Consumer Lead User’s Guide
How to Get the Most Out of the Service

Consumer leads is a service provided by ASTA to help connect consumers with travel advisors. Consumers visiting ASTA’s consumer website, TravelSense.org, can post details about a trip they would like to take. ASTA member advisors can view and respond the postings in a password-protected section of ASTA.org.

It’s a win-win situation for everyone: the consumer can get multiple advisor’s replies and members have a steady stream of easily qualified business leads.

– This brief guide will help you get the most out of this service –

THE LIST
The first thing you will see when you go to browse the trip requests is a list of all the active requests. Beside each request ID number are a few details, such as the destination, number of people traveling, the poster’s travel budget and their travel timeframe. The example below is an actual posting and is fairly typical. The consumer is interested in traveling to Rome Italy in September. It’s a leisure trip for two people and their budget is US $2,000 - $5,000pp. Look at this budget as a starting point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mar 04</th>
<th>Bangor United States of America</th>
<th>Rome Italy</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Sep 12, 20 - Sep 26, 20</th>
<th>$2000-$5000</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar 04</td>
<td>Portland United States of America</td>
<td>Athens Greece</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sep 07, 19 - Sep 14, 19</td>
<td>$2000-$5000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Detail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is much more information available (which we will get to in a minute) but these few items make it easy for you to decide whether or not this is a good prospect. If you handle a lot of European travel, for instance, this could very well be one. For this example, let’s say this sounds like a good prospect and you’d like more information on the trip they want to take. Click on the detail button on the right to see more details.
TRIP DETAILS
The form the consumer fills out covers a lot of ground. While we encourage them to provide as many details as possible — pets, car rentals, vegetarian meals, etc. — the information shown in the list view is all they are required to post.

Though we developed the form to allow consumers to be very succinct without doing a lot of typing, the Trip Description is perhaps the most valuable bit of information on the page. This is where the consumer can explain what kind of trip they want to take. This gives you something to go on and makes it easier to qualify this lead.

THE RESPONSE
Let’s say you would like to contact this person. Below their information is space for you to fill in a response and email it to them. Put your email address in the “From” field. The subject field has already been filled in as “Response To Trip Request # xxxx.” We suggest you leave this as-is so your message doesn’t look like spam or junk email.

The information from your member profile is entered automatically into the message box, though you may edit or remove this information if you wish. Be certain that this information is correct! If there is any more contact information (i.e., 24-hour reservations service number) you wish to include, put it in your response. You never know how prospective customers may want to contact you!
**This is your moment to shine.** Show off your expertise in the area. Be brief but tell the consumer what you have in mind for them. Include options that most closely address their trip request. Sell them the trip of their dreams.

Give them alternatives that they might not have considered. **BUT,** don’t go to the work of planning out their whole trip. **Your goal is to get them to select you as their advisor.** If need be, ask them more questions about the kind of trip they want to take.

Once you have composed your message, hit “Preview Response” to see how your message will appear. If you want to make changes, click Modify. Otherwise, click Respond. Our system will send the email to them.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**There are so many requests. How can I pick out the good leads?**

That all depends on how you define “good.” One easy way is to look at the budget. If it is outrageously low for the destination — such as 10 people for a month in London on $1000 — the consumer doesn’t have a realistic view of how much travel is going to cost and is probably a window-shopper out to find prices.

However, a budget of 0 can be misleading, since that just means the consumers didn’t specify one when filling out the form. We strongly suggest that consumers specify their budget, but we do not require it.

You can also scan the destinations to pick out requests for locations you are familiar with or pick out travelers interested in cruises and tours. Quite a few recent requests were for groups of 40-50 people, perfect for agencies that handle group tours and packages. Another good tactic is to look at the details. The posting used earlier in this guide is a good example of a traveler that knows what he/she wants in a travel experience. Posts with few trip details or solid destination ideas are probably from window shoppers.

**I responded to a request, but I haven’t heard back. What gives?**

There are several reasons for this. You may have incorrectly entered your email address or your contact information is incorrect in our files. (If our files are wrong, please check your member profile and make
the necessary changes.)

Consumers can set a limit on the number of responses they receive, so you might have missed the cutoff. (Which is all the more reason to check the list frequently and respond quickly.) The person may be a window-shopper fishing for quotes. There is also the possibility that the consumer preferred another advisor’s response.

**I went back to look for a request I saw just a few days ago and I can’t find it. Where did it go?**
Consumers can put a time limit on their request, ranging from 20 to 60 days. Once that limit is reached, the listing is pulled. Check the list often and respond quickly to insure you don’t miss out on any leads.

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**Good luck using ASTA’s Consumer Lead service. We think it’s one of the greatest member benefits we can provide, and once you try it we’re sure you will agree. We always love to hear success stories. If the Consumer Lead service produces new business for you, please let us know askasta@asta.org !**