

Academic Travel Abroad, Inc.

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JOB TITLE: Tour Communications Specialist

DEPARTMENT: Client Services Department

SUPERVISOR: Director, Client Services

START DATE: Immediately

DESCRIPTION OF OFFICE:

Academic Travel Abroad, Inc. was formed in 1950 to assist colleges, universities, museums and other cultural institutions, and professional organizations in the creation and operation of educational group travel programs for their memberships and patrons. Today ATA, a leader in cultural and educational group travel, operates unique travel programs throughout the world. In the last five years, ATA has strategically entered the market of patron tours by providing highly-customized, up-scale group tours for cultural, political and professional organizations to use as fundraising tools with their major donors and boards of directors. ATA has a staff of over 60 in the U.S. involved in all phases of travel: tour design, land operations, travel services, airline sales, and marketing.

ATA also has two subsidiary divisions which include offices around the world. CET Academic Programs is well known for its innovations in the field of study abroad. Its programs— now based at multiple centers in Asia, Europe and the Middle East —specialize in integrating students into the society in which they are living. Professionals Abroad works with top U.S. and international professional associations to facilitate professional exchange between counterparts around the globe.

BASIC FUNCTION OF THE POSITION:

The Tour Communications Specialist (TCS) provides customer service to all ATA travelers. TCSes handle many domestic and international tours for a variety of client organizations. The TCS responsibilities are: 1) provide superior customer service in all forms, including oral and written; 2) monitor and ensure quality of tour, passenger, and financial data in the in house reservations system, Tour Tools and produce accurate tour reports for our partners in-house and abroad; 3) write tour mailings, maintain accurate mailing templates, and proof documents before they are sent to travelers; 4) send tour mailings 5) perform other projects as needed to fulfill ATA's commitment to superior customer service to our traveler and client partners. The TCS works closely with other ATA staff, as well as attending regular meetings of the Travel Services Department in order to maintain a unity of ATA tour operations.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (not necessarily in order of work time percentage):

1. Customer Service

- The TCS commits to carry out ATA's Gold Standards of Service in all interactions with travelers.
- Act as front line customer service representative in taking calls from existing tour participants for all tours.
- Provide same-day responses to all caller and e-mail inquiries.
- Communicate with participants by telephone and/or in writing on all tour-related matters with the exception of air requests which are forwarded to our partner air department.
- Provide consistently superior customer service to our Donor clients through more hands-on contact with the client representative, travelers, and their assistants, and by ensuring that the quality of all materials are top-notch and error free.
- Identify potential customer service problems and work quickly to solve them
- Creatively solve problems that may arise with travelers within established guidelines and working closely with the Director of Client Services.

2. Traveler Interface

- Work with our partner air department regarding participant air arrangements, and enter travel information into Tour Tools.
- Follow up with travelers on assigned tours at scheduled intervals to ensure that their travel needs are being met and that they are satisfied with ATA and our partner air department's service.
- Follow up with travelers regarding missing information and forms, and payments.
- Manage traveler's requests for extra hotel nights. Request extra space as needed from the operators, and update inventory accordingly.
- Monitor passenger payment balance sheet at regular intervals and contact passengers for past due payments.
- Process passenger cancellations, request refunds from accounting, and mail cancellation letters to participants. Communicate with the appropriate sales team if space can be resold, and advise our partner air department in the event of travel arrangements to be cancelled.

3. Traveler and Tour Information Management (via Tour Tools, our reservations database)

- Maintain accurate and current tour and traveler information in the Tour Tools system
- Enter traveler information into Tour Tools and create reports with the travelers' information
- Update our suppliers abroad about the needs of our travelers
- Order name badges, luggage tags, and gift items when appropriate
- Request insurance coverage for tours when applicable
- Prepare vouchers and print itineraries for inclusion in final mailing
- Maintain tour files in accordance with departmental procedures, for the benefit of all colleagues who need access to those files.
- Produce briefing materials for tour staff and clients
- Request insurance coverage for each assigned tour when applicable

- Coordinate with Generations Visa Service to ensure travelers have obtained necessary visas. Proof all kits before they are sent to travelers.
- Respond to queries from travel insurance companies regarding claims
- Assist Account Managers in producing accurate invoices for client organizations when necessary.

4. Tour Document Management

- Partner with a team of Program Managers, Account Managers, and client partners to ensure that accurate and engaging trip mailings are drafted to advise travelers of what to expect on tour.
- Assemble and send all mailings, invoices, airline itineraries and vouchers, or gift items to travelers and track who has received the mailings.
- Update tour documents and notify travelers as changes occur to schedule, itinerary, or accommodation.
- Work to update and improve mailing templates, handbooks, and other communications with travelers. Examples include restaurant lists, event lists, and other value added information.
- Create and maintain weblogs dedicated to each tour, as clients allow.

5. Phone Team Support

- Answer rollover calls from the reservations center and main phone line.
- Assist callers, or direct them to an appropriate person.

6. Additional Responsibilities

- Open mail and process payments, forms, and invoices from suppliers.
- Take mail or UPS packages to collection points in building each afternoon.
- Monitor other TCS's work for quality control
- Seek new ways to streamline and improve existing procedures within the Tour Communications Specialist scope of responsibility
- Assist with training of newer TCSes and help maintain accurate training documents.
- Other projects as assigned by the Director of Client Services.

Note: Depending on the experience of the individual and the complexity of the tour operations, the department manager will assign the tours and writing projects among the TCSes to maximize the effectiveness of the department.

ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS:

- B.A. degree

SKILLS:

- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Excellent customer service skills
- Professional and mature telephone manner and presence
- Ability to work independently with minimal supervision
- Self-starter
- Strong organizational skills—able to handle multiple projects and prioritize deadlines

- Attention to details and facility with numbers
- Professional manner in dealing with clients and colleagues
- Knowledge of Microsoft Office Suite (Word / Excel / Outlook)
- Familiarity with internet blogging and basic website building technology
- Willingness to learn Tour Tools and FoxPro
- Travel agency or other travel-related experience a plus
- Knowledge of geography and cultural history of international destinations
- Ability to work on multiple projects concurrently and work under pressure
- Team-player
- Adaptability and flexibility—and a sense of humor

SALARY:

- Commensurate with experience.

BENEFITS:

- In addition to the salary are benefits including a variety of insurance options, 401K, and paid holidays, vacation and sick leave. For details regarding benefits, please consult our website at <http://www.academic-travel.com/web/guest/employment> and refer to the “Benefits Summary” section.

Minimum 1-year commitment desired