

Talking Points – Unfavorable News Reports on Airlines and the Value of an Agent

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The following Talking Points can be used in conversations with the media and customers regarding news reports on airline events such as stranded travelers or unfavorable news reports on airline safety. (April 17, 2018)

1. When wintry weather disrupts travel plans, travelers who book through a trained travel agent professional have many advantages over those who “go it alone.”

2. We are here to assist our clients; their safety and well-being is our top priority.

3. As far as safety concerns, we provide available information, so our clients can make informed decisions about their travel plans.

Recent Events

The [Associated Press](#) reported that hundreds of travelers from Minnesota were left stranded in Mexico after Sun Country Airlines canceled flights from Los Cabos and Mazatlán due to a snow storm at home in Minnesota. Passengers had to scramble to find flights on other airlines because the carrier had ended its seasonal service.

Also making headlines is a [60 Minutes](#) report on alleged safety concerns at Allegiant Air, a low cost carrier based in Las Vegas. A member of Congress called for an investigation into the carrier.

A column in [Travel Market Report](#) recommends that agents make clear in writing that they do not operate aircraft and only act as agents for airlines. In addition, the column states that agents should disclose any unusual or specific problems with a supplier that they are aware of.

Below you will find additional information, supporting material, and statistics supporting each talking point.

1. When wintry weather disrupts travel plans, travelers who book through a trained travel agent professional have many advantages over those who “go it alone.”

- Travel agents are trained to monitor situations like winter weather that may impact their clients’ travel plans. As such, they also can work on alternative travel plans and can likely have those in place the moment the need arises. In some cases, such as weather, airlines are not required to provide accommodations. Travel agents can proactively find accommodations for their clients in when weather disrupts travel plans.
- If changes in travel plans are necessary due to weather or mechanical issues for example, many times, travel agents can rebook clients for no additional charge or are able to obtain travel vouchers and/or refunds that clients may not know are due or available to them.

- We stand ready to assist clients who may encounter major transportation delays or cancelled flights. If necessary:
 - We will help our clients secure other flight arrangements.
 - We will work to rebook hotel and car rental reservations.
 - We will work to find alternative modes of transportation to get our clients to their destination.
- With limited airline seats available, travel agents have the resources needed to quickly rebook clients and reserve the next available seat.
 - Travelers who book on their own either have to “roll the dice” by calling an 800-number or standing in a lengthy customer service line to try get rebooked. Using a travel agent can essentially move you to the “front of the line.”

2. We are here to assist our clients; their safety and well-being is our top priority.

- Whether traveling domestically or internationally, our number one priority is always our clients’ safety and well-being.
- We are advocates for our clients; and they know that by working with a true travel professional, we are there for them before, during, and after their trip should they need us – which gives them peace of mind.
- As professional travel agents, we are trained to monitor situations that may impact our clients’ travel plans. As such, we are also able to work on alternative travel plans and have those in place the moment the need arises.
- We strongly encourage all of our clients, whether they are traveling domestically or internationally, to purchase travel insurance, particularly right at the same time as travel has been booked. Travel insurance offers an additional layer of protection for travelers and can potentially help save a traveler hundreds or thousands of dollars if a medical or travel emergency occurs.

3. As far as safety concerns, we provide available information, so our clients can make informed decisions about their travel plans.

- We closely monitor the latest news and weather updates, as well as the U.S. State Department website, for travel alerts and travel warnings for all destinations, including those that are most popular with our clients.
- Should we become aware of an issue for a specific destination, we alert clients who may be planning to travel there so they can determine for themselves if they still wish to travel.
- We believe in providing the facts as we know them to our clients, so they may make informed decisions regarding every aspect of their travel plans.
- Our business is founded on repeat customers. Therefore, we want to be sure everything goes off without a hitch.