



Tina's Travel Network

"Your personal Travel Concierge"



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TIME TO REFLECT

*A look at where I've been;
A glimpse of where I am striving to get.*



I have been in the travel industry for over a decade and many of my customers have been a part of that journey for a long time. During that time, there have been an incredible amount of changes.

*When I began selling travel, the norm was to call a supplier and request a quote. I would then call and relay the information to my customer. Faxed confirmations were the norm. With the introduction of the **INTERNET** the Supplier websites provided access not only the agent, but every customer. The opportunity to research and book travel became a passion for many. Today, many suppliers almost demand agents utilize their website for everything from extracting quotes to making payments making it decreasingly necessary to speak with a live person. Carnival and Funjet set the trend by giving deeper discounts when sales are completed online and more suppliers are following suit. Suppliers who tried to hang onto their old-fashioned standards of "personal service" over convenience soon found sales lagging as tech savvy agents and customers booked online, forcing them into the world of technology.*

*Clearly, today's **CUSTOMERS** are different than they were in the early 90's. Many more customers value convenience over service and for some that means using the internet over speaking with an agent. Finding and keeping clients is probably the biggest challenge for any business and the internet is part of the reason for that. Competition is fierce and easily accessible.*

*Finding loyal customers is every business owner's dream. I have been blessed by many loyal client's whose referrals continuously grow my business. During much of 2011, referrals have accounted for upwards of 40% of my sales. Customers who value the **SERVICE** I provide and **TRUST** me with their friends and family are being rewarded.*

*For customers who prefer to do online research, I have provided **PARTNER BOOKING LINKS** (refer to the box on the right). Now you can access my preferred suppliers and even book your own travel while still receiving personal my service. When you use the link, your reservation is assigned to me and I am notified in order to review and service your reservation.*

*Visit my **FEATURED SUPPLIERS** links and bookmark them, knowing they can be trusted. While the internet can be a great source of information the amount of information can be overwhelming and confusing. Statistics show that fewer travelers are booking online these days than they were two years ago. Could it be that establishing a relationship with someone you can trust who is willing to provide customer service has become more fashionable again?*

NEW WEBSITE RESOURCES!

You can feel confident when you use my preferred partner links to research or book your travel. You will see the same inventory and pricing that I get. While these are my most preferred resources, I have access to many more too numerous to post on my web site.

Partner Booking Links






Featured Suppliers

WHAT MAKES THEM SPECIAL?

Superior pricing in the industry coupled with their travel protection plans! Funjet was a leader in providing **PRICE PROTECTION*** and still remains at the top of the industry in providing **FULL REFUNDS**** on travel cancelled for any reason including published air!

*Customer must purchase the travel protection plus at time of booking.

**Travel Waivers must be purchased at time of booking. Refund less the cost of the travel waivers.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF USING A TRAVEL AGENT?

Tina's Travel will not relinquish customers to the internet any time soon!

With the rise of the internet and easily accessed information, it certainly seems possible for anyone to do the job I do. I'll agree, booking your own air, or hotel is simple enough. Yet when you ask yourself how often you take a vacation, is that really often enough to be an expert at doing my job? **What do you really know about the destination, or whether you can trust what you are reading online about the resort?** I spend hours each year training on products, meeting with suppliers and doing site inspections or touring destinations. I know from first-hand experience, or know someone in my connections that has been where you plan to go.

So far this year, I have booked travel for almost 150 clients. Each time I do, I risk my reputation on making certain their destination and accommodations meet their expectations. Since I specialize in the Honeymoon and Destination Wedding Market, sending someone on a bad trip can literally mean shattering their dreams!

Occasionally, even my clients end up with issues during travel. **The difference between my customers and the person who has booked online is that they are able to contact me and ask me to resolve whatever went wrong. I have responded to emails, texts and phone calls, even in the middle of the night. If MY customer is traveling, I am accessible to them, or have an alternate available.**

How often do issues come up? Thankfully, not too often, but every year there are 2-3 instances where something needs to be resolved for an unhappy customer. I will always assist a client in booking a resort they choose, even if I can't recommend it. But when they arrive and are not happy with the choice, I use my connections to try and rectify the situation. Recently, one family chose a resort in Punta Cana that they found online. The resort is a well-known chain and sold by my suppliers. I didn't have any experience with that particular resort but had sold within the chain at other destinations. It was a mere minutes after the customers arrived in their room that I received a distressed phone call. What could have been a ruined vacation turned bright again when I was able to move them to the resort I originally recommended for the remainder of their trip. That kind of service doesn't come with an online booking engine! Another trip for 3 couples to the Bahamas turned out to be a poor choice that didn't suit their personalities. Next time, they will be making a decision based more on my personal recommendation, not the prices they found online.

One of the first questions I am often asked by a new customer is **"How does using your service work? Is there a fee or do you work on commission?"** I am always happy to tell them **purchasing a vacation package from me won't cost them anything extra.** Not all travel agents work for their clients with no service fees. There are a lot of professionals who provide a service to others for a fee. I happen to be in a business where suppliers are willing to sell their products to me at a net price because they value the service I provide our mutual customers. The suppliers and hoteliers spend hundreds of thousands of dollars each year not only promoting their products to travel agents, but hosting them on FAMiliarization trips to educate us with their products. They have Business Development Managers (BDMs) to build relationships and help us grow our business. The fact that our connections pay us a commission for bringing them customers doesn't mean that you will pay more for the end product.

Suppliers sell to agents at net because there is proven value in the service we provide for their customers.

HOW MY FUTURE GROWTH BENEFITS MY CUSTOMERS

In the same manner as business networking helps to support new growth by recommending other business associates; my customers who refer their circle of contacts have collectively influenced more new customers year to year than any other group. Each year, the percentage of referrals accounts for as much travel sold as my repeat customers. I want to reward my customers with outstanding service!

CUSTOMER SERVICES & BENEFITS

*I take pride on making myself available to my client's needs and these past two years I have been able to finally devote myself full time to my travel business. This summer, I have incorporated a **CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGER (CRM)** that will allow me to provide more professional service. There is a learning curb and it has been time-consuming setting it up, but my customers will soon start noticing the professional appearance of their itineraries branded with my logo and agency information. My CRM also means that I can access my client records from anywhere and my Host agency or another agent can provide backup support as well.*

*I have access through my Host Agency to a **CONSORTIUM** which has a marketing program. The consortium gives us even deeper discounts due to the volume of sales through their members (think of it as Sam's Club!). Last month half of my customers began receiving **EMAIL PROMOTIONS**. You can opt out, or contact me to personalize your categories. Over time, I hope to fully personalize everyone's profile (be patient, I have almost 800 profiles). Currently, they are just all ON.*

*Additionally, I have begun to opt into special mail out offers from my suppliers made available to you as my customer. Periodically, some customers will be receiving **SPECIAL MARKETING OFFERS** in their mailbox. These are processed according to the statistical buying habits of a particular household or area according to marketing companies that have scrubbed my list. Most of the time, limited to 50 of my most loyal customers.*

*One final tool is currently being implemented. A **CUSTOMER COMMENT CARD**, provided by Angie's List is available on my web site (under the specials). I will be sending this in follow up to all of my travelers and giving them the opportunity to rate Tina's Travel Network. Some customers will also be receiving a phone call directly from Angie's List staff (only if you are already registered with them). I appreciate you taking the time to complete and submit it.*

*All of this is meant to be a valuable service for my customers. There is so much more I want to accomplish but I am running out of time this year (and room here)! **Facebook, U-Tube, Merchant Circle** all provide me ways to communicate, share and have a better presence with my clients!*