

# TRAVEL

Beyond The Obvious

## **The Customer**

Madeline Jhavar, Italy Beyond the Obvious

# Let's talk about customers

- As a **destination expert**, your customers will likely work with you once, or maybe twice. Maybe three times at the outside.
- This means that you need to constantly be finding new customers. You **will not work with the same customers** year after year like a travel agent.
- Since you will not close every customer you work with, and since many will not be a good fit, you need a **steady stream of requests**, and you need to be able to **close customers efficiently**

# When you think about your customer, remember:

- You will be **creating your product** for your customer.
- You will be **marketing** to your customer.
- You will be **discussing your fees** with your customer.

You need to understand your customer. If you don't have a specific idea of your customer yet, think about yourself.

# Understanding the Customer



# I recommend you work with people who are:

- Independent travelers
  - No “bus tour” travelers
- Culturally curious
  - No “main sights only” travelers. NOTE that I am not saying you should say no to these travelers, just that they will not appreciate your deep expertise as much as others.
- Have traveled internationally
  - No “brand new passport” travelers
- Are time-poor
  - Therefore don’t have time to do their own trip
- Have created their own trips and know how much work it is
  - Therefore value your time and expertise

# Exercise: brainstorm client descriptions

## For example, our clients:

- Enjoy active trips
- Prioritize food and wine
- Value private guides
- Appreciate VIP experiences
- Like all sorts of accommodations
- Appreciate a depth of knowledge or a focus in one area
- Want to connect with the locals
- Are not “budget” travelers
- Are between the ages of 45 – 70
- Appreciate off the beaten path
- Enjoy shopping, but not usually a lot
- Enjoy beaches, but don’t want beach vacations
- Love hanging by the pool
- Love kids’ activities
- Do not like touristy activities
- Do not like large group tours
- Are adventurous
- Appreciate history
- Appreciate art
- Identify as luxury travelers
- Have deep, specific interests
- May have unusual requests
- May want to skip “main” sights
- Have been to Italy before

**Why not just try to  
serve everyone?**

## If you understand your customer

- You'll write targeted blog posts
- Your customer will feel understood when they read your website
- Your customer will read your services, and think "YES, this is what I need".
- Your customer will appreciate your fees
- Your customer will be appreciative!

## If you try to reach everyone

- You'll spend time on the phone selling
- You'll spend time explaining your fees
- You'll have people telling you that you're too expensive
- You'll get lots of requests but not close very many



# The importance of understanding your customer

- If you understand your customer, they will recognize themselves in your website & marketing
- If they recognize themselves, the time you spend selling to them will be shorter
- If you spend less time selling, you can serve more customers
- If you serve more customers, you will have a more successful business

# BE TRANSPARENT

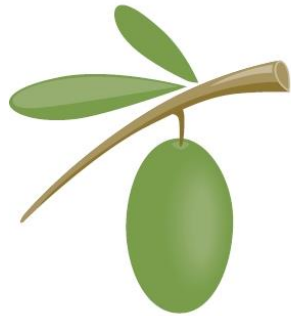
This is one of the things that I believe has contributed to my success. I believe there is enough work for everyone and I do not believe in secrets.

Make it EASY for your customer to hire you! Your website should include:

- Information about YOU. Your story. You want the customer to feel a connection.
- Examples of your itineraries. You want the customer to see what they get for their money.
- Put your pricing on there. No “contact us for a quote”. Phone calls should be about which service best meets their needs.
- Tell your customer all the reasons they should hire you. Don't be modest!

# Customer Requests

- In 2017, Italy Beyond the Obvious did exactly 50 trips.
  - To get those 50 trips, we had 159 customer requests but we are currently at 50% referrals.
- We turn people away who are not a good fit. For example, customers who:
  - Want to join a bus tour or a group tour
  - Are spending less than \$800 / day
  - Don't want to give us their credit card info
  - Want miscellaneous advice here or there



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