
UNIT 5 MANAGING TOUR OPERATIONS – II

(Field Operations – Inbound and Outbound)

Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Developing and Managing Linkages with Principal Suppliers
- 5.3 Managing Recruitment and Trained Manpower
- 5.4 Operations Department
 - 5.4.1 Inbound Tour Operations
 - 5.4.2 Outbound Tour Operations
- 5.5 Managing the Marketing of Tours Packages
 - 5.5.1 Marketing In-bound Tours
 - 5.5.2 Marketing Out-bound Tours
- 5.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.7 Clues to Answers
- Annexure

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- appreciate the importance of liaisoning with providers of services at local and international level for tour operations,
- know about the management of available human resources,
- learn about the construction of fares and quoting fares for tours/packages,
- understand precautionary measures to be taken while handling inbound tour operations, and
- know the various procedures involved in tour operations.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the management of tour operations you have to address primarily functions related to two areas, i.e., inbound tour operations and outbound tour operations. In inbound tour operations as a manager you have to design the product according to the market tastes and trends, attend and reply mail regularly by using latest means of technology, prepare quotations of fares, costing packages, supervising and controlling issues of vouchers as tickets as well as motivating your employees to achieve desired goals. As a manager you also have to provide in-house training to your employees on various aspects related to their jobs. Inbound tour operations also involve several field operations like arranging transfers, pick-ups and hotel check-ins as well as to ensure smooth connection of the group by rail, road and air.

On the other hand, outbound tour operations have always been the centre of attraction for all the employees of the organisation because they are also seen as a gateway for frequent overseas visits either as a part of familiarisation trips or to develop contacts with the principal suppliers of services. As a manager, therefore, your prime responsibility is to equip your employees with updated product knowledge by giving them first hand experience of outbound operations. On the one hand, you can develop your own outbound packages and on the other hand, you can also sell the packages of inbound tour operators of other destinations.

Thus, in this Unit an attempt has been made to familiarise you with management and operational issues related to tour operations. Some of these have already been discussed in TS-3 and TS-6.

5.2 DEVELOPING AND MANAGING LINKAGES WITH PRINCIPAL SUPPLIERS

Tour operations, just like any other industrial operations, largely depend upon the sources of supply. Here the point of difference is that industrial supplies are not visible to the consumer. For example, if you are producing edible oil, the consumer will not come to know who supplies you the raw material but in tourism operation suppliers like airlines, hotels, shopping malls, cultural attractions, all are visible for customers. Moreover, each one of these principal suppliers contributes towards the satisfaction of customers.

These service providers play vital role in your successful operation of tours and you need to develop and manage linkages with these suppliers. You have already been told that there are two areas of operations, i.e., inbound and outbound tour operations. Therefore, for each of these areas linkages work differently because the suppliers are different. In the case of inbound tour operations when you plan to design your product you are required not only to collect complete information on what type of travel products are available in the markets and at what price but also you will have to match the existing products with suitable target market segment. For example, if you are approached by a group of tourists having interest in Buddhist circuit, you must have complete and authentic information on all the components of this product including the providers of services and costs only then you can price and offer such a package. Here comes the need for developing contacts with the service providers to supply you with accurate information. If possible, conduct a familiarisation tour before taking decisions. Moreover, as a manager, you can negotiate well on various terms and conditions of such purchases when you have developed good rapport with them.

Principal suppliers may include airlines, hotels, transporters, insurance companies, health service providers, conference and convention organisers, shopkeepers/shopping mall owners and many more to complete the list, depending on the nature of the product to be packaged.

On the other hand, in case of outbound tour operations such linkages focus upon overseas suppliers who are also on look out for distributors of their products. You might have seen advertisements of Indian tour operators selling destinations like Singapore, Malaysia, Bangkok, Pattaya, Switzerland, France, Mauritius, Australia, New Zealand and many more at attractive costs. This all has become possible because of good linkages these tour operators are able to establish with their overseas suppliers. This has resulted in good terms for negotiations for both the parties, i.e., if overseas supplier assures good price you have to commit good volume of business. This forms the core point of difference between your quotations of a package from that of your competitors.

Thus, linkages can play crucial role in making your operations a success or failure. Therefore, you are advised to develop and maintain linkages and contacts with your suppliers both within the country as well as at other destinations.

5.3 MANAGING RECRUITMENT AND TRAINED MANPOWER

You have already read in MTM-2, MTM-3 and MTM-4, about the objectives and characteristics of manpower recruitment in any organisations. What you have learnt in these Units is also fully applicable on this trade. But each business/trade has its own characteristics and, therefore, certain modifications in recruitment procedures are required to suit these peculiar characteristics. In this Unit, our focus will be on recruitment and selection criteria or guidelines for successful operation of any tour operation business. It is obvious that since employees establish a direct contact between you and your customers, it becomes all the more crucial for you to select the right kind of staff to achieve your organisational goals. For other principles of personnel management you can refer to discussions given in MTM-3 which can also be applied to the tour operations business. While doing recruitment and selection of personnel for your tour operation business you must take care and caution because this business needs a highly professional approach for providing quality services. For example, if you have produced a wonderful package but your operational staff is not able to deliver in the same way as promised, it may lead to service gap and dissatisfaction.

In your tour operation business, therefore, you have to do certain preparation for recruitment. This means before you think of inviting people to apply for a job you have to decide what type of persons are to be invited and what would be their characteristics, i.e., you should outline “job specifications” for each position being created and filled in the organisation. This may include variations in physical specifications, mental levels, emotional and behavioural outlook and so on. For example, when you are looking for a person to handle pick-ups and transfer, desirable characteristics should be smart, good command over communications, hard working and someone who can work for longer hours with lots of patience. Similarly, when you are looking for a person to do costing/fare construction for you, the desirable characteristics should include good academic background having knowledge of world geography and international tariff regulation and a background in maths or finances.

In tour operations, job specifications may vary according to their area of operations. For example, in inbound tour operations your staff requirements may include:

- Supervisor pickup and transfers,
- Airport representatives,
- Reservation assistants,
- Domestic ticketing executives,
- Accounts executives,
- Drivers and chauffeurs, and
- Escorts/guides.

For each of the above-mentioned job you will find that required skills are different. For example, supervisor should be experienced enough to brief and train his/her staff on issues and considerations related to pick ups and transfers to hotels. It means he/she should be able to communicate effectively with his/her staff only then organisational objectives can be accomplished. For airport representative as already mentioned, should be smart, hard working person, who can work during odd hours because in India most of the international flights arrive at midnight. Therefore, such candidates should be preferred who can also work during day hours as Office Assistants. People working in accounts should possess competent qualification and experience because in tour operations most of the business is on credit and timely settlement of payment needs sincere attention otherwise you may have to wind up your business. Accounts executives are also responsible for controlling vouchers meant for transit transporters (pick ups and transfers) and for hotels.

Drivers and chauffeurs should have sound driving track record and full knowledge of routes and signalling patterns. Drivers and chauffeurs should have good command over communication and if possible good knowledge of touristic attractions in the area of their operations. They should also possess qualities like politeness, courteous, and with good sense of humour to make the tour a memorable experience.

Escorts and guides play a vital role in the success of any inbound tour operation. For example, the escorts’ job starts the moment a group lands at airport in India. From airport facilitation to the entire conduct of the tour, it is the escort who represents your company. In fact, he/she is the walking image of your company.

In the field of outbound tour operations recruitment and selection of personnel is almost similar to that of inbound tour operations. However, the difference in the operation section of this department is that employees have to be selected keeping in view the fact that most of these employees deployed in operations would be visiting the destination that they have to market. Therefore, they must possess adequate skills and knowledge of one or more foreign languages. Skills may be related to the field of international ticketing, fare construction/calculation, itinerary preparation and so on. Here while selecting any candidate stress should be laid on sound knowledge of destinations and geography of the candidate along with touristic attraction of various popular destinations.

To conclude, we can say that well planned and executed recruitment and selection procedure in tour operations can prove crucial for your organisation. If right kind of people are selected, oriented and

trained for these jobs, results would be better than your expectations. Precaution should be taken in putting right person at right job at the right time.

5.4 OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

As it is already mentioned in the introduction of this Unit, that operations of tours are the backbone of this trade. These operations primarily take place in both the fields of inbound tours and outbound tours. As managers in the trade you have to ensure that the work force efficiently handles the tasks.

5.4.1 Inbound Tour Operations

For some weeks, or even months, you and your office staff has worked to obtain the business from, and conduct administration for, a group of clients. When these tourists are about to arrive, you must ensure to deliver all that you have promised while negotiating for the group handling. This is the moment to fulfil expectations and to prove that your company and your country as a destination were the right choices for their vacation.

A good impression, in the very beginning of the visit, will put everyone in the right mood towards an overall success. Reverse to this situation would make them feel that they have committed a mistake by choosing this country as a destination and they start foreseeing a lot of problems all during their stay. This could mean that they are likely to make complaints even over small matters, and it could also mean that they will refuse to buy the extra services which otherwise would have contributed to your company's financial gains. Hence, properly prepared, planned and well-conducted transfers of groups will ensure a smooth and happy start. While doing so train your staff to always put themselves in the clients' shoe and how would they feel after a long flight when they are not only tired but they may also be dehydrated (as a result of the physical effects of flying, and of drinking alcohol on the flight which exaggerates this effect). They may be suffering from the change of climate from their country to yours. (A North European coming to South Asia in January could be experiencing a difference of as much as 45 to 50°C which requires a little adjustment). They are often nervous, for there is a fear of a foreign culture, foreign food, foreign people of different races and colours, of getting lost, ill, or robbed, and who knows what others fears! Of course, you can also look at these fears in a more positive way and can be regarded as part of the challenge, the excitement, or travelling abroad. After-all your clients did choose to come to you. Therefore, you must train your staff to apprise the tourist(s) being comfortable and safe. Once this is achieved atmosphere of noisy and hot airport bureaucracy and rudeness of many immigration and customs officials, the delay for that luggage, and the inadequacy of the trolleys can also be overlooked by them because what clients expect from you at this stage is:

- feel safe and secure,
- satisfy physical needs,
- belong with others, and
- have their status recognised.

Everything you plan before, during or after their transfer must centre around fulfilment of these needs. You should also consider whether your clients actually need you to conduct this transfer for them? He/she may not, since most adults are capable of finding their way to wherever they wish to go. It may take them longer, especially if there are language problems, and it may be less comfortable, more expensive, and slower to do it themselves but still they need you because you can do transfers for them more cheaply, more quickly, more comfortably, than they can themselves, and you can also provide for all those personal needs which are listed above. If you are unable to manage all this you are as good as those tourists in arranging all this for themselves. Clients will soon realise this and your business will evaporate. Now let us look at what steps you shall take as a manager to ensure that all goes well and the clients' needs are met. In fact, several days before pre-arrival day you should cross-check:

- that required/requested kind of transport has been booked, i.e., booked vehicle should be the right kind of vehicle for the purpose.

- that your staff is using the most appropriate transport for your clients. Clients may have requested air conditioned vehicle or they may have been carrying a lot of luggage so that a larger vehicle or even a second vehicle especially for the baggage may be needed. (This particularly applies to active special interest groups like divers, climbers, trekkers, and campers).
- the transport arranged by your staff must be reliable, safe, well maintained and clean. The driver must be briefed as to exactly where the transport will be located in the airport terminal building and how escort can locate it. You must check if a voucher is required for transport and hotel must be released by you well in advance and must ensure that there vouchers are prepared for all items and after rate agreed. If there is need for some cash for payment of portage of luggage then you must assess the required amount and release the cash. Ensure that your staff has informed the transport company about the number of passengers and bags expected and other relevant details.
- As a good manager/supervisor it is your responsibility to ensure that hotel rooms in required numbers shall be made available on arrival and you shall also advise the hotel front office and house keeping about what time the clients will actually be arriving in the hotel so that the housekeeping department is ready for them (this is especially true in the case of very late arrivals). Not only this you should also apprise your staff about other needs of your clients.
- You must always brief the escort to collect and carry information on:
 - Flight number;
 - Name list;
 - Details of transport, transport voucher;
 - Hotels' name and address, rooming list and hotel voucher;
 - Together with any special details such as the nature of the group, difficulties with mobility, VIPs, etc.; and
 - Greeting/sign board (individual tourist's placard giving name of the tourist, country coming from or company he/she is representing, etc.).

In some cities where there is a long transfer between airport and city there is a representative who meets at the airport and then despatches the group to the hotel where another representative awaits. In such cases it becomes important for you to arrange for both. In **an identical briefing**, but, of course, one who receives at the airport has the transport vouchers and one who escorts them to hotels will have the hotel vouchers. In such a system you need to develop proper communication systems between both the employees and try to provide both of them mobile phones so that both of them can update each other about the movements of the tourist(s).

It is for you to develop a culture of checks and rechecks among your staff. For example, before reaching the airport they should call the airline and establish the **Actual time of arrival**. This is possible only when the aircraft has actually left its departure point. Advise them not be persuaded by the scheduled time of arrival which can be widely different due to technical or non-technical reasons. **If there is a substantial change to the timings ask them always to advise the transport company and the hotel of changes, accordingly.** You must ensure that your transfer staff has reached at the airport before the passengers come out of the waiting hall. Tell by your experiences for how long it may take for passengers to come out of the immigration cell. Try to provide your staff an **airside pass** only then he/she enter the customs hall assisting and greeting passengers. In some airports where this is not allowed because of security concerns you must apprise your staff of the same so that they shouldn't commit any thing of this sort and while doing transfers they must position themselves in public/visitor's gallery **immediately outside** the customs hall closely indicating their guest's/group leader's name.

- You should take precautions at this point of time to gain first impression for your company since **you will not get another chance to repair your impressions**
- Your staff should be clean, neat, and very well groomed (Use the personality factor),

- Your staff should be wearing a badge which identifies him/her as the official in charge of your clients; and
- If possible your staff can wear a uniform since this also helps your client to easily recognise and trust the staff deputed.

In short, you must equip your airport transfer boy/girl with the following material ready for use:

- Badge,
- Uniform as prescribed,
- Greeting board,
- Name list,
- Clipboard and pen,
- Mobile phone or phone card or coins,
- Tips or voucher for porters,
- Transport vouchers,
- Hotel vouchers,
- Welcome packs and/or gifts,
- Hotel registration cards, and
- Smile of the escort.

Certain other aspects to be taken care of include:

i) **Passengers' Identification:**

You must train your staff to greet tourists cheerfully and briefly welcome them, and tick them off on his/her list (for the purpose of security and status), ask them to wait in the waiting lounge so as to allow all members of the group to assemble. In case, if he/she finds that someone is missing, immediately ask the airport information service to announce:

- Name of missing passenger,
- Name of tour group,
- Place arrived from,
- Easily identifiable meeting point, and
- Ensure this announcement is in the language the passenger speaks.

On rare occasions when the passenger does not appear, your staff must be apprised of procedures as to immediately check with the airline that whether the group was in fact on board the flight or not. If not, there is no need to wait. If so, then your staff is required to repeat the public announcement and shall also leave a written note at the information point giving advice to the passenger about how to catch up with the group. You must advise your transfer staff to wait for at least 30 minutes and then continue with the transfer. It is advisable that at all stages of tour your staff keep the other passengers informed of the reasons for the delay (This reassures them that you are doing a careful job).

If any passenger reports loss or damaged baggage in the customs/baggage areas your staff shall be trained to fill forms for tracing/ replacing the bags obtained from the airline staff. This is where your airside pass would of great help. Your staff at this juncture shall reassure the passengers, who feel very scared under this situation and may become very upset. Make sure that the airline gives the passenger copies of all forms filled in and that these are carefully kept by the clients as they will be required for insurance claims. The airlines are responsible for finding and forwarding lost bags and

fixed rates of compensation are payable to help with the cost of toiletries, and other essentials when bags are lost or delayed. In such cases your staff shall offer themselves to go with the client for this essential shopping.

Another critical situation comes when at any point of time your staff has to leave the clients to attend to another matter advise them to always “signpost”. This means that should not just disappear but they explain therein where they are going and why. Failing to do this can lead to chaos amongst the group members. Examples could be “please stay here I am going to check on the coach” or “I will be back in 10 minutes, I am going to help with that damaged bag”.

When your staff has all the passengers, and all their bags are accounted for, he/she should lead the group to the vehicle holding the welcome notice high so that they can follow them through a crowd. Go steadily, so that all can keep up, and talk to the passengers in a welcoming manner about their journey, etc. It is advisable that you should instruct your staff to take care of group members while crossing roads. Before boarding the vehicle your staff shall also ensure that each person checks/is requested to identify their own bags been loaded. Usually, the loading will be done by the porters or the driver but they cannot be expected to know which bag belongs to whom. Before moving off welcome the group again, saying your name clearly and checking the number of passengers present is still correct. When your driver is driving a group to the hotel you should advise him to introduce himself as well the name of the hotel and tell the group the approximate driving time that may take to reach there.

ii) **Departure Transfers**

Tourists who arrive in groups or as individuals are required to go through transfer procedure once again, i.e., the departure transfer. The departing experience of a client is as crucial as arrival transfer for your company’s image. Departure transfer for your clients is to be handled very professionally by your staff. Like the arrival transfer it starts some days beforehand. **Within 72 hours after arrival** all scheduled seats for the next sector should be reconfirmed. This means that you should have gathered up all the tickets and done this for your clients. **Beware**, there are just a few airlines which have different requirements such as “reconfirm within 72 hours of departure” and failure to comply can lose clients their seats. Get to know your local situation. You are supposed to act professionally while handling/supervising such transfers. For instance, each and every client must be advised in writing **one day before** of their flight time and date and pick up time from the hotel. This can be achieved by putting a notice on the tour notice board, or you can leave a letter for each client with reception. (If you do not put this in writing there is a risk that a client who misses the flight can blame you.) Details of any departure tax payable should be included. Once again, you need to reconfirm transport and voucher arrangements with the transport company and double check that there is no change in the flight time. You need to establish and inform how much in advance before the departure clients should settle their extra bills at reception. Computerised accounts of hotels can usually issue bills just before departure unless the group is very large, but some properties prefer this to be done a night before.

On departure day you shall advise your staff to follow the **departure transfer checklist** (given below) which is essentially the same as for the arrival transfer. Remember that the customers’ needs are the same, i.e., full attention. He or she may again be nervous and unsure but by now has developed trust in you and should be easier to direct.

Departure Transfer Checklist

- Brief clients in writing and in advance,
- Brief hotel and porters to be ready,
- Be at hotel early,
- Ask reception if everyone has paid extras,
- Gather up clients, phone rooms of those who do not appear,
- Load bags (each client to confirm),

- Remind clients to:
 - pay extras,
 - return keys,
 - empty safe deposits, and
 - have passports and tickets in hand luggage.
- Load passengers,
- Depart for airport,
- On route explain procedure at airport,
- Explain what facilities there are airside (toilets? Post office? Duty-free? Bars? Café?),
- Drive as close as possible to check in area,
- Before leaving bus wish them a safe and happy journey home and that they will come back soon. Sound as if you mean it,
- While saying goodbye some passengers may offer small tips and gifts. Thank for these but **NEVER** solicit them,
- Assist with getting porters/trolleys,
- Assist with check in procedures/airport tax paying, etc.,
- Escort to security and passport control,
- When all have gone airside you can leave but not before, and
- If there is a delay before the clients have gone airside you are still responsible for them.

iii) **Other Areas for Supervision in Inbound Tour Operations**

Tourism is a very sensitive industry as it deals with people and their holidays. In the preceding sections various aspects that are necessary were mentioned for making the customer feel comfortable. However, certain other aspects should also be taken into account.

- 1) As a tour operator you must manage your finances well.
- 2) As a tour operator, besides having proper product knowledge, you must also have a proper understanding about the functioning and role of each organisation (like airline, hotel, surface transport, Government department, such as, Archaeological Survey, Ministry of Environment, etc.). He or she should also analyse the options available and work out contingency plans.
- 3) You, as well as your employees in a tour operation company should always be prepared to react to any sudden development (strikes, health problems, political upheaval, non-availability of hotels or airline seats, etc.) to handle such situations, you should train your staff to take on the spot decision to offer solutions.
- 4) Increasing use of technology has considerably changed the nature of operations management. However, computers, fax machines and even telephone systems also keep breaking down (e.g., power cuts, etc.). Hence, it is important that you should also train your employees in manual systems as it comes handy in times of crisis.
- 5) Market research, market segmentation, understanding the tourist markets, tourist profiles, etc. are essential for achieving success in business and a tour operator must pay considerably attention on these aspects. Besides, proper linkages have to be established with principal suppliers. Preparing attractive brochures, participation in travel fairs and travel conventions help the tour operator in increasing business. Many tour operators are also going for direct selling to the consumers by putting advertisements in the print as well as electronic media.

5.4.2 Outbound Tour Operations

This department specialises in providing facilities to only those passengers who intend travelling abroad. In order to perform a variety of jobs, it can be divided into following small sections:

i) Documentation Section

To travel abroad one requires procuring a number of documents and fulfil a set of formalities. This section, therefore, focuses upon these formalities and documents required for all types of foreign travel. Any person wanting to go abroad shall have to come into contact with the documentation section of the travel agency/tour operations department. It is only after asking the reason of visit you can and shall advice him/her about the documents needed for obtaining the required visa of the country of visit or for any other approval like that of RBI or Income Tax Office.

The formalities and the documents needed for travel abroad differ according to the purpose of visit. There are various reasons for travelling abroad – tourists for higher education, business, medical treatment, immigration, etc. In each case the formalities and the supporting documents differ not only from country to country but from the point of view of motives of travel also.

ii) Visa Section

This section keeps all the information for the formalities involved in obtaining visa for different countries. The staff collects and endorses passports on behalf of passengers and delivers them to passengers much in advance from the date of journey.

iii) Reservation Section

This is another important section which deals with the reservation of transport and hotel accommodation. The staff in this section has to be well conversant with all the airlines' timetables, airfares for different sectors and hotel accommodations, types and tariffs at most visited destinations. After taking note of all the details of the programme information is recorded by them on a specially printed sheet of paper. Thereafter a suitable travel plan is drawn giving suitable flight connections with arrival/departure timing and places of stay. It also makes an approximation of the cost for staying and the airfare. After the approval of the travel plan, a finally typed copy is given to the passenger for his reference. This is known as itinerary.

After getting the itinerary approved the reservation section contacts the concerned airlines and asks for seats as per the itinerary. The concerned airline will also be given a copy of the full programme of the passenger because it will also send reservation messages to its concerned officers for the onward flight confirmation as per the programme. On obtaining all the confirmations, the airline informs the agent that all the onward reservations are ready. On receipt of this information the agent issues its voucher drawn on the airlines asking them to issue their tickets in favour of the passenger as per the details of the flight given in the voucher. Some of the important contents of voucher may include:

- a) Name of the Passenger,
- b) Place to be Visited,
- c) Date,
- d) Flight Number,
- e) Time,
- f) RBI Permit Number,
- g) Passport Number,
- h) Applicable Fare, and
- i) Agent Code Number.

After receiving this voucher the airline issues the tickets. The ticket is sent to the agent who crosschecks it and after complete satisfaction hands it over to the passenger.

Thus, it is seen that you have to provide a number of services to the passenger for which no extra amount is charged. The passenger gets the benefit of guidance and services from you. You must acknowledge the fact that in your absence he/she would have had to waste a lot of time, energy and money.

Another feature of outbound tours is selling the packages of the inbound tour operators of other countries. There are few big companies who develop their own outbound packages and the product designing in such cases involves all steps that are necessary for developing a tour package. However, when you act as a seller of others, you must ensure that the package actually has in terms of services all that which has been promised. Fam trips, linkages and experience help in this regard. Such a precaution is must because it is you who is selling to the tourist. If anything goes wrong the tourist will hold you responsible and the same will be the case in a consumer court.

5.5 MANAGING THE MARKETING OF TOUR PACKAGES

Marketing techniques and strategies for tourism services are already discussed at length in MTM-6 (MS-6). These marketing strategies are basically related to appropriate application of marketing principles like product, price, promotion, place, people, packaging and process (marketing mix). While marketing of tour packages, application of each of these principles vary in inbound tours and outbound tours.

5.5.1 Marketing Inbound Tours

While marketing inbound tours focus is on popularising your product in tourist generating countries so as to attract tourists. Therefore, emphasis is on developing marketing programmes targeting at achieving this goal. So far in India, we have been following traditional methods of publicising our products through 18 overseas offices of Department of Tourism. Only a few tour operators having their offices in other countries too, print and circulate their brochures highlighting the special features of their products, otherwise mostly bank upon the marketing efforts of Department of Tourism. This method is so conventional that even when any small or medium sized tour operator wishes to participate in international travel exhibition or exposition like ITB, Berlin one has to go through Department of Tourism because space is booked by them and then it is sold out to Indian participants through Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO).

If you want to succeed in inbound tour operations you are required to make efforts for getting a direct access to overseas markets. This can become possible once you start your marketing programme with one world principle, i.e., “customer care” or “quality”. Desired quality of the product and proper customer care to the tourists booked by your overseas contact acts as marketing tool for you. This is because your overseas contact develops a confidence in your company. You should also be prepared to design on demand packages as per the tourists’ interests.

When you have designed your products with above-mentioned mantra in mind, pricing will never act as a hindrance for effective marketing. As a conventional practice in the trade, whoever was providing the product at lower rates could get the business. But today these trade players have shifted their focus to quality rather than quantity while pricing their products. As a result, the market is divided in to two blocks – one who is targeting at budget class or mass tourists and other block in targeting at niche markets who are not bothered by prices of product.

You have already been told that promotion for quality products is word of mouth rather than expensive marketing campaigns as far as individual tourists are concerned. For example, even before buying a package to India inbound tourists gather a lot of information from those who have already visited India. As a result when an independent foreign tourist (FIT) lands at airport he/she looks for taxi driver to drive him/her to a particular hotel at place X. Not only this he/she has to complete idea of the location of such place of stay. This has become possible due to word of mouth publicity and promotion of quality products. Therefore, if you want to be a successful tour operator you must try to market package tours which are the combinations of quality conscious service providers in the trade.

Once the product is designed priced and promoted by application of appropriate tools, its distribution (place) requires proper planning. You have the option of either going directly to the consumers by sending messages to foreign tourists through their print and non-print media or you can plan your marketing efforts in an organised manner along with other trade players. Many countries use their tourism offices and embassies for tourism promotion. In such cases you must apprise the Tourism department about your products.

Marketing of inbound tour operations should centre around quality assurance at all levels of product designing, development, and product delivery/promotion, post-delivery efforts are making an impact on your overall marketing philosophy, i.e., whether you gather feedback and analyse it or not. Thus, you are advised to practise all these and other creative activities to be a successful inbound tour operator.

5.5.2 Marketing Outbound Tours

Unlike inbound tour operations here the target group is ever increasing and ever changing particularly in developing countries like India. In 1970s and 80s outbound tourism was seen as an elite practise and moreover a few destinations in Europe were popular like London, Paris, Switzerland. These destinations were heavily publicised by Indian movies of that period. For example movie like “An Evening in Paris”, “Night in London” and “Around the World in Eight Dollars” and many more movies with the same focus. Late 80s and early 90s saw a shift in this trend and Indians started looking for other destinations than these traditional ones. This changing trend coincided with the aggressive marketing campaign of Singapore Tourism Promotion Board and as a result today out of 5 million outbound Indian tourists nearly 65% are registered with Singapore, spending almost Rs.1500 crores a year.

While marketing to this ever-increasing size of market you will have to keep in mind that you have to be different in your approach not only in terms of product prices, product quality but also in terms of your product knowledge. In other words, any product be it Singapore, Malaysia or Switzerland, you must familiarise yourself and your marketing staff with these destinations. Only then you can present a convincing picture of the destination in front of your customers.

You know that tourism being intangible; it is very difficult to sample it. It is, therefore, your first hand knowledge of the tourist destination(s) you are representing which will help you in marketing them effectively. Most commonly used tool to achieve this goal is take advantage of familiarisation tours conducted by these destinations as promotion tools. These familiarisation tours are discussed at length in Unit 6. Moreover, you or your staff can avail of the facility of group escort, visiting either of these destinations. It's a matter of practice on a group of every 10-14 passengers you get one complimentary ticket. Same is applicable on hotel bookings. Thus, you can train your marketing staff by equipping them with the first hand knowledge of their products.

As an effective marketing manager you shall divide your marketing department according to different destinations you are planning to represent, e.g., if you are representing four destination but within the same continent, i.e., Europe you need not departmentalise. But if you are representing four destinations falling in different continents (TC Areas) then to train your staff you should departmentalise it.

Check Your Progress

- 1) Why is it important to maintain good relations with your suppliers in tour operations business?

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.....

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.....

- 2) Discuss various procedures associated with inbound tour operations.

-
-
-
- 3) Write an essay on out bound tour operations.

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5.6 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have familiarised you with guidelines regarding the management of day to day function in a tour operation company related to inbound and outbound tour operations. It is essential for a tour operator to equip himself/herself as well as one's employees with market conditions and product knowledge. The best method for the first hand product knowledge in either case would be the utilisation of familiarisation trips being offered by providers of services. As an effective manager you are required to plan and manage various activities related to inbound and outbound tour operations. For example, liaisoning, costing, packaging, briefing, business correspondence, etc. It is for sure that if you are able to handle these vital issues with the objective of providing customer care, nothing can stop you from becoming a successful tour operator. You should not forget that today as a result of technological revolution destinations which were hitherto been unknown and inaccessible to people have come within their reach. Thus, once again you are required to update yourself on various new travel circuits that have been developed on global tourist map and consequent changes in rules, regulation and fees.

As you know that outbound tourism market has outnumbered the inbound tourism in India, it is believed that this trend would continue for another decade. It is, therefore, advisable that you also focus upon other areas like arranging meetings, conferences, and exhibitions of different trade guilds in India to demonstrate their products in overseas markets. This will bring not only ticketing business but will also earn you commission on areas like hotel bookings, insurance, space booking, shopping etc. Insurance and foreign exchange endorsements can generate lot of revenue for your company if proper attention is devoted to these areas.

In addition, overseas education is also a promising area which can generate a lot of revenue for you, if you develop contacts with one or more foreign universities as their official representative in India. This again will provide you with ticketing business too.

5.7 CLUES TO ANSWERS

Check Your Progress

- 1) Refer Sec. 5.2.
- 2) Read Sec. 5.4.
- 3) Base your answer on Secs. 5.4 and 5.5.

ANNEXURE

In TS-3 you were made aware of certain ticketing and other operations. As a recap we suggest you read this annexure and refresh yourself on the theme.

Reservation on International Airlines

International airlines or the 'flag carriers' represent their country and normally have their own country's flag painted on the aeroplane. The majority of the international carriers are owned and sponsored by the governments of their respective countries. The international airlines and routes require an agreement between the various governments based on political and socio-economic consideration as well as the frequency of flight negotiations between the two countries. Therefore, the International Air Transport Authority (IATA) attempts to resolve policies and fares applicable to the participating international air carriers.

As a travel agent, it is necessary for you to use several airlines to complete a trip since no single airline give or can give services for every city. It becomes essential for you to know the major route structures and remember the general geographical regions serviced by each airline. Airlines and travel agencies must have a complete copy of all tariffs at all offices where air tickets are being sold in order to obtain the correct fares. As soon as the latest revision in tariffs is received by you, you must review and revise them promptly. To maintain a tariff plan properly, you should compare each revision transmittal number with the list on the cover sheet to be sure that each revision is in sequence and complete. You should check the correct number on the pages published in the front of each tariff. You should also know each effective date and any information on the transmittal that is especially important and then collate and insert in the tariff on all effective pages.

The local and joint passenger rules tariff provides the individual and group airlines policies governing the transportation of passengers and their luggage. There are airline rules for handicapped passengers, children under five years of age travelling alone, carrying fire arms abroad, a commercial flight, food service abroad flight, excess baggage charges and regulation in the tariff rules governing all aspects of airline and passenger relations. Recently the use of plastic cutlery on board has been made standard on all flights as a result of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Centre. Once the new tariff rules are approved and regulations passed these become official dealing with passenger handling. It is mandatory that your and airline employees must follow the rules published in the tariff otherwise you or your company will be liable to pay the penalties. Similarly, the local passenger fares tariff contains different regular fares of each participating carrier. A careful study by you will make you understand these fares quite easily. The joint one-way and round-trip fares and rules are published to cover transportation by two different airlines. In other words, a joint fare becomes one fare covering transportation over two different carriers with the stipulation that the passenger must change plane in a certain specified city. In the joint fare it becomes a lesser amount than the sum of two one way fares would be charged over the same route.

Ticketing Rules and Regulations

a) Guidelines for International Tariff Rules

As a manager in a tour operation company you need to acquire knowledge related to tariff construction for which certain guidelines may be used by your staff. While reading and finding the international tariff rules the following points must be observed by you:

- a) Refer the latest edition of air tariff including the most recent supplements,
- b) Check the airline tariff fare schedule for the applicable rule,
- c) Consult the tariff index for the rule numbers,
- d) Check the rule for the conditions governing normal and special fares. Identify the section of the rules most applicable. Make sure that there are no recent changes in fares,
- e) Refer and read the concerned rules thoroughly,

- f) Read the portions of the rule which are applicable to the carriers,
- g) Check the rules regarding the carriers in question, and
- h) Make a study of the proportions specially which begin with 'applicable to' and 'not applicable to' to see, if the carrier is mentioned.

B) Reference of Travel Directories for Ticketing

To function efficiently in the travel business you shall be able to give customers complete and correct information. The information on airline schedules is of particular importance. All airlines publish their own schedules of flights. However, to avoid maintenance of schedules for each and every airline, you can use one of the two comprehensive guides which has updated information on all the airlines timetables, viz.:

- **ABC World Airways Guide**, and
- **Official Airlines Guide (OAG)**

These guides are available worldwide and are updated on a monthly basis. **You must always ensure that you are using the current edition and you must be familiar with their layout and how to use them efficiently.** The **Official Airline Guide** is normally used in North, Central and South America. However, the **ABC World Airways Guide** is the one which is most commonly used in Asia, Europe and Africa. You have read about them in detail in **TS-1**. However, you must remember that these would enable you to supervise and manage your tour operations effectively and efficiently.

a) IATA Codes

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has developed a three letter coding system for major cities and airports of the world. There are number of reasons for this, the most important being that there are many places with the same or similar names and errors could occur. However, each place has its own different three-letter code. These reference guides state IATA codes, minimum connecting times, arranging and checking airline tickets. These are recapitulated in brief for your reference:

It is not necessary to learn these codes by heart at once as you can always refer to them in either the ABC World Airways Guide or the Air Passenger Tariff. However, listed below are the three-letter codes for some airports of the South Asia region. With regular use of such codes, you will become more familiar and will recognise the ones most commonly used instantly. You should try to learn as many as you can by remembering each new one as you come across it.

COUNTRY	AIRPORT	IATA CODE
BANGALADESH	DHAKA	DAC
BHUTAN	PARO	PBH
INDIA	DELHI	DEL
MALDIVES	MALE	MLE
NEPAL	KATHMANDU	KTM
SRILANKA	COLOMBO	CMB

b) Using ABC World Airways Guide

The **ABC World Airways Guide** comes in two volumes. The first volume has some general information and schedules from cities belonging with A to M. The second volume gives schedules from cities N to Z. It also has other information such as car hire directory and rates and an airline feature section. It also has each airport/city having a three-letter code and each airline a two-letter code, called a designator. The ABC will give airline designator codes and airport codes in alphabetical order. The ABC also contains an instruction section on how to read the ABC. You should refer to this section if you are in doubt.

When you need to use the ABC, it is important to know the layout of the information contained in it. It is presented in logical format and always follows that format. Here is an example of how the ABC is laid out.

Validity		Days of			Flight		Stops	
From	To	service	Dep.	Arr.	No.	Acft.	Class	
From	NAME OF THE CITY OF ORIGIN				NAME OF COUNTRY (IATA CODE)			
Apt. (This section gives details of the airport or airports of the city of origin)								
Str. (This section gives details of ground transportation available to and from the airport. It also details check-in-times)								
Destination city		Local time of		Local time	Flight	Aircraft	Class of	Stops
Details limitations		departure		of arrival	number	type	service	if any
On schedule								

The schedule is laid out in alphabetical order starting with the city of departure. This city will appear in bold typeface. The word “From” is placed before the city. The country name and the IATA three-letter code will follow the departure city’s name. Thus, if you are looking up flights leaving male in the ABC, the information will appear as follows:

From **MALE** Republic of Maldives (MLE)

The next heading is APT which stands for airport. This section gives information on airport name or names (for cities which are served by more than one airport), the distance from the city centre, the check-in times by which passengers using the airport must present themselves, and details of transportation available from the airport to the city.

Once you have found the airport form which a client wishes to travel, the next thing to do is to find the city to which he/she wishes to travel. These are called **arrival cities** and are listed in alphabetical order below the city of departure. They are written in medium typeface and are followed by the three letter city code.

After finding the departure and arrival cities, all you have to do is look for the flight schedules linking one to the other. The ABC lists all scheduled direct flights plus a number of transfer connections (which would mean a flight change) between the city of departure and the destination. The flights connecting the two locations are listed in time order using the 24-hour clock system. The flights are shown on one line and give the departure and arrival times for the flight.

Once you have found the flight schedules for the selected routing **you need to check that the flight is operating on the date the passenger wants to take the flight**. This information will appear in a column before the flight time. It is written in date format and shows the dates the flight operates. If no date appears it means the flight operates for the duration of the published guide. The ABC also indicates the days of the week flight operate. This information is given by numbering the days of the week. For example, 1 = Monday, 2 = Tuesday, and so on.

Under the column **Dep.** and **Arr.** the times given are the local times of departure and the local time of arrival at the city of destination. A three-letter airport code may also appear if the destination city has more than one airport.

The next column to be referred to is the **Flight No.** column. This column gives the airline code followed by the flight number. Airline codes are two letter codes for the airline flying the particular route. You do not have to memorise these codes as they are given in the **ABC World Airways Guides**. Information is also given on the type of aircraft that will fly the route, the class of service available on board and the number of intermediate stops made en route from one city to another. For your reference one duly filled up schedule is given below:

Validity From	To	Days of service	Dep.	Arr.	Flight No.	Acft.	Class	Stops
MALE	COLOMBO	Sri Lanka (CMB)						
Dec. 1	Jan. 31	1357	0800	0830	UL 101	310	Y	0
		12345	0930	1000	UL103	737	Y	0

c) Minimum Connecting Times

The **ABC World Airways Guide** also details on **Minimum Connecting Times (MCT)**. A **minimum connecting time is the time needed by a passenger to make a transfer from one flight to another to complete his/her itinerary. It is important that you give customers this information so that they can meet connecting flights when necessary.**

The time needed to get from one aircraft on its arrival to the next is expressed as a **minimum amount of time**. Of course, if you have slow or elderly passengers you should allow more time by booking a later onward flight.

When you book connecting flights and allow the minimum connecting time, or longer, and the passenger misses the second flight, the airline which brought him to the connecting point will accept the blame and arrange onward travel, or pay for a hotel overnight for the passenger affected. However, if you undercut the connecting time, and the passenger misses the flight, then the extra expenses will be your company's responsibility! Don't do it! (If you book through one of the CRS-computer reservations system then the MCTs are built in for you).

You must be aware of time zones and the time calculations world over are based on **Greenwich Mean Time** and the international date opposite it.

d) Arranging and Checking Airline Tickets

Airline tickets issued for travel are very important documents. They are evidences of contracts made between passengers and carriers (note, not between agent and passengers). The passenger is given the ticket upon payment of money. This ticket will specify all the necessary details of the passenger, the itinerary, the dates of travel, the class of travel and the fare which has been paid.

All tickets must be completed accurately and with great care. If passenger tickets are incorrectly completed it can cause problems for the passenger and may result in a loss to the travel agent. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) publishes a Ticketing Handbook which should be consulted if you are in doubt.

Fully licensed IATA travel agents hold stocks of blank tickets for the various airlines. Those which use **CRS (Computer Reservation System)**, hold stocks of universal tickets which can be used for any IATA airline. When a ticket is sold by a full IATA agency the airline will pay the full commission rate. This can vary but is usually 9% of the fare.

Some travel agencies do not have an IATA licence but can still sell tickets. They have to obtain tickets from an airline or from a full IATA Agency. Because they do not hold the ticket stocks their staff do not calculate the fare or write it on the blank tickets. This work has been done elsewhere. However, if you are working supervising a non IATA office you are still able to check whether your partner, agency or company has done correct calculation or not as it is your client who will face discomfort or inconvenience and not their and so, it is your responsibility to care for your own customers. Where ticket issue is done by another organisation you will split commission and may earn around 4 or 5% of the fare as sub-agent commission.

When a ticket comes out of the safe it looks like a book of coupons. Each coupon has a function. Every airline ticket will have the following coupons:

Audit Coupon: This is for the accounts department of the particular airline. It is taken out when the ticket is issued and attached to a sales report.

Flight Coupon: These are also for the airline. There is one for each sector that the passenger will fly. The correct coupon is extracted from the ticket when the passenger checks in at the airport and is exchanged for a boarding card/pass. Tickets come as TWO or FOUR coupon “booklets” and where a passenger needs to use more than one “booklet” then tickets containing the same number of coupons are used. For example, if a passenger made reservations for a six sector journey then two four coupon tickets would be issued and not one four coupon and one two coupon. The two remaining coupons would be voided to prevent their use.

Agent Coupon: This is for the agent’s records. It is removed when the ticket is issued to the passenger (or to you by the issuing office).

Passenger Coupon: This is for the passenger. It details the itinerary, the dates and times of travel and the amount of money paid for the ticket and is all that is left of the ticket when the journey is complete. Business travellers often require these for their expense claims in their offices.

Airline tickets also contains pre-printed information which must advise your customers to read carefully covering:

- Conditions for the contract,
- Details of the limits of the airline’s liability, and
- Reconfirmation requirements and items which may not be carried on board an aircraft.

When issuing tickets which are completed manually (i.e., tickets not automatically printed from a Computer Reservations Systems) **EVERYONE SHOULD BE TOLD TO:**

- use only BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS,
- make sure that the handwriting is clear and readable,
- make sure that the information is clear on all coupons,
- use a blue or black ballpoint pen with a fine nib,
- write the ticket in English,
- never cross out anything on a ticket (if a mistake is made in filling out a ticket cancel it by writing VOID across the whole ticket and send it back to the airline), and
- never destroy an airline ticket even if mistakes are made during completion.

e) **Manual Completion and Checking of Airline Tickets**

Airline tickets are best thought of as forms. Each box on the form (ticket) has strict rules about what should be written in it and how it should be written. Full details of each box are also given in the IATA Ticketing handbook. Any variation makes the tickets useless and you will have a very unhappy customer.

You need to learn exactly what must appear in every box. You can advise your less experienced staff to write a ticket on a photocopy sheet first and once this work is checked and corrected, then it can be copied carefully onto a real ticket for issue. This is a good way of learning as there is no risk and you can make as many corrections as you need to. For your reference a checklist:

- 1) **Name of the passenger may include:** The surname is written first, followed by a ‘/’ and the first name or initial of the passenger and then Mr., Mrs., Ms. Or Miss as appropriate. If the passenger is travelling to a place where someone will not know how to address him or her then it would be helpful to underline the name by which he or she should be addressed, which is usually the family name.
- 2) **Check the cities** from which the passenger will fly (**point of origin**) any places where he must change planes (**intermediate points**) and the final destination in the column marked ‘Form’.

Example:

x/o	NOT GOOD FOR PASSAGE FROM LONDON Heathrow TO PARIS Charles de Gaulle TO GENEVA TO VOID
-----	---

Ensure that “VOID” is written in any box not completed.

Note that many cities have more than one airport. In this case the name of the airport to which the passenger will travel as well as the city name must have been written. If this has not been done then you must ensure that the itinerary you give to your client is very clear on this matter. In big cities there could be three or more hours by road between airports.

- 3) Check the **maximum baggage allowance** which can be carried free of charge in the column marked ‘Allow’.

Example:

Allow
KG 40
KG 20
KG 30

Or, if working on a piece system 1PC, 2PC or 3PC.

Ensure that the correct allowance has been given for your client and ensure that your client understands what is meant when you brief him. **Inexperienced passengers are often shocked by the cost of carrying excess baggage.**

- 4) The airline’s name or two letter IATA code should be inserted in the column marked “Carrier”.

Example:

UL (Air Lanka), TG (Thai Airways), QF (Qantas) and it will be followed by the flight number and class of service to be provided in the column marked ‘Flight/Class’.

Flight	CLASS
101	Y

Many clients have airlines they particularly like, or dislike. Ensure that they have got reservations with the right one.

- 5) Check the **dates of the flights** which are written using the following format:

Note that there are always 02 digits in a date, and three letters in the month abbreviation.

DATE
29 AUG
05 OCT

- 6) Check the **time of departure(s) of flight(s)** which are written using the 24-hour system of expressing time. Be very careful where flights depart in the night. If a flight leaves at 1155 on 27

March, it is at lunch time. 2235 on 27 March is late at night. 0055 on 27 March is only an hour later and check-in procedures will be on 27 March.

Note that times are always shown as local times and arrival times do not appear on the ticket so you must also supply them to the client on an itinerary. Air tickets show clients where they must change planes but they do not show if a plane stops for refuelling or to pick up other passengers. Such short stops are a bonus on daytime flights as passengers can disembark and enjoy duty free shopping or just a stretch of their legs. However, on night flights such stops are a nuisance as the sleeping passengers must be woken and of course they add to the journey time. Information like this should be on your itinerary planner.

Example:

TIME
0730
1245
2315
VOID

- 7) Check the '**Status**' column giving details of the reservation. This will have been written using the following codes:

OK : The seat reservation has been confirmed by the airline.

RQ : The seat reservation has been requested by has not been confirmed by the airline.

NS : This code is used to indicate that the passenger (normally an infant) is not entitled to a seat on board the aircraft.

SA : This code is used to indicate that a certain rule which applied to a particular fare does not allow the seat to be reserved in advance.

If the passenger has RQ or SA on the ticket there is no guarantee that he or she is going to be able to fly on that flight. You must ensure that the passenger understands this.

- 8) In the column titled '**Additional endorsements and restrictions**' details of any restrictions, endorsements or reimbursements are written fully. Certain cheaper fares will have rules which prevent the traveller from changing the reservations or having a refund if he or she cancels. You must ensure that they understand these restrictions fully. Some passengers prefer to pay more for a fully flexible fare (can be changed) when they understand this.
- 9) Certain **Fares Rules** may indicate restrictions on the date of flights to be taken by travellers. The column '**Not Valid Before**' should be completed to indicate such dates.

Example:

Coupons not valid before				
1	2	14 MAY	3	4
Coupons not valid after				
1	2	3	4	24 JUNE

The above example indicates that the flights indicated in flight coupon 2 may not be taken before May 14 and that the flight indicated in flight coupon 4 may not be taken after June 24. In other words, the passenger can make some alterations to his reservations but he must stay within these parameters.

- 10) The '**Fare**' column shows the amount paid for the ticket in the currency of the country in which the travel starts.

Example:

Fare
Rs.8,000.00

The above example indicates that the fare is Rs.8,000.00.

If your company is dealing in discounted fares you may find that the fare shown is MORE than the customer has paid. This is common but technically wrong. However, you should never accept a ticket which has a face value of LESS than the customer has paid. The passenger will soon have a complaint.

- 11) If taxes have been collected at the time of payment for the ticket, the 'Tax' column should be completed indicating the currency and the amount collected.

There are several kind of tax including departure tax, security tax, agriculture department tax and others. Each has a code. A complicated route could involve several different taxes appearing on one ticket and the client will question these. It is your job to advise your client about this clearly on the itinerary whether all taxes are paid or some more will be paid by customer at the time of departures or arrivals.

- 12) If discounts apply to a ticket the '**Ticket Designator**' column should be completed. This will indicate the reason for the discount.

Example:

IN – an infant paying only a percentage of the adult fare

CH – a child paying only 50% of the adult fare, etc.

Check that these are correct for your passengers.

- 13) In the '**Tour Code**' column information detailing the code of any inclusive tour should be indicated. If this column has been completed there should NOT be any price shown in the fares section.

- 14) In the box, '**Date and Place of Issue**', the official validator of the company issuing the ticket should have been used.

Once all the boxes that are applicable to the journey have been checked against the file requesting the reservation your final task is to ensure that all the relevant information has been clearly and accurately reflected in the itinerary. You must also ensure that all coupons are clearly legible and contain all the necessary information for the ticket to be accepted by the airlines.

f) **Travel Vouchers**

In all travel agencies, services are ordered from suppliers. These services will be sold on to the travel agent's customers. If each transaction that takes place between an agency and a supplier were to be paid for separately, for each and every service provided, for each and every customer, the amount of paperwork and the amount of cash moving around, would be enormous. To cut down on the amount of paperwork and money transactions between the supplier and the agency, a system has been devised whereby these transactions are reduced.

This system involves the preparation and issuing of vouchers which are, in effect, **promises to pay for the services which the supplier of such services promises to provide**. Vouchers are only accepted by a supplier if prior arrangements have been made. By using a voucher system the risks of handling cash transactions by staff are reduced and the number of individual transactions between the various suppliers of service are minimised. These vouchers are used for many activities including:

- hotel accommodation and other hotel services,
- excursions and tours,
- transfers,
- tour guide services,
- restaurant services,

- entrance fees to sites of interest,
- theatre tickets, and
- sports events tickets.

As you have already been told that these vouchers are basically promissory notes, i.e., by issuing a voucher, the agent authorises the service supplier to provide the services specified on the voucher and gives a commitment to pay for those services at a later date. Hence, their controlling become crucial and **you must take great care of all vouchers and control their use as failure to do so can result in fraud and financial loss for your company.**

Vouchers will normally have a number of copies for:

- supplier's copy,
- customer copy,
- client's file copy, and
- accounts copy.

Below is a sample of a completed voucher. In the example chosen, the voucher covers the provision of hotel services. You should remember that vouchers can be issued to the suppliers of other services and not just those provided by hotels.

SAMPLE VOUCHER

ABC WORLD TRAVEL		
Tel:		Voucher
ISSUED TO:	Royal Hotel	ISSUED BY:
	123, Park Street	Rahul
	Dhaka	Sales Trainee
		ABC World Travel
Services to be provided		
Passenger/client name: Mr. Varun		
Number of Pax: 4		
Service requested: Two double rooms with bath		
Room rate: DBLD US\$ 120.00	Tax/service @20% US\$24.00	
Basis: Full board		
Number of nights: Three		
From: 24/08/1995	TO: 26/08/1995	Total Voucher Value: US\$ 864.00 incl.
Validation:		
Company Validation		
Stamp	Signed:	
Please provide bearer with services detailed		

Any additional charges are to be billed directly to the client and collection of such charges is the sole responsibility of supplier since your agency cannot accept liability for charges for services not included on this voucher.

You must train your staff that since vouchers are security documents, it is very important that they must take great care in completing and issuing them. By issuing a voucher you are committing your company to pay for the various services detailed in the voucher. Mistakes in filling vouchers can cost

your company money. Vouchers should, therefore, be accurate and contain all the information necessary. You must always remember to validate all vouchers and have the signature of the person authorised to sign such vouchers on behalf of your company. Any voucher amended by supplier shall be treated as invalid. But rigorous enforcement of this could lead to problems for clients, so only vouchers which have been hand amended (or not amended) WITH A REFERENCE ON THE CLIENT FILE should be accepted for payment.

Supervising Issues of an International Airline Ticket

Once all the required procedures of international travel are completed next important step is to get a booking of international airline ticket. In the case of an international airline the procedure is slightly different from the domestic ticket. The step by step procedure can be summarised as:

When the client approaches you the following information may be acquired for the preparation of ticket:

- a) Nature of the client,
- b) Type of flight,
- c) Place of departure,
- d) Place of destination,
- e) Date of journey/departure, and
- f) Date of return.

Once basic information is acquired then you shall:

- a) Refer the world-wide edition of OAG and look up to the place of destination from the place of departure,
- b) Write the date, clients, name and residential phone contact on reservation pad,
- c) Write the flight you have selected and date for customer's flight,
- d) Again refer the OAG to select return flight of the client. Look up to the place of destination from place of departure. See the date of return,
- e) Transfer all this information to the itinerary pad,
- f) Contact the concerned airline and book the flights,
- g) If the flights are available circle OK,
- h) Make a note of the airline reservationist's name and date on which the booking is made,
- i) Convey the passenger's name, residential address and telephone contact number and travel agency's phone number to the airline reservationist,
- j) Double the fare for round trip and add the international tax,
- k) Re-verify the fare. Refer to the Air Traffic Worldwide Book-I (Latest Edition, Yellow Pages). Check the fare. Check the fare from place of departure to the place of destination. Note down the fare, and
- l) When you find that the fare given by the airline is correct, you should be ready for ticketing.

However, in case of stopover in some other city for a day en route to the place of destination there will be a different itinerary. In such a case you have to check the mileage in the same way as is given in the tariff listing. Thereafter, refer to the 'Routing ... non-stop sector mileage's section of the tariff to check the non-stop sector mileage. By looking up the mileage under the stop over place, you may get the sector mileage listings for both the segments. Now one can complete the sector mileage and the computed mileage. If the computed mileage is well within the permitted mileage it is not necessary to increase the fare. In case of complicated fare itineraries, verification should be made with the airline rate desk who will give you the rate number. This rate number should be written on the fare construction portion of the ticket.