Travel	YES	YES	YES
Luxury Gold	YES	YES	YES
Mayflower Tours	YES	YES	YES
Perillo Tours	YES	YES	YES
Sceptre Vacations	YES	YES	YES
Tauck	YES	YES	YES
Trafalgar	YES	YES	YES





chart 04

### COMMISSION SCHEDULE

Few things are more troubling for agents than having to track down commission checks that are due them. Most of the tour operators maintain a strict schedule for paying agents their fair share.

# commission payment schedules

Escorted Tour Operator	What is your schedule for paying travel agents commission?
African Travel	Week of client's departure
Brendan Vacations	When clients depart <sup>1</sup>
CIE Tours International	10 days after completion of travel
Collette	After travel
Contiki	Within 30 days of travel
G Adventures	Generally after client has traveled
Globus family of brands	Approximately two weeks after client travels
Insight Vacations	Approximately two weeks after client travels
Intrepid Travel	Pay agents during the month of client travel
Luxury Gold	Approximately two weeks after client travels
Mayflower Tours	Within 3 weeks after completion of travel
Perillo Tours	Payable on the first week of the month following the end of the tour (after client travels)
Sceptre Vacations	Processed on the 1st and 15th of the month post departure
Tauck	3 days after the guests depart on tour
Trafalgar	Payment is processed when trip departs

1 Varies by agency/consortia



chart05

### NON-COMMISSIONABLE PRODUCTS

Tour operators surveyed pay agents commission on most, if not all, items in which they play a role. Here's what some tour operators say they don't pay agents for:

# non-commissionable products

Escorted Tour Operator	Do you offer products and services to consumers that aren't commissionable to travel agents?	What services and products are included in your non-commissionable fees?
African Travel	YES	Volunteer activities and permit fees
Brendan Vacations	NO	
CIE Tours International	NO	
Collette	NO	
Contiki	YES	Taxes, port charges, optional excursions
G Adventures	NO	
Globus family of brands	YES	Pre-paid options
Insight Vacations	YES	Optional excursions sold by tour director in the destination
Intrepid Travel	NO	
Luxury Gold	YES	Optional excursions sold by tour director in the destination
Mayflower Tours	NO	
Perillo Tours	YES	Pre- and post-tours
Sceptre Vacations	NO	
Tauck	NO	
Trafalgar	YES	Optional excursions which are purchased while on trip



chart06

### GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Generally speaking, guaranteed departures will not be canceled on the day they are scheduled due to lack of bookings, but policies vary among escorted tour operators.

# guaranteed departures

Escorted Tour Operator	Do you guarantee departures for escorted tours? If not, what happens to travelers who have committed?
African Travel	YES – we offer locally hosted tours; these departures are guaranteed with a minimum of 2 guests.
Brendan Vacations	YES – but if a departure doesn't meet minimum count, client will either receive a full refund or be offered a similar trip.
CIE Tours International	YES
Collette	YES
Contiki	YES – we cover all change/cancel fees and reprotect on another departure date or completely new itinerary for travelers who purchase their air through Contiki
G Adventures	YES
Globus family of brands	YES
Insight Vacations	YES
Intrepid Travel	YES
Luxury Gold	YES
Mayflower Tours	YES
Perillo Tours	YES – on certain dates
Sceptre Vacations	N/A
Tauck	YES
Trafalgar	YES – when a departure meets operating minimums





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**G Adventures**



chart07

# agent referral program

Escorted Tour Operator	Does your website/company have a travel agency referral program for preferred agencies?	If yes, how do agents get onto the referral/preferred list?
African Travel	YES	Launching in 2018
Brendan Vacations	NO	N/A
CIE Tours International	NO	N/A
Collette	YES	Preferred agencies are listed in Collette's Agent Finder
Contiki	NO	N/A
G Adventures	YES	Any agent can sign up to Sherpa whether they are an independent agency or part of a bigger consortium.
Globus family of brands	YES	Become specialist, produce minimum \$7,500 annually to be listed and produce \$20k annually for "Click to Connect"
Insight Vacations	NO	N/A
Intrepid Travel	NO	N/A
Luxury Gold	NO	N/A
Mayflower Tours	NO	N/A
Perillo Tours	NO	N/A
Sceptre Vacations	NO	N/A
Tauck	NO	N/A
Trafalgar	NO	N/A





# TOUR OPERATORS MEET DEMAND FOR AUTHENTIC TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

*by Kerry Tice*

*Experiential travel brings the history and culture of destinations to life, from learning to cook paella from a chef in Spain to meeting a samurai warrior in Japan.*

As an increasing number of travelers seek out authentic experiences, suppliers are heeding the call. Extensive research of the experiential travel trend is driving the introduction of more diversified products from escorted tour operators, who are determined to show visitors their destinations in an entirely new light.

Insight Vacations and Luxury

Gold, two escorted brands under The Travel Corporation (TTC) umbrella, have both pushed beyond the envelope when it comes to implementing experiential travel by giving guests behind-the-scenes access to local attractions, farms, and local people for hands-on learning experiences.

Particularly with their epicurean itineraries, guests who travel

with either brand are given unprecedented admittance to vineyards, bakeries, restaurants and farms, bringing the history and culture of each destination to life through food.

For example, Insight Vacations offers guests in the village of Saumur, France, the chance to discuss grape varieties and local terroir with a resident wine expert



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*Regardless of the type of experience, the focus for operators is on keeping the itineraries distinctive and unforgettable.*

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while sampling the wines of the Loire Valley. And while on the “Highlights of Spain” journey, guests can meet the chef at a local family-run restaurant in the heart of Valencia and learn the traditional recipe for paella during a cooking demonstration.

Experiences like these are also available through Luxury Gold, whereby a guest touring in Japan can see a performance by a samurai warrior and then have an exclusive meeting with him to learn how this specialized martial art has been passed down through many generations. Meanwhile, in New Zealand, guests can have lunch with a retired champion horse jockey and hear his racing tales.

Regardless of the type of experience, the focus for operators is on keeping the itineraries distinctive and unforgettable.

“Whether it’s an expert chef showing you how regional Tuscan specialties are made, or a private viewing of the Ceremony of the Keys in London, travelers get unique experiences that they wouldn’t get if they were traveling on their own,” said Phil Cappelli, president of Insight Vacations and Luxury Gold.

### **EXPLORING NEW CORNERS OF THE WORLD**

For Intrepid Travel, introducing product around this trend was the result of a OnePoll research study the company commissioned this year that found North Americans care

more about experiences over things, and that they have a strong desire to try new adventures and see new corners of the world.

As a result, Intrepid developed three distinct themed itineraries that their research showed clients were looking for, namely “Real Cycling Adventures,” “Real Food Adventures” and “Family Adventures.”

In addition, for seasoned travelers looking for more off-the-beaten-path experiences, the company has some limited-edition Expedition trips that venture to the world’s most remote places. Set to depart in 2018 and 2019, these itineraries will explore destinations like the Congo Basin’s tropical rainforests and the remote Siberian Peninsula.

“Intrepid Travel has seen a 66 percent increase in bookings from North Americans on our authentic, experience-rich trips in the past two years alone,” said Leigh Barnes, Intrepid Travel’s regional director for North America. “There is a trend in people looking to have more of a sense of purpose, and they are now using experiential travel as a way to achieve this.”

And while the trend towards experience-based vacations is not new, it has certainly picked up speed recently. In fact, Collette first introduced its exploration line back in 2008 and, like Intrepid, the operator’s own recent research solidified its decision to relaunch the immersive experience line later this year.

“Our explorations growth has

been up year-over-year,” said Diana Ditto, director of product design for Collette. The operator also recently rolled out new culinary-focused tours, featuring meals hosted by a local family, and cooking classes and demonstrations with local chefs with cuisine sampling. For example, in Vietnam, guests can visit a local market and shop for ingredients to create their own meal.

### **DISPELLING THE ESCORTED TOUR MYTHS**

Ditto said experiential products give travel agents the opportunity to “debunk” many of the myths associated with guided travel, specifically for those who may be hesitant to take a group tour because they consider it too rigid.

“We know that the added bonus of having a tour manager far outweighs the benefits of traveling alone, but what many don’t know is how much goes into finding the perfect experiences for our guests. Our tour designers spend over 100 days on the road, creating unique experiences that just can’t be booked through research,” Ditto said.

With an abundance of experiential products on hand, suppliers are doing their part in meeting the demands of today’s traveler. Their advice to agents: take advantage of these vast experiential offerings and focus on each client’s personal travel preferences. Whether it’s adventure, wellness or culinary, there’s bound to be an experience they are seeking.





chart08

# consumer-agent issues

Escorted Tour Operator	Do you currently take consumer email addresses from travel agent bookings to use for direct-to-consumer marketing campaigns?	When marketing to agency clients, do you include the booking agency's call to action?
African Travel	NO	YES
Brendan Vacations	YES 1	YES
CIE Tours International	NO	YES
Collette	YES 2	YES
Contiki	YES 1	YES
G Adventures	NO	YES
Globus family of brands	YES 1	N/A
Insight Vacations	NO	YES
Intrepid Travel	YES 1	YES
Luxury Gold	NO	YES
Mayflower Tours	NO	YES
Perillo Tours	NO	YES
Sceptre Vacations	NO	N/A
Tauck	YES 1	YES
Trafalgar	YES 1	YES

1 Mainly for registration and emergency communication; not used for direct to consumer marketing

2 The Call to Action is always back to the booking agent



chart08

# consumer-agent issues

Escorted Tour Operator	If you do direct-to-consumer marketing, do you include a “call your travel agent” call to action all of the time?	Do you pay commissions on non-refunded cancellation monies paid?
African Travel	YES	YES 4
Brendan Vacations	YES	YES
CIE Tours International	YES	YES 5
Collette	YES	YES 6
Contiki	NO	YES 7
G Adventures	YES	YES
Globus family of brands	YES	YES
Insight Vacations	YES	YES
Intrepid Travel	NO	YES
Luxury Gold	YES	YES
Mayflower Tours	YES	YES 3
Perillo Tours	YES	NO
Sceptre Vacations	YES	N/A
Tauck	YES	YES 8
Trafalgar	YES	YES

3 Case by case

4 Only on cancellations at 100%

5 If insurance is purchased, up to cancellation fees

6 Commissions are protected on 100% penalties

7 Our trips are fully refundable up to 45 days prior to departure (excluding the deposit which can be used toward a future trip) so no, we don't protect commission as the money is refunded to the client. Cancellations within 45 days are charged varying fees due to suppliers billing us for

services, at this point, commission would be applied at 10% to any amount not refunded.

8 On penalties withheld



# consumer-agent issues

Escorted Tour Operator	Do you allow agencies to mark up any fares?	Do you allow agencies to rebate to their clients?	Can commissions be netted against checks in a weekly summary?
African Travel	YES	YES	YES
Brendan Vacations	NO	NO	NO
CIE Tours International	YES <sup>9</sup>	NO	N/A
Collette	N/A	NO	YES
Contiki	NO	NO	YES <sup>12</sup>
G Adventures	NO	NO	N/A
Globus family of brands	NO	NO	NO
Insight Vacations	NO	YES <sup>10</sup>	NO
Intrepid Travel	NO	NO	NO
Luxury Gold	NO	YES <sup>10</sup>	NO
Mayflower Tours	YES	YES <sup>11</sup>	NO
Perillo Tours	NO	YES <sup>11</sup>	NO
Sceptre Vacations	YES	YES	YES
Tauck	NO	NO	NO
Trafalgar	YES	YES <sup>10</sup>	NO

<sup>9</sup> Custom group tours only

<sup>10</sup> Some agency partners have this business model, but they are not allowed to advertise the discount

<sup>11</sup> Not encouraged, but have no control over agencies' policies

<sup>12</sup> We can support a variety of payments depending on the agreement with the consortia. We do not have special payment plans for individual agencies.





chart08

# consumer-agent issues

Escorted Tour Operator	Do you add a surcharge on credit cards to cover merchant fees?	Do you prominently display the agency's name and phone in confirmations and documents?
African Travel	NO	NO
Brendan Vacations	NO	YES <sup>13</sup>
CIE Tours International	NO <sup>14</sup>	YES
Collette	NO	YES
Contiki	NO	YES
G Adventures	NO	YES
Globus family of brands	N/A	YES
Insight Vacations	NO	NO
Intrepid Travel	NO	NO
Luxury Gold	NO	NO
Mayflower Tours	NO	YES
Perillo Tours	NO	YES
Sceptre Vacations	NO	YES
Tauck	NO	YES
Trafalgar	NO	NO

13 Available for FIT, not guided tours

14 On supplemental billing for groups only



# TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL TO BOOST LAND VACATION SALES

*by Jessica Montevago*

*Major tour operators are offering updated resources to give travel agents the tools they need to stay current on itineraries and promotions, and to receive rewards.*

Having a diversified portfolio of travel products to offer clients can be a key strategy in keeping them happy. One tried-and-true way that travel agents can develop a good understanding of the numerous land vacations on the market is to take advantage of the new and updated training programs being offered by tour operators, as they invest in more support for their trade partners.

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*Having a diversified portfolio of travel products to offer clients can be a key strategy in keeping them happy.*

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Educational opportunities give agents the tools they need to

stay up-to-date on itineraries and promotions, as well as to qualify them to be rewarded through special benefits and incentives.

Collette is in the midst of developing a new e-learning system, going live this fall, as it looks to improve the overall user experience. Its current course educates agents on both selling tactics and Collette's various product lines.

Meanwhile, earlier this year, the Globus family of brands unveiled a new training program for all four brands — Globus, Cosmos, Monograms and Avalon Waterways. It is available for agents via their desktop or a mobile/tablet app; and provides progressive online learning tools to help them retain and apply the information with selling tips, client profiling tools and destination information to help grow their business.

“With so many new products, and emerging destinations, we want to ensure our agents are always on the cusp of innovation as it relates to Globus, Cosmos, Monograms and Avalon Waterways,” said Vanessa Parrish, channel marketing manager for the Globus family of brands. “Continuing education is so very important to the travel agent community, and it is why the Globus family continues to invest in best-in-class learning tools.”

The other important resource for advisors is their District Sales Managers, who can work with agents one-on-one to schedule sales calls, events, webinars, conferences and tradeshow. Mayflower Tours, which focuses on groups, has sales managers available to conduct trainings as well as presentations for agencies.

“Relationships are key, and training is a great opportunity to start building that District Sales Manager/Travel Advisor relationship.” said Shannon McGee Whitebread, director of sales for Insight Vacations.

Insight’s DSM team is available to do training with agents whenever and where ever it is most convenient for them, whether it be in office, in a coffee shop, with a group, or one on one. They also set up general training events. “It is as important to strengthen your sales skills as your product knowledge, which is why we include a bit of sales training in all of our sessions,” McGee Whitebread added.

Trafalgar, too, sees the importance of this partnership and continues to grow its team. It has



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*Participants represent the top luxury agencies and are typically the highest producers in their respective markets.*

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added one new DSM to its staff of 16 available to the retail travel trade nationwide, as well as a senior development manager dedicated to host accounts.

Insight and Trafalgar – both under The Travel Corporation’s (TTC) umbrella of travel brands – are also a part of the company’s recently introduced online learning platform, TTC Academy. It provides one central location for advisors to take courses from Trafalgar (which has two up and a third under development), Contiki, Luxury Gold and Insight Vacations. Each course provides an in-depth look at the brand and offers the best selling practices.

Two courses about travel to Africa are also underway. In addition, the company introduced its first parent company course, called TTC: Your Best Trade Partner, highlighting their diversity of immersive travel experiences.

With Tauck, travel advisors who complete the five-module online specialist course gain exclusive access to the Tauck Agent Rewards promotions; and an exclusive invitation to participate in an upcoming Tauck Academy,

which incorporates classroom modules, roundtable discussions, on-tour experiences, and signature “sparkling events.”

Travel advisors are hand-selected to participate in Tauck Academy based on booking performance with the tour operator or potential to achieve as identified by Tauck staff or industry leaders. Participants represent the top luxury agencies and are typically the highest producers in their respective markets.

“Tauck Academy offers agents a high-touch, personal connection with Tauck and has an experiential element to it as well, while the online specialist training is shorter, delivered virtually, and is available on demand to provide greater accessibility,” said Kaci McAllister, director of sales and marketing for Tauck. “These two platforms combined allow us to reach the widest audience, and we have seen outstanding results with both.

McGee Whitebread concluded, “We work in an industry that can change minute to minute so it is important to stay on top of trends and new offerings.”





chart09

# co-op marketing

Escorted Tour Operator	Do you provide co-op marketing?	How does an agency qualify?
African Travel	YES	Performance results
Brendan Vacations	YES	Agency must have positive production and present a compelling sales and marketing strategy.
CIE Tours International	YES <sup>1</sup>	Through the local director of sales
Collette	YES	Revenue/performance
Contiki	YES	Part of preferred agreements with partners, generally a percentage of gross sales.
G Adventures	YES	Contact local global purpose specialist (BDM)
Globus family of brands	YES	Plan agreed upon with agency and BDM
Insight Vacations	YES	Contact business development manager
Intrepid Travel	YES	Based on varying contracts
Luxury Gold	YES	Contact business development manager
Mayflower Tours	YES	Based on production levels; can earn up to 1% of total sales as co-op
Perillo Tours	YES	Approved on a case-by-case basis; agency must share 50% of the marketing costs.
Sceptre Vacations	YES	Contact business development manager
Tauck	YES	Contact business development manager
Trafalgar	YES	Developed with all preferred partners based on previous year's sales revenue. Individual agencies can work with local sales manager.

<sup>1</sup> For group bookings only



chart10

## TRAINING

Training is the bedrock on which agents build their business. Knowing a product inside and out is the first step toward being able to recommend and then sell it. Here's what the tour operators have to offer in terms of training for travel agents:

# types of training

Escorted Tour Operator	Seminars in agency office?	Regional seminars?	Video seminars?	Tele-conference/webinar training?	Certification program as specialists?
African Travel	YES	YES	NO	YES	Launching Q1 2018
Brendan Vacations	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
CIE Tours International	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Collette	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Contiki	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
G Adventures	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Globus family of brands	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Insight Vacations	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Intrepid Travel	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
Luxury Gold	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Mayflower Tours	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO
Perillo Tours	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
Sceptre Vacations	YES	YES	YES	YES	Launching Q3 2018
Tauck	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Trafalgar	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES



chart11

# fam trip policy

## Escorted Tour Operator

What is your fam trip policy for travel agents?

African Travel	25% discount on full brochure itineraries for agent and companion
Brendan Vacations	Requirement to complete the academy online course
CIE Tours International	30% discount for agent and one companion on land only
Collette	All agents can apply to travel on collette familiarization trips, agent rates available for Collette specialists who complete e-learning modules
Contiki	Free fams for preferred agency partners and paid fams for other agency partners at a deep discount; must complete the ContikiU e-learning "core" courses to be eligible
G Adventures	Every region has a different policy, including general agent fams and partner fams
Globus family of brands	Agent must be employed with agency, producing more than 4 traveled passengers annually to qualify
Insight Vacations	Must be a producing agent and have taken e-learning program
Intrepid Travel	Every region has different policies, we offer agent discounts for all agents, plus additional dollar-value discounts based on agent sales
Luxury Gold	Must be a producing agent and have taken e-learning program
Mayflower Tours	Promote specific dates for fams, agents have to request to join
Perillo Tours	30% discount on land portion of any tour
Sceptre Vacations	Offered to agent partners in the fall and spring of each year
Tauck	Fams have been replaced with agent rewards program, which allows agents to earn points based on traveled passengers to apply towards their personal travel with Tauck
Trafalgar	DSMS review their applicants and choose based on selling history and future potential









# OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF SELLING ESCORTED VACATIONS

*by David Cogswell*

*From new ships and itineraries to over-the-top entertainment and amenities, the cruise industry is offering something for every guests' taste and budget.*

There are many advantages for travel agents to sell escorted tours or guided vacations. There are challenges, too, but it is worth the effort to surmount them because escorted tour programs are ideal in many ways. The primary challenge for the travel agent is the same as for the tour operator: people don't know what tour operators do. It's a problem of education.

"You have to educate them on what an escorted tour is," said Steve McSwain, owner of Arta Travel in Plano, Texas. "There are common misconceptions, this concept that you're going to be stuck on a bus and be herded around like cattle

and not have a unique experience. Depending on the tour operator, I guess that could be true to an extent. But if it's not, you can educate them about it, and make them understand that you miss the highlights of a destination by not taking a tour."

While many people imagine guided touring to be like the 1960s movie "If It's Tuesday This Must Be Belgium," tour operators have been refining their craft for decades to banish that image from history. They can't shake it, so the problem of perception remains. And the chosen solution of tour operators is communication through the national network of travel agents.

"We get this sort of pushback all the time about tours," said Dan Austin, president of Austin Adventures. "Of course, the number one solution is always a basic quality sales process, meaning accept the fact that the concern of fear is there — and real — and work to educate and overcome. People buy from people they trust. You have to build that trust."

The travel agent is the necessary bridge between the wholesaler and the public.

"Some of the challenges I encounter are normal concerns," said Claire Schoeder, of Travel Edge in Atlanta. "People ask, 'Why should the



bus be delayed for the same people who are always late?’ I try to find out guidelines from tour companies. Some have rules in place and others say they deal with it if it happens.”

### **MANY CHOICES FOR GROUP TRAVEL**

Today, tour packages are available to satisfy any desired degree of independence.

“The primary problem with selling an escorted tour is that people don’t think they have enough free time,” said Beth Baran, owner of Traveleaders in Mason, Ohio. “You have to explain what the tour is. What’s good about escorted touring is maximizing time in the destination, going to see all the most important highlights in whatever area you are in. You’re not going to have to wait in line to enter any venues because you’ve got agreed-upon entry times.”

“We’re actively engaging with travel agents in order to give them the opportunity to debunk many of

the myths associated with guided travel – specifically for those who may be hesitant to take a group tour because it’s too rigid,” said Courtney Iannuccilli, vice president of marketing at Collette. “We also know that the added bonus of having a tour manager far outweighs the benefits of traveling alone. But what many don’t know is how much goes into finding the perfect experiences for our guests.”

Learning about the range of product available is the first step to selling tours. The other basic staple of education is to learn to clearly explain the advantages of group travel over independent travel to a client. Once the initial sale is made, clients tend to lock into return business with some regularity.

“It’s really all about how you make the experience more personal and intimate and offer better service within the movements of a program that happens with others,” said Steve Spivak, vice president of sales for

Tauck, the Connecticut-based tour operator. “So for us, so much of it is about the experiential elements of the program and how unique they are and how exclusive they are.”

### **THE PROSPECTS FOR RETURN CUSTOMERS**

For tour operators, the big hurdle is getting people to take their first escorted tour. If it is a quality program and well-suited to the client’s preferences, they will discover the many joys of escorted travel and it will wipe away their misconceptions. Their sales resistance will be gone. They will become return customers and will provide what Tauck calls an “annuity.”

But getting them to take that first tour is the most difficult thing.

It is because of this problem that tour operators are among the best industry partners for retail travel agents. The tour segment of the industry is fragmented and highly diverse. Each operator approaches each destination in a highly individual way. No tour operator has any hope of monopolizing a market, as a few airlines have done. Their products are not commodities that are all essentially the same.

The tour operator needs the travel agent to be their reach into the far corners of the U.S., to explain to prospective customers what they actually do. To the tour operator, the travel agent is golden. Tour operators are not looking to cut commissions. They are looking for ways to help agents stay in business because without agents their businesses will die.

The problem is one of education. To partner with tour operators, travel agents need to educate themselves on the different kinds of tour programs that are available so they will know what kind of program would fit a particular client. They need to understand the benefits of group travel, and they have to develop the vocabulary for getting that knowledge across to clients.



chart 12

# what does your fare include?

Escorted Tour Operator	Base Fare	Government Taxes	Meals
African Travel	YES	YES	YES <sup>1</sup>
Brendan Vacations	YES	YES	NO
CIE Tours International	YES	YES	YES <sup>2</sup>
Collette	YES	YES	YES <sup>2</sup>
Contiki	YES	YES	YES <sup>2</sup>
G Adventures	YES	YES	YES <sup>2</sup>
Globus family of brands	YES	N/A	N/A
Insight Vacations	YES	YES	YES <sup>1</sup>
Intrepid Travel	YES	YES	YES <sup>2</sup>
Luxury Gold	YES	YES	YES <sup>1</sup>
Mayflower Tours	YES	YES	YES
Perillo Tours	YES	YES	YES
Sceptre Vacations	YES	YES	YES <sup>6</sup>
Tauck	YES	YES	YES
Trafalgar	YES	YES	YES <sup>2</sup>

1 Depends on the tour/itinerary

2 Some included

3 With airfare purchase

4 At an additional cost

5 With groups

6 Custom to suit

7 Internal airfare, not airfare to get to the start point

8 With some restrictions



chart 12

# what does your fare include?

Escorted Tour Operator	Gratuities	Transfers	Hotel Accommodations
African Travel	NO	YES	YES
Brendan Vacations	YES 2	YES 1	YES
CIE Tours International	NO	YES 3	YES
Collette	NO	YES 3	YES
Contiki	YES 4	NO	YES
G Adventures	NO	YES 1	YES
Globus family of brands	YES 5	YES 3	YES
Insight Vacations	YES 2	YES 7	YES
Intrepid Travel	NO	YES	YES
Luxury Gold	YES 2	YES	YES
Mayflower Tours	NO	YES 3	YES
Perillo Tours	YES 2	YES	YES
Sceptre Vacations	NO	YES 6	YES
Tauck	YES	YES	YES
Trafalgar	YES 2	YES 3	YES

1 Depends on the tour/itinerary

2 Some included

3 With airfare purchase

4 At an additional cost

5 With groups

6 Custom to suit

7 With some restrictions





chart13

# Do you charge additional change fees for...?

Escorted Tour Operator	Name?	Date?	Room upgrades?	Room Downgrades?	Other?
African Travel	YES	YES	N/A	N/A	
Brendan Vacations	YES	YES	N/A	YES	\$75 service fee per person on airline ticket
CIE Tours International	YES	YES	NO	NO	
Collette	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	
Contiki	NO <sup>1</sup>	NO <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	
G Adventures	NO	NO <sup>3</sup>	YES	NO	Adding a single supplement
Globus family of brands	YES	YES	YES	YES	
Insight Vacations	YES	YES	NO	NO <sup>1</sup>	
Intrepid Travel	NO	NO	N/A	N/A	
Luxury Gold	YES	YES	NO	NO <sup>1</sup>	
Mayflower Tours	NO	NO	NO	NO	
Perillo Tours	YES <sup>2</sup>	YES <sup>2</sup>	Varies	NO	
Sceptre Vacations	Varies	Varies	N/A	N/A	
Tauck	N/A <sup>4</sup>	NO	YES	N/A	
Trafalgar	YES	YES	NO	YES	Airfare

<sup>1</sup> Outside of 45 days

<sup>2</sup> Air only

<sup>3</sup> Fee may apply within 60 days of travel

<sup>4</sup> Requires re-booking

# travelmarket

Voice of the Travel Professional **report**



The Escorted Tour Operator Report Card for Travel Agents is the fourth volume in our series of report cards highlighting travel agent policies from companies in all corners of the travel industry. The first Ocean Report Card for Travel Agents was published in early 2017, followed by the second in February, 2018. The River Cruise Report Card was also released in January, 2018.

These report cards were born during a meeting of Travel Market Report's Editorial Advisory Board. In the course of brainstorming ways TMR might be of service to our readers, they suggested it would be helpful to have one reference book that contains all the details of all the policies of all the suppliers in the travel industry. We began our research project in 2017 and while not all of the suppliers we contact have responded, we feel most are represented.

By the time we're done, we hope to have a multi-volume reference you can keep at hand and consult any time you want to check the policies of a supplier with whom you deal. We should point out that after these suppliers respond to our surveys, our travel agent advisory board reviews for accuracy. We hope you find our report cards useful for your business. As the Voice of the Travel Professional, our goal is to be your advocate.

## AND IT'S ALL THANKS TO:

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**Jennifer Wilson-Buttigieg**, *Valerie Wilson Travel, New York, NY*

*Abercrombie & Kent, Adventures by Disney, Gate 1, Ritz Tours, and Swain Destinations were also given the opportunity to participate in the report card but declined and/or could not meet the deadline.*

*Travel Market Report will update this document on our website if or when the information changes or another tour operator chooses to participate.*



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*Voice of the Travel Professional* report

