Ten things you must know as a home-based travel agent
Congratulations! You’ve taken the first step to becoming a home-based travel agent with KHM Travel Group. You are about to venture off on a journey that can be both fun and financially rewarding. We want you to be well-informed before making this important decision! Before getting started, read over these 10 things every home-based travel agent must know.

First, let us tell you a little bit about KHM Travel Group. We are a host agency that got started in 2005 with one agent and one computer in a dining room. Today we occupy a 14,000-square-foot campus in Brunswick, Ohio with a staff of more than 50 employees. Our network of agents has grown from one to over 4,000 home-based agents located throughout the United States. Over the years we have become one of the largest and fastest-growing host travel agencies. We’ve also become a top travel seller of popular travel suppliers like Disney, Carnival, Sandals & Beaches, Funjet Vacations, Royal Caribbean, Southwest Vacations, Princess Cruises, Hertz, Marriott, and Apple Vacations.

Our team has developed a platform that provides home-based travel agents with a comprehensive education program, a dedicated support team, and technology and marketing resources. All of this adds up to millions and millions of dollars in travel sales each month. Continue reading to see more benefits of launching your travel agency from home with KHM Travel Group!
Everyone wants to get into the travel business. It just sounds fun. Who doesn’t love blue skies, sandy beaches and palm trees? But as much of a lure as travel has, most people become agents because they want to make money. Unfortunately, some people want (or need) to start earning income overnight. Here’s the thing: It doesn’t work that way. Sure, we get new agents that enroll and already have a cruise or vacation to book for a family or friend. However, some agents don’t start making bookings until they’ve been in business for six months or more. That doesn’t mean they won’t be successful!

However, perseverance does pay off! Most of our new agents spend their first few weeks or even months setting up their new travel business, going through the startup education program, figuring out their target market, and which travel products they want to sell. Taking the time to build a solid travel business with a strong educational foundation helps ensure that you will have a business that you can be proud of, and one that pays you dividends now and well into the future.
One of the things that KHM Travel Group is known for is our education program. Early on, we noticed that agents who invest in their education from the beginning tended to be more successful. This includes learning about destinations, resorts, and cruise lines, but also about how to make bookings, work with suppliers, keep track of travel documents and find clients.

Successful agents also took the time to practice making bookings with our suppliers so that they would be ready when their clients needed a quote.

Especially for newer agents, getting your feet wet is critical. It’s important to go on FAM (familiarization) trips, which you’ll learn more about next. The bottom line? There is no shortcut when it comes to travel agent education, and because the industry is always evolving, there is always something new to learn about this business. You will always have opportunities to gain more knowledge and develop new skills.
We love travel – it’s one of the reasons why we started KHM Travel Group. If travel is something that you are passionate about too, then this is the right opportunity for you!

One of the things agents absolutely love is FAM (familiarization) trips. These trips are offered throughout the year in partnership with our Preferred Suppliers and they are among the most valuable opportunities for travel agents. They are designed to allow agents to see resorts, destinations, and even cruise ships, giving them firsthand experience they can share with clients.

For example, Apple Vacations recently hosted 20 KHM Travel Agents on a FAM trip to Cabo. They spent four nights at the RIU Palace Cabo San Lucas, and did site inspections at eight other resorts in the area. They enjoyed four nights at a beautiful all-inclusive resort, transportation from the airport, meals and snacks, plus some free time to enjoy the pool or beach.

FAM AVAILABILITY IS OFTEN BASED ON SALES...SO THE MORE YOU BOOK, THE MORE OPPORTUNITIES YOU’LL HAVE TO TRAVEL!
Finding a client and booking their trip is part of a travel agent’s responsibilities. But what sets travel agents apart from booking websites like Expedia and Travelocity is not price, or selection. It’s customer service! Going the extra mile for your clients is also what will bring you repeat business and referrals. Building a relationship with your clients, and really caring about their vacation is paramount to long-term success as a travel agent.

For instance, some of our agents send their clients a packet in the mail prior to departing for their trip. They include information on the specific destination: the weather forecast, top activities, and things to see. They also provide important facts and telephone numbers to their clients.

Following up after a trip is also an essential step in developing great customer service. Sending a thank-you card or email upon a client’s return is a small gesture that pays off in the long run. Plus, it allows you to gather feedback from your client about their trip!
One of the most common questions that we get asked is, “Can I really make money at this when everybody books their own travel online?” Many people are surprised to learn that not everyone books their own travel online. In fact, travel agent usage has risen every year for the past four years! Consumers might be comfortable doing some preliminary research online, but when it comes to dropping $6,000 on that all-inclusive vacation to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, they want to work with an expert they can trust. This is where our agents come in.

On the next page, check out actual commissions our agents earned last year. We pay commissions by way of direct deposit twice a month on the second and fourth Friday of each month. These are just a few examples!
COMMISSION EXAMPLES

5 NIGHT FAMILY VACATION
Disney World Port Orleans Resort
Disney
Agent: Mia M.
Commissionable Package Price: $4,863.22
Agent’s Commission: $401.60

7 NIGHT HONEYMOON
Sandals Ochi in Jamaica
Sandals
Agent: Suzanne B.
Commissionable Package Price: $3,738.30
Agent’s Commission: $537.08

9 NIGHT HONEYMOON
Secrets Papagayo Costa Rica
Gogo Vacations
Agent: Kelly M.
Commissionable Package Price: $6,325.16
Agent’s Commission: $704.16

ANNIVERSARY TRIP
4 Week South American Cruise
Holland America Line
Agent: Keith D.
Commissionable Package Price: $11,534.64
Agent’s Commission: $1,169.20
Sparked by an idea and an unquestionable passion to do something different, KHM Travel Group has quickly become one of the most innovative host travel agencies in the nation. As a leader in customer service and personal travel agent development, KHM Travel Group is one of the best choices for someone looking for high commission, unlimited support and the latest technology.

We work with hundreds of travel suppliers like:

- Funjet Vacations
- Carnival
- Royal Caribbean
- Sandals
- Apple Vacations
- Disney

80%-90% of the commission earned goes to the agents. (That’s one of the highest payouts in the industry!)

No fees. Zero fees per booking.

Highest commission an agent earned on their first commission check:

- $13,775.59

We have 5 regional development coordinators throughout the U.S. to provide local support.

Each agent receives 1 private label TravSearch website to launch their agency’s online presence.

Our travel agents sell:

- All-inclusives
- Cruises
- Romance
- International
- Destination Weddings
- Vacation Packages
- Groups
Some new agents think they’ll be able to just send people to their website to book their own travel. But think about this: Do you really want to train your clients and potential clients to go online and do it themselves? If this is your selling strategy, why do your clients really need you? If you ask our most successful agents how they built their clientele, they will tell you that it was by developing personal relationships with their prospects and then clients. By positioning yourself as the expert and providing excellence customer service, you create a relationship in which your clients wouldn’t even think of booking travel without you. Take the stress and uncertainty out of planning and booking their next vacation, and you’ll be showing them the value you have as their travel agent.

Some travel agents try to be everything to everybody. However, even veteran travel agents don’t know everything about every destination. It’s impossible! We live on a big planet with many amazing locations. That is why we recommend that new agents focus on a few destinations, suppliers, or at least the type of client they’d like to work with. We often see agents discussing a request they’ve received from a prospective traveler for a remote or exotic destination. They spend weeks trying to learn about that destination and determine which, if any, of our travel suppliers cater to that location...only then to find out that the client changed their mind and wanted to go to Las Vegas instead. It’s okay to say no. Your time is valuable. Stack the deck in your favor and focus on those clients who are likely to follow through and use your services for their next vacation.
Several years ago, Carnival Cruise Line made the decision to do away with the expensive, high gloss, multi-page brochures that they had provided to agents for years and years. When this was announced, some agents were concerned. They asked, “How in the world can we sell Carnival without brochures?” The truth is that they needed to stop selling Carnival and start selling themselves. Whether it’s Carnival, Disney, Marriott or Sandals, they don’t need travel agents to sell them. They do enough of that on their own. You need to focus on selling your clients on why you are such a valuable resource when it comes to ensuring that their travel plans go off without a hitch. You are your clients’ advocate.

One the biggest obstacles travel agents have to overcome is the fact that many people aren’t aware of the benefits of working with a travel professional. Instead of only highlighting suppliers, cruise ships and resorts...talk up your value! Once you’ve established your expertise, people will want to pick your mind about travel. Being able to educate them about what a travel agent does and how you can elevate their vacation experience is one of the keys to success for your travel business.
Another common misconception new agents have is that the secret to marketing their business is passing out business cards and asking their prospective clients to contact them when they need to book travel. Both of these activities should be part of what travel agents do, but the reality is that this can take a while to generate bookings. These activities are what we refer to as pulling.

To successfully market your travel business, you need to constantly be in front of your prospects. People are traveling. Maybe not today or even tomorrow, but they are traveling. Your job is to make sure that when they are ready to book their next all-inclusive resort stay or family cruise, they think of you. This requires you to stay in contact with them, even when they aren’t booking travel. One way to do this is by sending them a weekly email. Or posting about a new resort opening on Facebook. For example, say you specialize in all-inclusive romantic vacations to Mexico. Send your clients a quick email about Apple Vacations’ current promotion to Live Aqua Resort in Cancun for $679 per person, including air. Give your prospects something to visualize and think about. Plant the idea in their head. Maybe they won’t take you up on this offer. But maybe a few weeks later they decide they want to visit Jamaica. Chances are very good they’ll contact you! This is pushing information out to your clients.

Once you get bitten by the travel bug you are hooked forever. There may be opportunities out there that pay more, but in our opinion, nothing is as fun and rewarding as helping people plan their dream vacations! Jumping into this and becoming a travel agent with a clear idea of what to expect will make the experience even more enjoyable.
Life has a way of taking us back to our roots, and that’s certainly the case with Rick. He began in the travel industry fresh out of college where he worked as a travel agent for a small mom and pop agency in Cleveland, Ohio. Rick left the travel industry to follow his brother into the residential construction industry where he spent the next twenty-five years. In early 2005, he began to dabble in travel again. One thing led to another and KHM Travel Group was founded. While not a gambler, Rick’s passion is taking trips to Vegas with friends, family and agents. Rick’s vision for KHM Travel Group is to have the absolute best agent support, combined with the state-of-the-art educational programs, and to be known for having the highest commission payouts in the industry. Today, Rick is the driving force behind KHM Travel Group. He is also an active advocate of the travel agent community and serves on multiple travel-related Advisory Boards.
Lisa Morris  
Vice President of Agent Operations

With over 25 years in the travel industry, Lisa brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Executive Team. She has worked as a travel agent, a travel and tourism instructor at a business college, and as a member of the Royal Caribbean International team. Eventually Lisa took to the skies as a flight attendant, traveling to places across the globe before returning to Ohio to be with her family. Since joining KHM Travel Group team in 2009, Lisa has been an integral part of many of the agency’s new programs and initiatives. She works daily with our Preferred Supplier representatives to find creative and innovative ways to promote their travel products to both travel agents and consumers. Lisa has also provided insight and ideas toward the development of several programs to help foster a positive working environment for KHM Travel Group’s 50+ team members. As a leader and resource to several of the company’s major departments, Lisa works closely with the rest of the Executive Team to ensure their vision for KHM Travel Group is implemented from an operational standpoint.

Geoff Cox  
Vice President of Sales

When Geoff joined KHM Travel Group in 2011, he was no stranger to the travel industry. From 1993 to 2002, he worked as Business Development Manager and Key Account Manager at Royal Caribbean International. After his time with Royal Caribbean International, Geoff served as a Business Development Manager with Carnival Cruise Line for 8 years. Geoff’s exceptional leadership skills and commitment to growing KHM Travel Group’s sales volume make him an excellent addition to the company’s Executive Team. As Supplier Relations Director, Geoff has played a significant role in increasing the host agency’s production with several key Preferred Suppliers including Mark Travel, Delta Vacations, and Carnival Cruise Line. Geoff has also helped strengthen the bond with many of the company’s top producing agents through his involvement with the Pinnacle and Basecamp programs.