

Component 2

Customer Needs in Travel and Tourism

 Student eBook

Bob Holland



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Component 2: Customer Needs in Travel and Tourism

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BTEC Tech Award in Travel and Tourism

Component 2: Customer Needs in Travel and Tourism

Introduction

Exactly matched to the 2022 Pearson BTEC Level1/Level 2 Tech Award in Travel and Tourism specifications, this book provides comprehensive coverage of **Component 2: Customer Needs in Travel and Tourism**. The purpose of this publication is to support students in developing their understanding of the content of the specification by explaining and expanding on the terminology used.

There is a **teacher's resource** to accompany this book – [*Customer Needs in Travel and Tourism – Student Activities and Exercises*](#), which contains comprehension exercises based on the content of the module, further research activities and 'mini assignments' to help students prepare for their internal assessment.

This resource should be used in conjunction with other materials available on the Pearson Qualifications' website, including the current specification, teachers' guide and sample assessment materials.

Covid-19

It is important to remember that since March 2020 the UK and global travel and tourism industries have been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic, with both domestic and international travel severely restricted, resulting in drastically-changed patterns of tourism. Restrictions on travel have impacted on many travel and tourism organisations and it is unlikely that, at least in the short term, the volume of international travel will recover to pre-pandemic levels.

I hope you find this book a useful companion for your BTEC Tech Award in Travel & Tourism course and wish you well in your studies.

Bob Holland
February 2023

How to use this book

This publication covers the content of **Component 2** of the BTEC Tech Award in Travel and Tourism, with first teaching from September 2022. The component has two learning outcomes:

- A** – Demonstrate an understanding of how organisations identify customer needs and travel and tourism trends.
- B** – Recognise how the needs and preferences of travel and tourism customers are met.

This book includes the following features:

1. **Component overview and introduction** – giving details of the content for the unit
2. **Assessment for the component** – details of how you will be assessed
3. **Icebreaker activities** – for each learning outcome to help make a start with topics
4. **Clearly-labelled sections** – exactly covering the specification content for the component
5. **Student activities** – to promote knowledge and understanding, while developing research skills
6. **‘Did you know’ sections** – snippets of factual information to expand knowledge and promote discussion
7. **Charts, diagrams and images** – to add realism while learning about travel and tourism

Although this book is provided primarily for tutors and students studying the 2022 Pearson BTEC Level1/Level 2 Tech Award in Travel and Tourism qualification, it will be of use on similar Level 1/Level 2 courses, such as those offered by NCFE, WJEC/Eduqas and City & Guilds.

Access to more Travel and Tourism resources

Staff and students are welcome to visit our website www.tandtpublishing.co.uk and register for access to our expanding database of travel and tourism resources. You will find a wide range of free and subscription resources, including the latest industry news, videos and video clips, links to relevant websites, blank maps, tourism statistics, student activities, etc. Simply visit the website and click on ‘Free Resources’ on the top bar to learn more.

About the author

Bob Holland has been involved in the field of tourism education for more than 25 years, through working with a range of organisations to develop resources and provide professional development opportunities for teachers. He has worked as a Chief Examiner and Principal Moderator, and has been closely involved with the development of a number of Travel & Tourism specifications. He is the author of a number of popular Travel & Tourism textbooks and eBooks, including these for the [2022 BTEC Tech Award](#) and [WJEC Level 3 resources](#).

Also available

Student Activities and Exercises

Component 2: Customer Needs in Travel and Tourism

[Learn more](#)



Learning outcomes and component content

Learning outcome A : Demonstrate an understanding of how organisations identify customer needs and travel and tourism trends

Content

A1 : Types of market research

This section investigates how market research is used by travel and tourism organisations to collect information about their customers and their travel preferences. Research is also undertaken to investigate *trends* in travel and tourism.

Students will need to be aware of the range of primary and secondary research methods used by travel and tourism organisations, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of each method.

A2 : How travel and tourism organisations may use market research to identify customer needs and preferences

It is important to understand how the results of market research can be used by travel and tourism organisations. Students need to understand that travel and tourism organisations must have a clear understanding of the needs of their customers and how these may change over time.

Students will also learn about the concept of 'the market' and how markets can be segmented using different criteria. Additionally, students should understand how market research can be used to develop new products.

Finally, market research can be used to measure customer satisfaction and feedback in order to encourage loyalty and repeat business.

A3 : How travel and tourism organisations may use research to identify travel and tourism trends

Information relating to trends in travel and tourism can be found on a range of government and tourist board websites, as well as from commercial organisations.

Students should be aware of how patterns of tourism change over time. These changes, known as trends, can relate to variables such as the types of travel, the choice of destinations, the numbers of domestic, inbound or outbound tourists and the types of accommodation used.

Learning outcome B : Recognise how the needs and preferences of travel and tourism customers are met

Content

B1 : Customer needs and preferences

Travel and tourism organisations have to provide a range of products and services which meet the needs and preferences of their customers in order to be successful. However, it is not possible to meet the precise needs and preferences of every single customer.

Students need to appreciate the variety of needs and preferences shown by different types of customers, such as families, groups, couples and individuals. This section also looks into the wide

range of tourists' desirable preferences. Many of these, such as first-class travel or premium rooms, can be provided at an additional cost to the customer.

B2 : How travel and tourism organisations provide different products and services to meet customer needs and preferences

Travel and tourism organisations need to be aware of the likely needs of different types of customers. These needs may be met by providing service and assistance online and during the booking process, while the customer is travelling or away from home.

Students should be aware of the main needs and preferences of different customer groups and how tourism organisations provide different products and services.

B3 : Customer needs and different types of travel

There is a wide variety of types of travel, including leisure travel and business travel, as well as visiting friends and relatives (VFR travel). This section investigates how each of these can be subdivided further.

Students should be aware of the main needs and preferences of tourists undertaking travel for a variety of reasons. They should appreciate that the needs of different customer types are generalised and that a number of factors will determine the precise needs of each customer. For example, the needs of a family going on holiday with two teenage children will be different from those of a family with three children under the age of five.

B4 : Travel planning to meet customer needs and preferences

Travel plans can be produced by tour operators, travel agents and by tourists themselves. They include all the essential information and advice needed for a trip. The more complex a journey or holiday, the more information that is needed on the travel plan.

Students will need to be aware of the stages needed to produce a travel plan which meets the needs of the customer. They should understand that travel plans will vary a great deal according to the type of travel, destination(s) visited and the specific needs of the customer.

Component 2: Customer Needs in Travel and Tourism



What you will study in this component

A : How organisations identify customer needs and travel and tourism trends

B : How the needs and preferences of travel and tourism customers are met



Introduction to the component

Customers are at the heart of all travel and tourism organisations, whether they operate in the private, public or voluntary sector. This is particularly the case with commercial companies – quite simply, without customers a business wouldn't survive. So it's important for organisations to know exactly what customers are looking for when they choose their holidays, short breaks and other travel products.

In this component you will investigate the different types of market research used by travel and tourism organisations, plus the advantages and disadvantages of each. You will learn how travel and tourism organisations use the results of their market research to identify customer needs and preferences, as well as trends in travel and tourism.

You will also investigate how travel and tourism organisations improve their products and services, and introduce new ones, as a direct result of market research and customer feedback. In addition, you will learn how customer needs and preferences differ for different types of travel.

Finally, you will investigate travel planning, learning about different sources of information that can be used to produce a travel plan. You will also learn about what should be included in a travel plan for a customer.

This component will help you develop an understanding of how customer needs are identified and satisfied by travel and tourism organisations. You will develop transferable skills, such as research skills, which will support your progression to higher level vocational or academic qualifications.



Assessment for this component

This component is assessed by a non-exam internal assessment set by the awarding body (Pearson), which is marked by tutors in your school or college. It will be completed in approximately 5 hours of monitored preparation and 6 hours of supervised assessment. To assist students preparing for this assessment, an accompanying publication to this resource, [Customer Needs in Travel and Tourism – Student Activities and Exercises](#) is available from Travel and Tourism Publishing. This resource contains comprehension exercises based on the content of the module, further research exercises and 'mini assignments' to help students prepare for the internal assessment.

Learning outcome A

Demonstrate an understanding of how organisations identify customer needs and travel and tourism trends



Icebreaker

Learning outcome A is all about the market research techniques used by travel and tourism organisations to find out the needs and preferences of their customers. Working by yourself, or in small groups under the direction of your tutor, see how you get on with the following tasks to help you make a start on this learning outcome:

- What do you think 'primary research' means to a travel and tourism organisation?
- What is the difference between 'primary research' and 'secondary research'?
- Think of a time when you or your family took part in a survey while on holiday or visiting an attraction.
- Why do you think travel and tourism organisations carry out market research?
- Make a list of the different needs of a customer on a package holiday and a business traveller.
- Why do you think it's important for a hotel to measure customer satisfaction?
- What impact did the Covid-19 pandemic have on trends in UK and international travel and tourism?

When you've finished, show your answers to your tutor and compare them with what others in your class have written.

Travel and tourism organisations need to understand the needs of their customers in order to be able to offer the correct range of products and services. There is no point in a tour operator offering holidays to a destination if nobody wants to go there!

Also, over a period of time, tourist destinations go in and out of fashion. Similarly, some activities become more or less popular and attitudes to issues such as the environment also change. Therefore, travel and tourism organisations need to be able to identify changes in the patterns of tourism and the reasons for those changes. Changes in patterns over time are called trends. For example, there is a trend for older UK residents to travel more often in recent years.

Organisations carry out market research activities in order to identify customer needs and preferences, as explained in the following sections of this component.

A1 Types of market research

To many people, market research is when somebody comes up to you in the street and asks you to take part in a survey – but there's a lot more to it than that! Market research is the collection and analysis of data about customers and its use by organisations for decision-making and meeting their objectives. It is the foundation of successful marketing, since it underpins activities such as developing new products, setting prices and promotional activities.

All travel and tourism organisations, from the biggest names in the industry, like British Airways, TUI Travel and Premier Inn, to a small seaside hotel need information about their customers in order to be successful. It is the job of market research to provide this information in as objective a way as possible, in other words with no bias. Not all market research is a costly or elaborate

affair – the owner of a restaurant, for example, will regularly get informal feedback from guests on their opinion of the food, service and facilities, and will make adjustments as necessary.

Once a travel and tourism organisation has identified the need to carry out some market research, it has to decide whether to conduct primary research, secondary research or a mixture of the two. Primary research is collecting new data that is not already available from another source, for example a survey of visitors to a theme park. Secondary research is the analysis of data that is already available, either from an organisation's own records or from another source, such as a report from a research company or a tourist board's annual report.

Successful travel and tourism organisations undertake market research to identify changes in the needs and preferences of their customers and adjust their products and services accordingly. Market research can be undertaken by staff working for the organisation or by a specialist research agency.

Figure 1.1 shows the main market research methods used in travel and tourism.

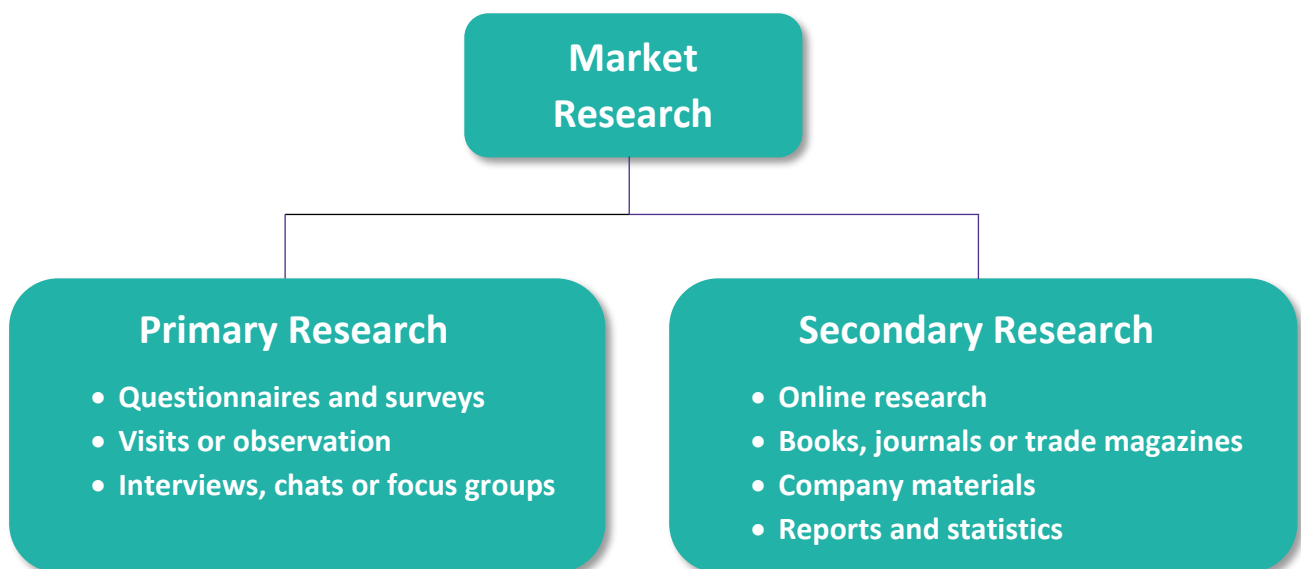


Figure 1.1 Market research methods in travel and tourism

Primary research methods

Primary research is collecting new data that is not already available from another source, for example a questionnaire survey given out by a holiday company to its customers on their return flight from a holiday.

Questionnaires and surveys

By far the most common method of collecting primary data in travel and tourism is by carrying out a survey, which usually involves completing a questionnaire to collect information and views from a cross-section of people. There are four main types of questionnaire survey that can be used to collect primary data:

- Face-to-face interview
- Telephone survey
- Postal survey
- Email/website/social media survey

A **face-to-face interview survey** involves an interviewer asking questions of a member of the general public, known as the respondent, and recording his or her answers and comments on a questionnaire. This type of survey is very common in all sectors of the travel and tourism industry, from tourist attractions to seaside resorts. Face-to-face interviews are a very good way of obtaining both qualitative and quantitative data. **Qualitative data** refers to a person's opinion or attitude to a particular facility, product or service. Typical survey questions that would produce qualitative data include:

1. Which feature of the theme park did you enjoy the most?
2. How would you rate the standard of service you received at the hotel?
3. How could the facility be improved for people with disabilities?
4. What is your opinion of the food in the hotel?

Question 1 is an example of an **open question**, since it gives the interviewee the chance to give their views or opinions.

Quantitative data refers to factual information collected as part of a survey, using questions such as:

1. What is your age?
2. How far have you travelled today?
3. What is your occupation?
4. How did you hear about this visitor attraction?

These are all **closed questions**, which give valuable factual information rather than opinions.

Face-to-face interviews have a number of advantages when compared with other survey methods, for example:

1. The interviewer is able to explain difficult questions
2. Visual aids such as photographs and charts can be used
3. The interviewer can prompt the respondent for further details
4. Initial interest on the part of the respondent is aroused
5. Response rates tend to be high



Carrying out a questionnaire survey.

The main disadvantage of face-to-face surveys is that they are expensive, since the interviewers have to be fully trained and the administrative load is high. It can also be time-consuming when

compared with other techniques, for example email, social media and telephone surveys. Also, respondents may give dishonest answers just to get rid of the person asking the questions or refuse to answer sensitive questions.



Activity 1

Design a simple questionnaire and carry out a face-to-face interview survey to find out where other members of your group went on their last holiday, how they travelled to their destination, and what tourist attractions and facilities they visited in-resort. Include questions to gather qualitative data on the respondents' opinions of the destination visited and travel arrangements. The questionnaire example shown on page 13 may give you some ideas for questions.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A1

Self-completed questionnaire surveys, where customers fill in a questionnaire themselves, have the benefit of being cheaper than a face-to-face interview survey, since there is no need to recruit and train interviewers. It is common to find self-completed questionnaires at visitor attractions and leisure facilities, for customers to complete and either return by post, or leave behind before they depart. Some travel and tourism organisations provide an incentive, such as a free gift or discounted prices, in order to increase the number of completed questionnaires returned. Many tour operators carry out a postal survey of returning holidaymakers, asking them to complete a questionnaire related to their holiday experiences.

Telephone surveys can certainly give a speedy response and, if trained operators are used, many interviews are possible in a given time period. Disadvantages include the fact that it is not possible to use visual stimulus materials and the likelihood that people will feel that they have had their privacy invaded and will not co-operate.

Postal surveys are expensive to carry out and are not used extensively by travel and tourism organisations. However, a holiday company, hotel or airline may send out a postal survey to its customers once a year in order to gain feedback on its products and services.

Did you know?

It is estimated that only 9% of people over the age of 65 respond to online questionnaires.

The use of **email, website and social media surveys** is growing rapidly. They are a relatively cheap and fast way of gaining feedback from customers and are useful in targeting specific customers, for example a holiday company emailing everybody who visited a particular resort. Response rates can be low with these types of surveys and incentives are often used to increase the number of responses, for example a free gift or travel discount.

Visits or observation

As well as carrying out surveys, some travel and tourism organisations make use of visits or observation as a method of collecting primary data. It is particularly suitable for visitor attractions such as theme parks, art galleries and museums. The researcher will have a structured set of objectives, which will vary according to exactly what is being observed. Observation is practised

HOLIDAY FEEDBACK

QUESTIONNAIRE



Name: _____ Sunvil Bkg Ref: _____ Departure Date: _____ No. in Party: _____

Accommodation: _____ Airline: _____ Resort: _____

Name of Representative: _____

In order to monitor and improve our standards and service, we would very much appreciate a few moments of your time to complete this short questionnaire. Please return it to one of our representatives prior to your departure; alternatively please post it on your return to the freepost address overleaf. All replies will be treated confidentially and are only used for our development and planning purposes. We regret we are unable to respond individually on the basis of this questionnaire.
Should you have any points on which you would like a reply please write to us under separate cover.

RESERVATIONS

Did you make your booking	Directly with us <input type="checkbox"/>	Through a travel agent <input type="checkbox"/>		
Reservations Staff	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Brochure Accuracy	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>

JOURNEY

Flights	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Transfer to/from your accommodation	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>

RESORT/HOLIDAY AREA

Note: Fly-Drive or multi centre clients please give overall average of areas/resorts visited

	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
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YOUR ACCOMMODATION

Overall	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Location	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Comfort and furnishings	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Maid standards (cleaning)	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Service/Hospitality/Friendliness (hotel only)	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Meals (hotel only)	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>

REPRESENTATION

Overall	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Efficiency	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Local Knowledge	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Ease of contact	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Friendliness	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Attention to your needs	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>

HIRED SERVICES

Prebooked Car Hire	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Prebooked Boat Hire	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Prebooked Excursions	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Prebooked Bicycle Hire	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Prebooked Watersports	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state)	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
Level of Service from Suppliers	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>

FINALLY

How would you describe your overall level of satisfaction with your holiday?

Value for money	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsatisfactory <input type="checkbox"/>
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Would you choose to travel with Sunvil again?
(if no, we would be grateful for your reasons overleaf)

Yes No Perhaps

Age bracket of the person who usually chooses your holiday

Upto 24 <input type="checkbox"/>	25-34 <input type="checkbox"/>	35-45 <input type="checkbox"/>	
46-60 <input type="checkbox"/>	60+ <input type="checkbox"/>		

What was the most enjoyable aspect of your holiday? _____

What was the least enjoyable aspect of your holiday? _____

An example of a self-completed questionnaire (courtesy of Sunvil Travel).

in many large attractions with the help of sophisticated techniques such as closed-circuit television (CCTV) and time-lapse photography, and can produce valuable information on the flow of people and traffic. Electronic tally counters are used in visitor attractions, leisure centres and tourist information centres to monitor usage. On occasions, researchers may be asked to mingle with visitors or customers and to eavesdrop on their conversations without revealing their identities. People are often far more honest about their true feelings when talking in private, than they would be when asked questions as part of a survey.

Observation also has an important role to play in researching competitors' products. There are very few products, services and facilities in travel or tourism that are truly unique, most having been based on an idea seen elsewhere. It is not uncommon for hoteliers, travel agents and airlines, for example, to use the facilities of competitors in order to pick up new tips and improve their own products. They sometimes employ 'mystery shoppers' to report on their competitors' (and even their own!) facilities and standards of service.

Observation checklists are used to record the movement and behaviour of people, as well as the flow of vehicles, in tourist facilities. Observers record details such as how long visitors stay at particular rides at theme parks, the direction in which they travel between rides, any comments they make, what retail facilities they use, etc.

Visits and observation are useful in finding out certain aspects of the operation of an attraction or facility, but the lack of views and opinions of customers is a disadvantage. Also, what is being observed is open to interpretation by the observer and may not always be a true picture of events.



Focus groups are useful for in-depth market research.

Formal or informal interviews, chats or focus groups

Interviews, chats and focus groups give organisations an opportunity to discover what influences an individual's purchasing decisions – for example, why does somebody prefer to fly with airline A rather than airline B? This information is not easy to obtain from questionnaire surveys or observation, but in-depth interviews and focus group sessions give respondents the time to reflect and consider in detail why they make the decisions they do. A focus group usually consists of up

to 10 consumers under the guidance of a skilled interviewer. The interviewer will use a number of techniques to explore the innermost thoughts and values of the members of the group. The sessions are generally taped or video-recorded for future analysis and will often signal changes of direction in terms of a company's product range or promotional activities.

Given the intensive nature of in-depth interviews and focus groups, they are expensive methods of gaining primary research material and tend, therefore, to be used mainly by larger travel and tourism organisations. Once a focus group has finished, the interviewer will write a report on the main findings for the company concerned.



Activity 2

Working by yourself or with another member of your group, make a list of the primary research methods that are likely to be useful to an airline, a tour operator and a major visitor attraction. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each method?

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A1

Secondary research methods

Secondary research is the analysis of data that is already available, either from an organisation's own records or from another source, such as a report from travel research company or a tourist board.

The main advantage of secondary market research is that the person or organisation undertaking the research does not have to spend time and money designing and carrying out questionnaire surveys or other types of primary research. However, data produced from secondary sources may not provide exactly what the researcher is trying to find out about a particular group of customers.

Also, major events, such as war, changing economic conditions and the Covid-19 pandemic, can result in dramatic changes in patterns of tourism which cannot always be predicted through market research. Secondary data relating to travel and tourism can also go out of date very quickly. Any data collected may also be unreliable if it is not collected from a trusted source.

Figure 1.1 on page 10 shows us that secondary data can come from a variety of internal and external sources, including:

- Online research
- Books, journals and trade magazines
- Company materials
- Market and government reports and statistics

Online research

The growth of the internet means that all types of data on travel and tourism is readily available to everybody. Much of the data is free, but it is not always possible to verify the authenticity of the information without further research. Using search engines such as Google and Bing will generate thousands of results on a single topic, but it is often hard to pinpoint exactly the information required.

Trusted research sources, such as national tourist board websites, the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and trade associations like ABTA and UKInbound, offer reliable data that is kept up to date. For example, the following table shows the number of UK residents visiting the USA between 2011 and 2019. This information was easily obtainable from the internet and shows a growing trend, with the number of UK residents visiting the USA increasing from just over 4 million in 2011 to more than 4.8 million in 2019. This data might encourage more UK-based tour operators to offer a greater range of tours to the USA.

Number of UK residents visiting the USA	
Year	Number of visits (000s)
2011	4,071
2012	3,744
2013	3,871
2014	4,197
2015	4,398
2016	4,382
2017	4,439
2018	4,943
2019	4,805

However, it should be remembered that during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 to 2022 there were virtually no tourists visiting the USA. Thus, although there is a vast amount of information available online, the researcher needs to be aware that the information might be out-of-date and of limited use. Another aspect of online research is that, although much of the information is freely available, some detailed information is very expensive and is provided by companies which have spent a lot of money collecting the data.



Activity 3

Carry out some research to find **three** commercial companies which specialise in collecting and publishing data on the travel and tourism industry.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A1

A further issue with online research is that the person conducting the research has to know what they are looking for and be able to use the correct terminology when using search engines. They also need to assess the relevance of any information they find – for example, the number and characteristics of visitors to Windsor in Canada would be very different to those visiting Windsor in the UK!

Books, journals and trade magazines

Books and journals relating to travel and tourism have an important role to play in market research. Guidebooks, for example, provide useful information on destinations for visitors, such as the best places to stay, visitor attractions and transport options. Printed books can go out of date quickly, which is why many travel guides are now made available online where they can be easily updated at lower cost to the publisher.

Tour operators may consult guidebooks when developing new tours as a way of gathering information on natural and built attractions which could be offered to customers as excursions.

Trade magazines, such as *Travel Weekly* and the *Travel Trade Gazette*, are used by people working in the industry to keep abreast of current trends and company developments.



Company materials

All large travel and tourism organisations have to publish annual reports which give detailed information about their activities, developing trends, employment, sustainability, corporate social responsibility and future plans. These reports may also contain financial information such as the profit or loss made by the organisation. This information can be used by market researchers and competitors to examine how successful the organisation is, how many customers it had and to discover the direction of its future plans.

The annual reports of public limited companies (PLCs), including British Airways, Merlin Entertainments, TUI Travel UK, easyJet and Whitbread (the owners of Premier Inn), can be accessed online for market research purposes.

Trade magazines help staff keep up to date with industry developments (courtesy of Travel Weekly).

Internal data held by travel and tourism organisations is also very useful for market research purposes. For example, a holiday company could use its past information on the number of visitors to specific destinations to identify trends in the popularity of resorts. Details of customer profiles, such as age, gender, occupation, location, interests, etc., could be used when designing promotional campaigns.

Market and government reports and statistics

A great deal of useful secondary market research data is available from a variety of government and commercial sources, including:

- **The Office for National Statistics (ONS)** – this government agency publishes data on UK residents travelling abroad and overseas visitors to Britain. It collects information via the *International Passenger Survey*.

- **National tourist board websites** – are a good source of data relating to tourism in their particular country. In the UK, the VisitBritain and VisitEngland websites share a single platform, while Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland publish their own statistics.
- **The World Tourism Organisations (UNWTO)** – this is the global body responsible for collecting data on travel and tourism trends. Every year it produces a publication summarising the statistics for the previous year.
- **The Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT)** – is a useful source of travel and tourism data concerning European Union (EU) countries.
- **Trade associations** – organisations such as ABTA, UKInbound and IATA publish data and reports on their specific sector of travel and tourism.
- **Professional bodies** – these represent people working in particular professions, for example the Institute of Hospitality, the Tourism Society and the Institute of Travel and Tourism.
- **Companies specialising in travel and tourism research** – collect and analyse data on travel and tourism trends and sell their findings as reports and presentations. Examples include Mintel and Ipsos MORI.

Did you know?

UK tourism statistics can be found on the VisitBritain/VisitEngland website as well as the tourism statistics websites for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Market reports, which are available from commercial organisations, tourist boards and trade associations, give detailed information on the current state of particular sectors of the travel and tourism industry, for example hotels, visitor attractions, travel agents and the cruise industry.



Activity 4

The Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) is a trade body representing many of the world's biggest cruise companies. Carry out some research on its website to find out the current state of the cruise sector. Prepare a presentation of your research findings.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A1



Activity 5

Working by yourself or with another member of your group, make a list of the secondary research methods that are likely to be useful to an airline, a tour operator and a major visitor attraction. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each method.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A1

A1 summary

Types of market research

1. Market research is an important tool used by travel and tourism organisations to find out about their customers' needs and preferences.
2. Primary market research is often the most effective method of collecting data, but can be expensive.
3. An organisation's own records are a good source of market research data.
4. Increasingly, secondary sources of information can be found online from a number of government and commercial sources.
5. Information can become out-of-date rapidly when global events change patterns of tourism.

A2 How travel and tourism organisations may use market research to identify customer needs and preferences

It is vital for any travel and tourism organisation to put the customer at the centre of all its activity and develop a customer-focused culture if it is to succeed. A company will use market research to gather certain basic information on its customers, such as:

1. How many are there?
2. What ages are they?
3. Are they male or female?
4. How do they travel to get to you?
5. What level of income do they have?
6. What is their attitude to your organisation?
7. How much do they spend with you?
8. Which competitor organisations do they use?

Travel and tourism is a very competitive industry, so organisations use market research data to find out as much as possible about their customers' needs, expectations and preferences. Primary data in particular can be expensive to collect and the results of surveys, interviews, focus groups and questionnaires should be used to help the organisation to recognise and meet the needs and expectations of its customers. In private sector organisations, using the information obtained from market research is designed to make the business more profitable, by developing products and services that customers want to buy. Public sector and voluntary sector organisations may also need to identify where they can improve the services they offer or to identify customers whose needs are not being met at the present time.

Types of customers and their needs

Travel and tourism customers can be put into broad categories such as leisure travellers, business travellers, couples and families. However, there are more specific groups than these, such as sports tourists, adventure tourists and solo travellers, each with their own specific needs. For example, the travel needs and preferences of a couple in their twenties looking for a skiing holiday are likely to be very different to those of an elderly couple going on a cruise.

A travel and tourism organisation may not be able to meet the exact needs and preferences of every one of its customers, but by knowing about the main types of customer needs, businesses can work towards satisfying the expectations of their main customer groups. For example, most tour operators providing summer holiday packages will have used market research to identify the facilities required by families with children of different ages. Some offer 'family-friendly' hotels which have a wide range of appropriate facilities to keep families happy.



Activity 6

Carry out some research into a visitor attraction close to you or in a nearby city. Make a list of the different types of customers who use the attraction and give details of what you think are their different needs. Make notes on how well the attraction caters for the needs of all its customers by providing suitable facilities and services.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A2

Families with children

Families on holiday have a wide range of needs which will vary depending on the age of the children and the composition of the family. For example, a single-parent family with one young child will have different needs to a family with two parents and four children, two of whom are teenagers. The age of the children also has a big influence on the needs and preferences of the family. Young children, for example, need items such as early-dining options, pushchairs, cots, nappies and plenty of spare clothes; older children need to be entertained, while teenagers often need a bit of their own space while on holiday.



Parents often return to popular destinations such as Bondi Beach with their own children.

Did you know?

It is estimated that 70% of parents take their children to destinations they visited when they were young.

Pre-school age children are also likely to need a buggy and cannot be expected to walk for any length of time. If these families book hotel accommodation, the children may have to share their parent's room and eat the food provided by the hotel. For these reasons, many families with pre-school age children choose self-catering accommodation, where they have more flexibility and control over what the children eat. Safety is a major concern for families with young children, so many families choose to visit smaller coastal resorts with safe beaches or quiet countryside areas.

Families with school-age children have less choice as to when they can go on holiday and will be limited to school holiday periods. These families tend to be focused on ensuring that the children

are having a good time and taking part in activities they enjoy. In coastal resorts, families can spend time on the beach, visit water parks or other family-friendly attractions. Some hotels offer a 'kids' club' facility where children can be left to play under supervision. It is generally the case that children under the age of 16 are not allowed to stay in hotel rooms on their own, so self-catering options such as apartments, villas or cottages might be more attractive for some families.

Did you know?

The single-parent charity *Gingerbread* offers tips and advice for planning holidays in the UK and abroad.

Multi-generational family holidays are becoming more popular, with grandparents being able to enjoy spending time with their children and grandchildren. Single-parent families can often benefit from holidays with free child places or discounts, while the single-parent charity *Gingerbread* has advice and tips for arranging holidays. Many travel and tourism organisations have responded to the needs of changing family

structures, by providing more facilities for larger groups.

Visitor attractions, accommodation providers and tour operators have to meet the needs of every type of family, regardless of its composition.

It is important to understand that most parents will put the needs of their children before their own needs when they travel. Parents will tend to choose destinations where all the family will feel safe and choose accommodation and activities which meet the needs of all of the family.

Solo travellers

Changes in population structure have led to many more people travelling alone and booking solo holidays. Many look for the company of others when travelling and book with specialist holiday companies. Solo travellers' needs can vary – a solo traveller could be an experienced backpacker who has travelled around the world many times or an elderly person travelling alone for the first time after the death of a partner. People travelling by themselves are sometimes asked to pay extra for single room occupancy, although this practice is gradually being phased out by holiday companies and cruise lines. Solo travellers often use social media to keep in touch while on holiday and to share their experiences with friends and family.



Activity 7

Carry out some research to find details of three UK tour operators which specialise in holidays for solo travellers. Make notes on the types of holidays on offer and how they meet the particular needs of people travelling alone.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A2

Leisure travellers

The majority of tourists and day trippers are classified as 'leisure travellers', i.e. they are using their leisure time to travel for pleasure, enjoyment, relaxation or to follow special interests.

The following chart gives you some examples of specific trips made by leisure travellers:

Leisure travel examples	
Short breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A city break in Amsterdam • Weekend break to a National Park • A stag or hen party in Edinburgh
Holidays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Package holiday to Majorca • An independent motorcycling tour of Spain • A Caribbean cruise
Special events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watching a Formula 1 Grand Prix • A summer music festival • London's Notting Hill carnival

Business travellers

Business travellers have very different needs to leisure travellers, often having to travel at short notice and to unfamiliar destinations. They need access to high-speed internet and other business facilities at transport hubs and in their accommodation so that their work can continue uninterrupted. Not all business travellers have big travel budgets – while a senior manager in a large organisation may fly first class and stay in expensive hotels, a self-employed business person may travel as cheaply as possible in order to save money. Travel and tourism organisations must offer products and services to meet the needs of a wide range of business travellers. Business travel agents are sometimes used by larger organisations to handle their travel and accommodation needs.



Business travellers have specific needs.

The following chart gives you some examples of specific trips made by business travellers:

Business travel examples	
Meetings, conferences, exhibitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visiting the World Travel Market • A sales meeting between a drinks' supplier and a hotelier
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sales manager from Bath attending a seminar on marketing in Cardiff • Travelling from Glasgow to Carlisle to organise an IT training course
Short-term work contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plumber from Stoke working on a 6-month job in Bristol
Incentive travel – a trip offered to staff as a reward for good performance at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A free holiday to Majorca for completing a project ahead of time • A spa break for an employee who beats their monthly sales target

Identifying market segments and target markets

The word 'market' has a number of meanings in business, but is usually defined as the total number of people who might buy a particular product or service. For example, the total market for UK holidays in 2023 is estimated at £2.5 billion – that's the total amount spent on UK holidays for that year. Every company selling UK holidays will be trying to gain the biggest possible share of the total market.

Market segmentation is the process of dividing the total market for a product or service (i.e. all the people who could buy it) into different 'segments', each with broadly similar characteristics. Companies carry out segmentation since it allows them to focus more clearly on the needs and expectations of particular groups of customers, for example older people, young couples wanting activity holidays or high spenders looking for the ultimate in luxury. These are known as their 'target markets', i.e. the customers they will target with advertising and promotion in order to maximise sales.

Market segmentation is, therefore, a tool that a travel and tourism organisation can use to satisfy the needs of its particular customers. Being concerned with the needs and expectations of customers, however, does mean that segmentation relies heavily on detailed market research to help match the products exactly to the clients' needs.



Activity 8

Review the websites of both TUI Travel and Jet2 Holidays. Make notes on how each produces holidays for various market segments, e.g. products targeted at different age groups, lifestyle interests, family composition, etc. Compare your notes with other members of your group.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A2

Did you know?

Blackpool Pleasure Beach is one of the UK's most popular tourist attractions with around 6 million visitors every year. The company carries out in-depth market research on its visitors and uses the data to segment its market. The under 15 and 15-25 age groups make up the bulk of customers to the attraction and this is reflected in the products on offer, e.g. the rides and fast-food catering. Around 80 per cent of visitors come from the C1, C2 and D socio-economic groups – the company uses this information to choose where to advertise the attraction, for example in the newspapers that these people read.

Markets can be segmented in a number of ways, for example by:

- **Age** – such as designing holidays to meet the needs of the 18-30 age group or people over the age of 55
- **Gender** – e.g. developing holidays just for women
- **Lifestyle** – for example, introducing new activity holidays for young people who live adventurous lifestyles
- **Geographical region** – e.g. all the people living in a particular postcode area of a city could be sent a holiday company's brochure
- **Income** – for example, designing short breaks for low-income families

Age

The needs and preferences of people while on holidays and day trips change as they get older. Children look to their parents to provide safety, fun and excitement while they are young. Teenagers may venture on holiday alone for the first time, either in the UK or abroad. 'Empty nesters' are older people whose children have 'flown the nest'. Sometimes called the 'grey market', many have active lifestyles and higher incomes, meaning that they are important customers for travel and tourism companies.



The Dorset coast is a UK destination which is popular with older visitors.

Rather than using specific ages when targeting customers, organisations often look at their stage in the lifecycle, as shown in the following table. Holiday companies will use this information to design products that meet the specific needs of customers in a lifecycle stage, e.g. designing mountain biking holidays in Majorca for single people or cruise holidays for the empty nest 1 group.

Lifecycle stage	Travel and tourism activities
Single	Young people with few ties and a reasonable income. Likely to frequent clubs in the UK and take adventurous holidays abroad.
Newly-wed/living together	Possibly a higher disposable income with leisure pursuits such as going to the cinema, eating out, going to clubs, taking short breaks and holidays abroad.
Full nest 1	Young marrieds/living together with youngest child less than 6. Beginnings of family-orientated leisure including visits to the park, tourist attractions and family holidays in the UK and abroad.
Full nest 2	As above, but youngest child over 6. Falling disposable income, less spending on travel, but some holidays taken in the UK.
Full nest 3	Older couples with dependent children, perhaps still studying. Disposable income low. Leisure centred on the home, with some UK holidays and cheaper overseas holiday options.
Empty nest 1	Older couple, childless or where children have left home. Level of disposable income likely to be restored. Increased demand for short breaks, overseas travel and active leisure pursuits.
Empty nest 2	Older couples with the chief breadwinner retired. Income again restricted. Avid watchers of TV and radio listeners, with most holidays centred on the UK.
Solitary survivor 1	Single/widowed person in work. Home and garden likely to provide most leisure activity, with few holidays taken.
Solitary survivor 2	As above but retired. Little spare cash for travel and holidays.

Figure 1.2 Lifecycle stages and travel and tourism activities



Activity 9

Using Figure 1.2 as your starting point, find details of **specific** holidays for **three** of the lifecycle stages listed in the left-hand column. Include full details including prices.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A2

Tourism destinations also use market research to discover the age profile of their visitors and aim their marketing at different groups. For example, a resort with a 'lively nightlife' will appeal mainly

to younger adults, while a destination offering 'peaceful walks and quiet relaxation' is likely to appeal more to older tourists.

Imagine the scenario in the following chart showing the results of market research undertaken by two tour operators.

Age group of customers	<i>Eddies Exciting Escapes</i>	<i>Taylor's Traditional Tours</i>
Under 30	35%	17%
31 - 45	44%	28%
46 – 60	13%	31%
61 – 75	6%	16%
75 and over	2%	88%

The table clearly shows that *Eddies Exciting Escapes* appeals to a much younger segment of the market compared with *Taylor's Traditional Tours*. Having conducted market research to produce these results, the companies can work to meet the needs and preferences of their main customer groups and develop products and services to meet their needs.

Some travel and tourism organisations specialise in holidays and travel for specific age groups. A good example is *Saga* which provides a range of travel and tourism products for people over the age of fifty.



Activity 10

Carry out some research into *Saga Holidays* to find three **types** of holidays offered by the company. Make notes on one specific holiday from each of your chosen holiday types.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A2

Gender

Some travel and tourism companies focus on a specific gender when developing their holidays and travel products. Ramblers Holidays, for example, offer women-only breaks in the Lake District which feature hill walking, yoga and circuit training. Travel and tourism organisations must be aware that they cannot discriminate on the grounds of gender when developing or operating their products and services. Market research can be used to ensure that the needs and preferences of *all* of the of the organisations' customers are met equally.

Lifestyle

Different people enjoy doing different things while on holiday or travelling. For example, some people choose to eat in burger bars and other fast-food outlets while others will enjoy dining in

restaurants. Although 'lifestyle' covers a wide range of choices which customers can make and activities they enjoy, a simple classification is as follows:

- 'Adrenaline junkies' are people who enjoy outdoor activities such as winter sports and water sports. They are likely to take part in adventure holidays and travel to more remote destinations as well as enjoying theme parks and similar attractions.
- 'Beach bums' like to relax on holiday, enjoy having time to sunbathe and perhaps sample the nightlife of the destination they are visiting.
- 'Culture vultures' want to spend their time visiting cultural sites, such as art galleries, castles and museums. They are more interested in the culture and heritage of the destination they are visiting. They enjoy eating local foods and visiting cultural attractions.

Did you know?

People taking part in adventure activities ('adrenaline junkies') are most likely to book travel and activities at the last minute using their smartphones.

Market research findings can be used to help an organisation to meet the needs of its customers according to their lifestyle. However, most organisations, in particular tour operators, cannot meet the needs of every lifestyle and so provide products and services for their main customer types.



Winter sports are an important segment of the travel and tourism market.

Geographical location

Knowing in which areas customers live can be very important for many travel and tourism organisations. For example, if a small theme park in Brighton found out through market research that 90% of its customers came from the south-east of England and London, it would focus its marketing on those areas. Money spent trying to attract customers from Scotland or Wales would be wasted.

UK-based travel and tourism organisations often segment their market according to recognised regions such as south-west England or north-east England. Many organisations identify a local market, a national market and an international market. For example, a National Trust property, such as an historic house, may attract visitors from the local area on a day out. There might also be domestic tourists visiting from other regions of the UK as well as international inbound tourists visiting the UK from other countries. Market research can help managers of the attraction to discover which of the three groups makes up the largest proportion of its visitors.

Income

Not everybody has the same amount of money to spend on holidays and travel. Some people can afford to fly first class on a regular basis whereas others cannot even afford a short break. Some people choose to stay in luxury hotels, while others can only afford budget accommodation. By no means everybody can afford to travel abroad for a holiday.

Did you know?

The average cost of a family holiday taken by UK residents is calculated to be £4,792.

Knowing the income range of its customers can be very important to a travel and tourism organisation in terms of pricing its products and services. Market research can be used to find out how 'price sensitive' the customers of an organisation are. Generally, travellers who buy more expensive travel products, such as business-class seats on aircraft or luxury hotels, are less price sensitive, because they have a

higher disposable income. Accommodation providers and attractions which cater for people with lower incomes will need to ensure that the prices are affordable for their main customer groups. This can be achieved through market research.



Attractions such as zoos need to have a pricing policy which allows people from all income groups to visit.

Product development

Holidays in most Western societies have developed beyond all recognition over the last 50+ years. Trips abroad have changed from being available only to the privileged few to within the grasp of most people in the UK today. Over time customers' needs, expectations and preferences change. For example, more people today choose to follow a vegetarian or vegan diet and expect these options to be available when they travel away from home. Market research can be used to find out which new activities or services a particular target market for a travel and tourism organisation might find interesting or enjoyable.

Travel and tourism organisations must respond to changes in customer needs and preferences by adapting existing facilities to meet these changes or developing new products and services – this process is known as 'product development'.



Activity 11

Working with a partner, produce a presentation on how the range and quality of UK tourist accommodation has changed since the opening of the first holiday camps to the present day.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A2

Adapting products and services

Theme parks are a good example of product development in travel and tourism. They have to adapt their rides and experiences on a regular basis in order to give customers a reason to visit again. A theme park which doesn't invest in product development is unlikely to survive for long. The development of a new multi-million pound ride will only take place after extensive market research using focus groups and customer surveys.

Cruise ships are continually improving the facilities they offer their customers. It is now common for cruise ships to have climbing walls, gyms and themed restaurants. The New P&O Cruises ship *Arvia* has an escape room, wellness suites and even a rum distillery!



The P&O Cruises ship Arvia has a number of innovative facilities for guests (courtesy of P&O Cruises).

Restaurants use market research to identify new trends in food and drink. They adapt their menus accordingly based on feedback from customers.

Developing new products and services

Changes in customer needs and preferences drive the development of new products and services. Paddle boarding, for example, has grown in popularity in recent years in the UK and abroad – many water sports companies now include paddle boarding as one of the options available to customers. A zip line has been built across an old quarry in North Wales to meet the needs of adventure tourists. Many hotels have added spas and wellness centres in recent years to meet customer demand. New tourist destinations across the world are created on the back of new flight routes, for example Nashville in the USA.

Travel and tourism organisations use market research findings to develop new products and services to satisfy existing and new customers. The rise of the ‘grey market’ has provided travel companies with an opportunity to introduce new products, such as self-guided walking holidays, cycling breaks and motorhome touring. ‘Glamping’ has become very popular in recent years, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic when any outdoor holiday was seen as a safer option. The market for cruising has changed markedly, from being the preserve of the elderly, rich and famous to cruises aimed at a variety of different customers, including young couples, families and multi-generational groups.

There have also been many recent developments in how holidays and other travel products are purchased. The development of booking apps and websites, such as Airbnb and booking.com, have made it much easier for customers to search and book hotels, short breaks, activities, etc.

Measuring customer satisfaction

All travel and tourism organisations, whether operating in the private, public or voluntary sector, aim to have satisfied customers. Measuring customer satisfaction is one of the most common uses of market research. For example, primary research can be undertaken when customers leave an attraction and comment cards are often left in hotel rooms asking for customers’ thoughts about the room and other facilities provided. Travel and tourism organisations can also send out online questionnaires to customers following a holiday or visit to an attraction.

Some of this information is very easy to collect and increasingly organisations are using star ratings and similar systems to measure the level of satisfaction. Feedback information can be collected electronically with customers being asked to rate their experience by using a device showing a happy/sad face, ticks or similar symbols.

Encouraging customer loyalty

It makes good business sense for travel and tourism organisations to develop customer loyalty, i.e. trying to keep as many of their existing customers as possible. This is because it is estimated to cost five times more to attract new customers with marketing initiatives than to retain existing ones, according to the UK Institute of Customer Service (ICS). Also, organisations with higher-than-average customer service ratings earn 114% more revenue per employee (ICS data).

Travel and tourism organisations use a variety of techniques to encourage customer loyalty – from discounted rates in hotels and free ‘extras’ like airport lounge access to airline frequent flyer programmes and car hire upgrades.



Activity 12

Carry out some research into the *Avios* rewards programme operated by International Airlines Group (IAG), the parent company of British Airways. Use your findings to create a short presentation on the aims of the programme, how it works, partner companies, etc.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A2

Responding to customer feedback

It is important for travel and tourism organisations to respond to the feedback they receive from customers. If, for example, customer feedback at a visitor attraction consistently mentions the poor quality of the toilets, managers should respond by improving the toilet facilities. Also, if customer feedback is consistently positive and reviews mention, for example, the quality of the service they have received, this can be used in the marketing of the organisation. It is good practice for organisations to respond to the comments made by their customers. People are more likely to stay loyal to an organisation if they feel that their views and comments are listened to and acted upon.

Review websites, such as Tripadvisor and Trustpilot, have been revolutionary in increasing the quality of holidays and other travel products. Reading reviews has become an essential part of most people's buying experiences, whether they are purchasing a TV, car or holiday. Review sites offer users the opportunity of finding out about a holiday area or property before they make a booking. Many review sites also now allow customers to book accommodation direct from their site, thereby generating extra revenue for the reviews company in the form of commission. Although most reviews are genuine, users of review sites should be aware that some feedback may not be a true reflection of a place or property.



Activity 13

Visit the Trustpilot website and list six companies that have earned a 5-star rating in the UK travel agent category.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A2



The use of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, has become widespread in recent years. People use the apps to carry out research when choosing which tourist destinations to visit or travel companies to use by reading about the personal experiences and reviews posted by other travellers.

Social media apps are also used by travel and tourism organisations. They create accounts to showcase their products and services to existing and potential customers. They give users a quick

way to contact a company, rather than emailing or phoning. Customers often use social media to complain about a product or service, such as a late train or delayed flight, so companies must monitor their accounts carefully in order to limit the amount of bad publicity they receive. People also post reviews of products and services on social media, which can influence other people's buying habits. Travel and tourism organisations have far less control over the content of social media sites, and the views expressed by individual users, than they do over information on their own websites and apps, over which they have total control.

A2 summary

How travel and tourism organisations may use market research to identify customer needs and preferences

1. There is no point in organisations undertaking market research if they do not make use of the results.
2. Finding out about customers' needs, expectations and preferences is vital for the success of many travel and tourism organisations.
3. Market research can help to identify the main market segments and target markets for a travel and tourism organisation.
4. The results of market research should be used to modify existing products and services, as well as introducing new concepts.
5. Organisations should have systems in place to collect feedback from customers and should always respond to comments, particularly negative feedback.

A3

How travel and tourism organisations may use market research to identify travel and tourism trends

Having investigated changing customer needs and preferences in the previous section we can now turn our attention to how organisations research and respond to travel and tourism trends. Organisations use market research to identify changing trends and use the information to adapt their products and services.

A trend can be simply defined as a recognisable change over a period of time. Trends can be identified by collecting research data and identifying what changes have occurred over the period in question.

Researching trends

Travel and tourism organisations can use a variety of research sources to monitor and evaluate trends, including:

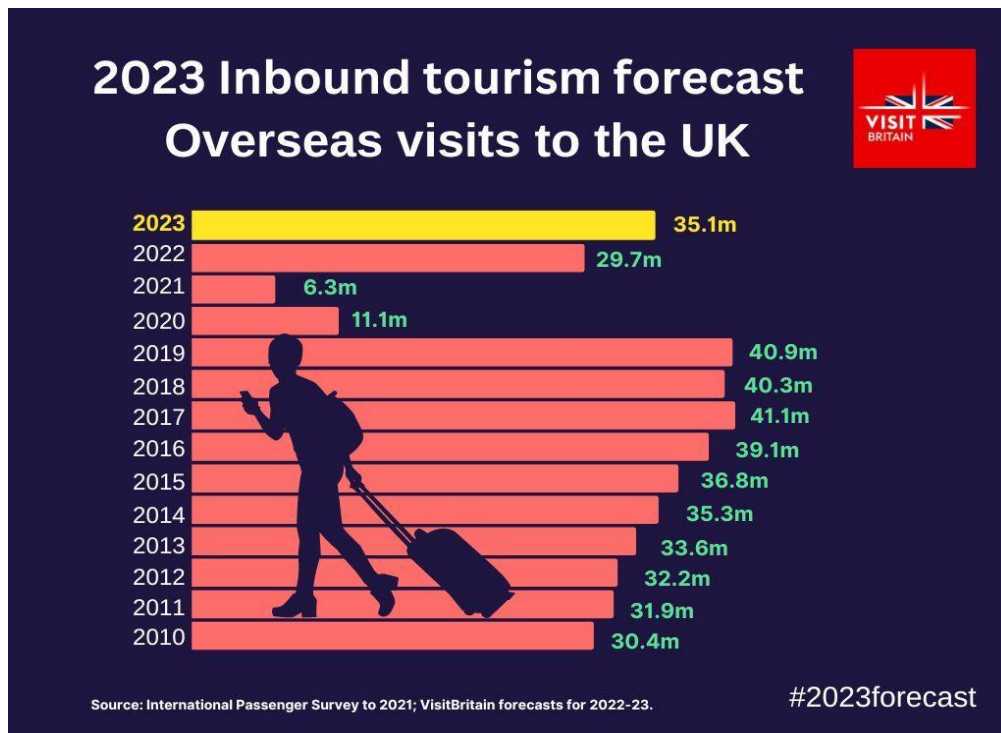
1. **Internal company data** – the organisations own information on sales, visitor numbers, destinations visited, etc. is useful for analysing trends.
2. **Primary research** – analysis of data from any surveys or focus groups carried out by the organisation can highlight trends.
3. **Competitor information** – major travel and tourism organisations publish annual reports with information on new developments, financial performance, future plans, etc.
4. **Reports and statistics** – the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and national tourist boards gather data on travel and tourism which can be useful for highlighting trends.
5. **Trade data** – trade bodies such as ABTA, UKInbound and IATA (the International Air Transport Association) publish statistics on trends in travel and tourism.

Studying the trends in travel and tourism statistics over a period of time can highlight:

- **Growth areas of origin and destination** – this could be important for governments which may want to invest more in tourism in growth areas.
- **Changing purpose of visit** – market research may reveal a decrease in, say, the number of business tourists from a country or an increase in VFR tourism.
- **Transport type used** – analysis may highlight the growth in popularity of a particular type of transport that people use while holidaying in the UK, for example taking more train trips rather than flights or choosing electric vehicles when hiring a car.
- **Length of stay** – if statistics show that visitors from a particular country are staying longer in the UK, and therefore spending more, finance and marketing resources can be diverted into encouraging more visitors from that country to visit.
- **Increase and decline in popularity of destinations** – data analysis may reveal a rise or fall in, for example, visits to city destinations in favour of the countryside. This was the case in the UK during the Covid-19 pandemic when people were looking to explore the great outdoors and enjoy open spaces after having been told to stay indoors for long periods of time under government regulations.

The table on page 35 from VisitBritain shows the number of overseas visits to the UK between 2010 and 2023. You can see that the trend was positive between 2010 and 2019, but took a

severe drop in 2020 and 2021 due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on international travel. The situation improved in 2022 to 29.7 million visits, with a forecast growth to 35.1 million for 2023.



This data can be used by travel and tourism companies which provide tours and other travel products for incoming tourists to the UK. For example, hotels, tour operators, airlines, travel guides, event organisers and car hire companies, can see a general upward trend in tourist numbers and use this information to invest in new products and services.

Secondary market research is used a great deal by travel and tourism organisations to discover changes in patterns of customer behaviour and general trends relating to many aspects of tourism, such as the types of destinations visited, changes to methods of travel, how much money is spent by tourists and the number of people travelling between different countries. This data can only be used to establish what has happened in the recent past – it is not possible to identify with any certainty what trends will continue into the future.

Did you know?

In 2020, as a result of the decreased demand for cruise holidays brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, nearly 30 cruise ships were scrapped across the world.

It is important to remember that secondary data is often published some time after the information was collected, so can only be used as a 'snapshot' of the past. It should also be understood that the travel and tourism industry, at both the national and international levels, can be affected by global events which may have impacts on patterns of travel and customer behaviour, for example the dramatic reduction in domestic and international travel during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Using a variety of data sources, including the VisitBritain and Office for National Statistics (ONS) websites, travel and tourism organisations are able to identify a variety of trends and to make decisions about the range of products and services they provide to customers.

VisitBritain.org

All major countries collect a wide range of data related to travel and tourism. In the UK this data is published on the websites of the national tourist boards such as VisitBritain and VisitEngland or through the government websites for Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland. One of the key roles of all national tourism bodies is to encourage and support inbound and domestic tourism, which in turn helps the economy. Most countries do not want their residents to travel overseas to spend their holiday money!

It is very important to understand the difference between VisitBritain.com, which is a consumer site promoting the UK to international tourists, and VisitBritain.org which supports UK tourism businesses. There are three areas of the VisitBritain.org website which are of particular importance for market research data, namely:

- *England research and highlights* – which provides data about domestic tourism
- *Inbound research and highlights* – which relates to inbound tourism
- *Inbound markets and segments* – which provides detailed information about the characteristics of visitors from specific countries



Activity 14

Use the *Inbound Markets and Segments* section of the VisitBritain.org website and make notes on the main characteristics of visitors to the UK from the following countries – Canada, Italy and Sweden.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A3

Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Data relating to UK residents travelling abroad and overseas tourists visiting the UK is collected through the International Passenger Survey and published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). It publishes an annual overview of UK travel and tourism data known as *Travel Trends*.



Activity 15

Carry out some research using the latest *Travel Trends* section of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) website. Make notes on the most recent data on the number of UK residents travelling abroad and number of overseas visitors to the UK.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A3

Visitor numbers by type

It is important for travel and tourism organisations to monitor the trends in different types of visitors in order to modify their products and services. Increasing numbers of visitors from a particular country, for example, may mean that the company provides information for visitors in their own

language. If a holiday company finds that fewer people are visiting from a particular country the organisation can either decide to increase its marketing spend in that country or remove the destination from its programme.

Over time, there could be a trend for increased or decreased visitor numbers to a particular region of the UK. In recent years, for example, Cornwall has become a very popular destination for domestic tourists.



The Isle of Wight has become a less popular destination over recent years, partly due to the rising cost of ferry crossings.

Patterns of tourism between different regions of the UK are very complex, but it may be possible to identify trends which might be important. Examples could include a trend for more domestic tourists taking city breaks or fewer taking a holiday at all due to difficult economic conditions.

Did you know?

In 2019 British holidaymakers took 123 million domestic trips and 93 million trips abroad.

Domestic, inbound and outbound visitors

There are three main types of visitor who can be researched to highlight changing trends:

Domestic visitors: these are people taking holidays and day trips in their own country of residence, e.g. a family from Croydon enjoying a holiday in a cottage in Yorkshire.

Inbound visitors: are people from overseas visiting this country, e.g. Monsieur and Madame du Pont from Limoges sampling the delights of Windermere as part of a driving tour of the Lake District.

Outbound visitors: this refers to tourists leaving their own country of residence to travel to another country, e.g. a couple from Bristol visiting an all-inclusive resort in the Dominican Republic.

Local and national governments track the trends in these types of visitors in order to invest their money in areas that will benefit most.

The following chart from the ONS shows the trend in UK residents travelling abroad and overseas visitors to the UK over a 20-year period. As you can see, the trends in visitor numbers was generally increasing up to 2019 when the Covid-19 pandemic devastated the travel and tourism industry. The chart shows the beginnings of a recovery in visitor numbers from 2020.

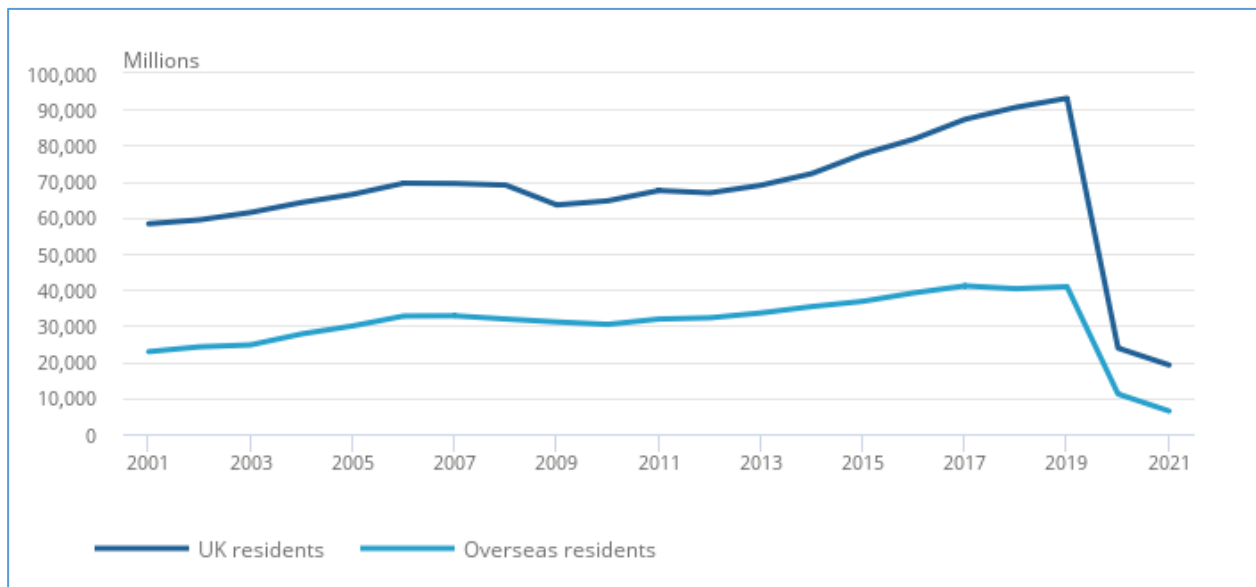


Figure 1.3 Visits to and from the UK from 2001 to 2021 (ONS data)

Reasons for travel

People travel in the UK and abroad for a whole variety of reasons, which can be simplified into three main categories:

1. Business travel
2. Leisure travel
3. Visiting friends and relatives (VFR)

Some travel and tourism organisations, such as city centre hotels, rely heavily on business travel and provide facilities for meetings and conferences. Others, including visitor attractions, rely almost entirely on leisure travel. Attraction managers could investigate the data on the research and insights section of the VisitBritain.org website to identify trends in the numbers of domestic tourists, where they travel from and the composition of groups, such as families or couples.

Business travel

Business tourism involves travelling away from home in connection with a person's employment, which may or may not require an overnight stay. Business travel activities include attending meetings, conferences, exhibitions and events. Business tourism also includes travelling for training or taking part in team-building events. Not all business travel is related to professional and management-level occupations. For example, coach drivers travel with the parties they are driving for and construction workers may stay in accommodation close to where they are working during the week and return home at weekends.

Also, business tourists do not necessarily travel business class or stay in high-quality hotels. Many are restricted to a budget or may be self-employed people who cannot justify spending money on more expensive travel or accommodation.

Did you know?

In 2019 business tourism accounted for 21% of all inbound tourism to the UK, with 8.7 million visits for business purposes.

During the Covid-19 pandemic the number of business tourists dropped dramatically as travel was restricted under government regulations. Many people were forced to work from home using video conferencing. Business travel began to increase after the pandemic, but is unlikely to return to pre-pandemic levels for some time.

Leisure travel

Every person has a certain amount of leisure time when they can choose to do what they want. Every day, an individual can choose to spend this time watching TV and playing video games, or they can take part in active leisure and sports activities close to where they live. Generally, people have more leisure time at weekends and less during weekdays. Most people who have jobs are entitled to paid holiday which enables them to have an extended period of leisure time, whether it be a few days, a few weeks or even longer. It is within these extended periods of leisure time that most tourism takes place. The majority of leisure tourists take part in travel and tourism activities for pleasure, enjoyment and relaxation, for example taking a holiday or a short break.

A number of different types of leisure travel have been identified, including special interests, cultural tourism, dark tourism, religious tourism, ecotourism and sports tourism.

Visiting friends and relatives (VFR)

Lots of people like to stay with friends and relatives, perhaps catching up with people they've not seen for a while. Visiting friends and relatives (known as VFR):

- May be domestic, inbound or outbound, e.g. it might involve you visiting a friend in the UK (domestic tourism) or one who lives overseas (outbound tourism); or some of your relatives from the USA visiting you in the UK (inbound tourism).
- Involves an overnight stay, usually in the home of a friend or relative.
- Will involve travelling away from your home area or region.
- May involve travelling to another country.
- Could be for a leisure or business purpose, e.g. you may be visiting a friend for a birthday party (leisure) or may stay with a relative while attending a conference for work (business).

Visiting friends and relatives (VFR) makes an important contribution to the income that tourism businesses receive. Visitors, although enjoying free accommodation, are likely to spend money on other goods and services in the locality, such as food, entertainment and transport, so helping the local economy. Indeed, the very fact that they are not paying for their accommodation may well be an incentive to spend *more* on such things as eating out and entertainment.

The *Great British Tourist Report 2019* includes data on domestic VFR (visiting friends and relatives) tourism. The figures for 2019 show that 43.9 million overnight trips to visit friends and relatives were made by British people in the UK, out of a total of 122.8 million trips.

VFR tourism is an important reason for UK residents travelling overseas, with 23.5 million trips to visit friends and relatives recorded in 2019.

VFR tourism is also an important part of inbound tourism to the UK, with 12.4 million overseas visitors coming to the UK for this reason in 2019 out of a total of 40.9 million visits.

Figure 1.4 shows the trend in overseas visitors to the UK based on their reason for travel. As you can see, holidays are the most popular reason for travel followed by visiting friends and relatives, business and miscellaneous trips. All trips fell sharply from 2019 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. VFR tourism picked up the fastest of the reasons for travel in 2020 and 2021 as people were eager to visit loved ones after the Covid-19 travel lockdown.

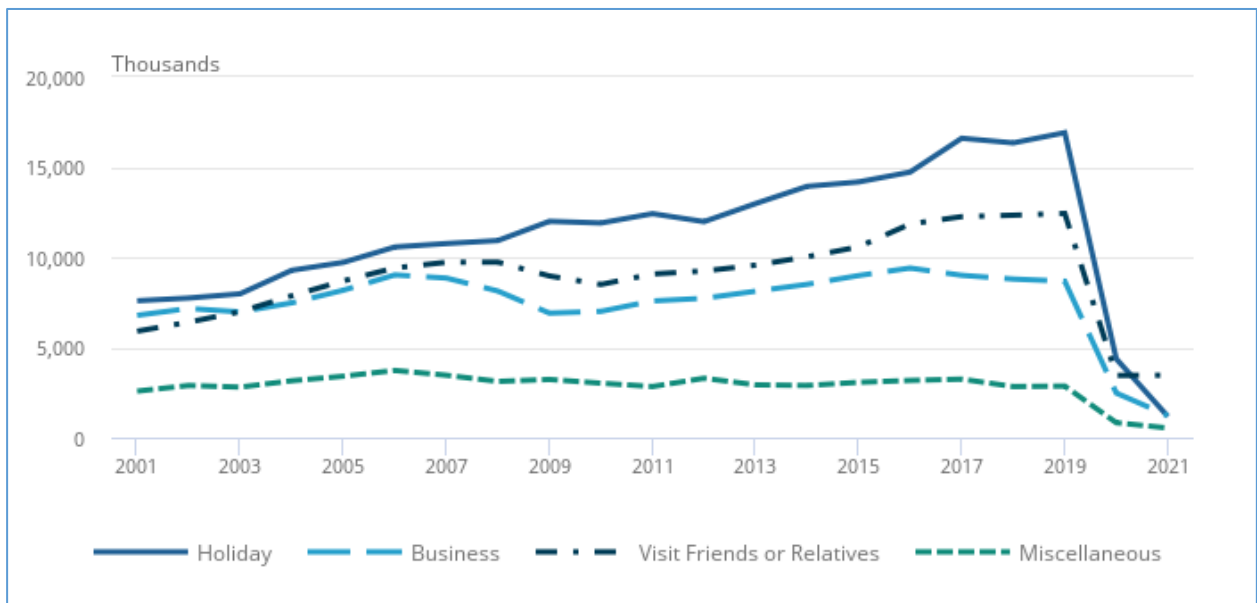


Figure 1.4 Overseas visitors to the UK by reason for travel from 2001 to 2021 (ONS data)

New and emerging destinations

The popularity of tourist destinations changes over time in response to a number of factors, such as exchange rate fluctuations, media attention, natural disasters, political upheaval, investment in tourism infrastructure, new flight routes, etc. Emerging destinations are ones that are being visited by increasing numbers of tourists.

Local and national governments are often keen to encourage more visitors to destinations since it brings extra money into the economy which can be used for other purposes, for example education, housing development and health care.

Travel and tourism organisations use market research to monitor the trends in visitor numbers to destinations. They will invest time and money into new travel products and services in destinations that are growing. For example, if data showed that fewer UK tourists were travelling to Italy and more to Greece, then UK tour operators might provide more package holidays to Greece and fewer to Italy.

Did you know?

The Azores have grown in popularity with European travellers in recent years as a winter sun tourist destination. 1.8 million visitors arrived in 2020, up from 1.7 million in 2019.

Until the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, India and China had been identified as major emerging markets for travel to the UK. In 2010, approximately 186,000 Chinese tourists visited the UK – by 2019 this number had increased to 883,000. This trend encouraged UK travel and tourism organisations to provide products and services which would appeal to Chinese visitors, such as, visits to locations used in the making of the Harry Potter films.



Activity 16

Use the VisitBritain.org and Office for National Statistics' websites to find out the latest data on the number of overseas visitors to Britain from China and India.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A3

Changing popularity of different holiday types and destinations

Trends in different holiday types

When the travel and tourism industry began to expand 50+ years ago, the early package holiday companies did not offer a great deal of choice to their customers. Holidays from the UK were to a small number of Mediterranean destinations for a fixed period of time from a small number of UK airports. Today, the situation is very different. When buying package holidays, customers can choose from a wealth of short-haul and long-haul destinations, more departure airports, different hotel facilities and meal arrangements, more activities to do while on holiday, etc.



'Glamping' (glamorous camping) has grown in popularity (courtesy of Saga).

Self-catering accommodation, when guests look after themselves and make their own meals, has grown in popularity in recent years. It includes all rented premises used for holiday purposes, self-catering holiday centres and villages, all types of caravan accommodation, camping, self-catering youth hostels and chalets, motels (roadside accommodation geared to motorists), second homes, aparthotels (a cross between an apartment and a hotel), Airbnb accommodation and boats

(excluding cruises). Holidaymakers like the freedom and value-for-money that self-catering accommodation offers – families with young children and/or older relatives find it particularly convenient and flexible.

All-inclusive holidays, when holidaymakers pay a single price for all accommodation, flights, food, drinks, transfers, entertainment and activities, are offered by all the major UK tour operators. They have grown in popularity recently and are particularly attractive to families travelling on a budget.



All-inclusive holidays are popular with families (courtesy of TUI Group).

One type of holiday which has seen a steady increase in popularity is cruising. There has been a steady upward trend in the number of tourists taking cruises. Companies operating cruise lines have identified these trends and are providing an ever-growing range of destinations to visit. Ex-UK cruises are particularly popular with British cruise customers. Companies such as Marella Cruises and Disney Cruises offer holidays which appeal to families. The market for cruises has changed in recent years – the traditional, older cruise passengers have been joined by families, groups and younger customers.

Adventure travel is a growth area of travel and tourism as people look for ever more adventurous and stimulating experiences in their leisure time. The term 'adventure travel' can cover anything from a cruise along the Nile or a trek in the foothills of the Himalayas to scuba diving in Madagascar or bungee jumping in South Africa. New Zealand is a country that markets itself as an adventure tourism destination, offering a wide variety of activities such as canyoning, hot air ballooning, sea canoeing, paragliding and snowboarding. In the UK, an increasing number of zip wire rides are now available at visitor attractions and as part of adventure holidays.



Activity 17

Find out the names of three visitor attractions featuring a zip wire ride in the UK.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A3

Tourists are also looking beyond 'sun, sand and sea' holidays for new experiences as part of their travel plans. There is a growing trend in health and wellness tourism – taking part in activities such as yoga are becoming popular while on holiday as a way of escaping from the pressures of modern life.



The Velocity 2 zip wire in North Wales (courtesy of Zip World).

Changing popularity of different destinations

Until about 50 years ago, most UK tourists had little choice but to visit one of the major British coastal resorts such as Bournemouth, Southend or Blackpool for their holidays. The growth in package holidays to Europe, followed by the opportunity to visit long-haul destinations throughout the world, has resulted in changing trends in the popularity and growth of tourist destinations.



Cornwall is a popular UK holiday destination (courtesy of VisitCornwall).

British seaside resorts remain popular for a range of tourist activities, not just the main summer holiday. However, in recent years the trend has been for many countryside areas in the UK to increase in popularity with visitors.

Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that the majority of UK residents visit the countries bordering the Mediterranean, as well as Portugal, for holidays abroad in the summer and at other times of the year. Favourable exchange rates have meant that Turkey has become more popular as a tourist destination, receiving inbound tourists from many countries. For example, in 2015 approximately 25 million people visited Turkey, but by 2019 this figure had increased to 42 million visitors.



Activity 18

Carry out some research to find out how many UK tourists visited Spain in 2010 and 2019.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A3

In the early years of the twenty-first century, long-haul destinations such as the USA, Canada and Australia increased in popularity. In 2018, over 1 million UK tourists visited Orlando in Florida and more than 1.25 million visited New York City. Travel and tourism organisations conducting market research into trends in tourist visits to popular US destinations would have expected these figures to increase and for the trend to continue. However, the Covid-19 pandemic meant that inbound tourism to the USA virtually stopped for two years.

The travel trade body ABTA publishes a report every year on trends in travel and tourist destinations. It highlights the types of holidays and destinations likely to be popular in the coming 12 months.



Activity 19

Investigate the latest version of the *ABTA Travel Trends Report* and create a presentation of its main findings.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A3

Changes to booking methods and communications

There is no doubt that one of the most important recent trends in travel and tourism is the development of online/mobile bookings and payments brought about by developments in technology. It has been estimated that, throughout the world, 82% of all travel bookings are now made through apps or websites without any human interaction.

In recent years, we have seen a revolution in the way we book holidays, flights and other travel products and services. Developments in technology have opened up completely new methods for companies to promote and distribute their travel and tourism products, and to communicate with their customers.

Historically, using a travel agency was the only way that somebody could book their holiday abroad. Today, travel agencies are going through a period of significant change. Developments in new technology, particularly the internet and mobile apps, are giving customers a host of new ways to buy their holidays and travel products themselves, rather than using an agent. Travel agencies are responding by reducing the number of high street premises and developing their own online operations, giving customers the opportunity to book online rather than visiting a travel agency. All the major travel agency chains, including TUI Travel and Hays Travel, now operate as online travel agents alongside their more traditional high-street branches.



Jet2 Holidays is a very popular holiday website (courtesy of Jet2 Holidays).

Websites are commonplace in all areas of the travel and tourism industry, including travel agents, tour operators, accommodation providers, visitor attractions, transport companies, tourist destinations, etc. Along with mobile apps, websites are normally the first port of call for anybody wanting to research their holiday and travel plans. Websites provide information and prices on a company's products and services, plus the option to make a booking online and perhaps even read reviews.

Apps (standing for applications) are essentially scaled-down versions of websites that are designed to be used on mobile devices such as smartphones. Many travel and tourism companies have developed apps that allow customers to use their mobile phones to create accounts, check the status of their holiday or journey, make bookings and contact the company. Examples include airlines, e.g. British Airways and Virgin Atlantic, train companies such as Great Western and ScotRail, accommodation suppliers, including booking.com and Premier Inn, and visitor attractions, for example Alton Towers and Legoland. Apps allow people to research their travel arrangements and make bookings while on the move.

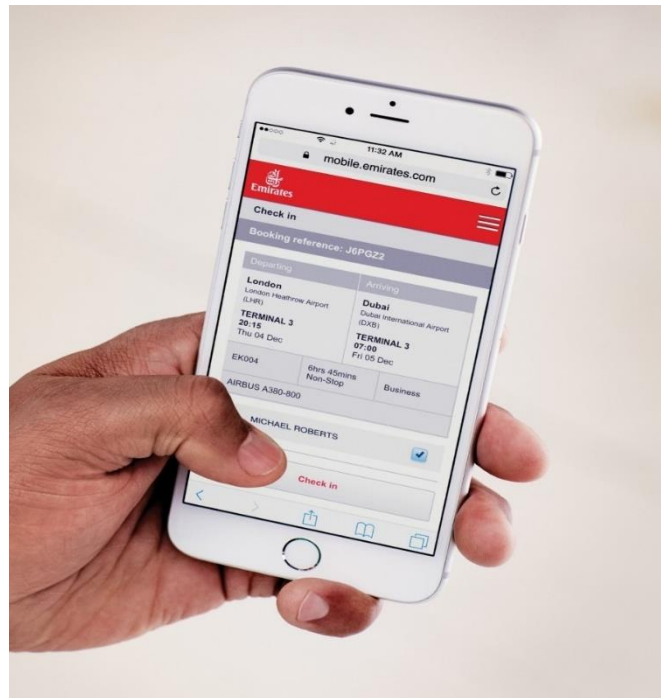
Did you know?

Airbnb was launched in 2009 and today the company has half a billion users.

Social media apps, including Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, are also used by travel and tourism organisations. They create accounts to showcase their products and services to existing and potential customers. They give users a quick way to contact a company, rather than emailing or phoning. Customers often use social media to complain about a product or service, such as a late train or delayed flight, so companies must monitor their accounts carefully in order to limit the amount of bad publicity they receive.

Changing transport trends

In recent years there has been demand from customers for faster modes of transport to enable them to reach their destinations more quickly. This has made long-haul destinations more accessible to tourists, thereby allowing tourism to add to the economic growth of countries worldwide. Aircraft can travel faster and further, while high-speed train networks have been developed to open up new growth opportunities for tourism. Transport companies have also increased passenger capacities by making larger aircraft and bigger cruise ships, thereby reducing their operating costs per customer. The world's biggest cruise ship, Royal Caribbean's *Symphony of the Seas*, was launched in 2018 with a capacity of nearly 9,000 passengers and crew.



Mobile apps are commonly used when checking in at airports (courtesy of Emirates Airline).

There are many reasons why different travel and tourism organisations might be interested in researching changes in transport trends, for example:

- A hotel chain might consider building a hotel close to an airport where passenger numbers have increased
- A ferry company might be interested in operating a larger vessel if passenger numbers rise over time
- A coach tour operator might not offer certain tours if there has been a trend of fewer people booking particular itineraries or destinations

There are some well-established trends when we look at the use of different types of transport used by tourists. In most countries, including the UK, there has been an ever-increasing use of private cars which has enabled most people to travel wherever and whenever they want. At the same time, there has only been a minor increase in the number of coach tours being taken.

Rail travel is an altogether more environmentally-friendly mode of transport than travelling by road and one that is growing in popularity with tourists. Particular growth areas in tourist travel by rail include short breaks to cities and the popularity of heritage steam railways. Some operators have successfully exploited the market for 'nostalgia' travel by introducing rail holidays, e.g. the Venice-Simplon Orient Express, which is sometimes chartered for special excursions in the UK. Eurostar services from London to Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam and other European destinations have fuelled the growth in demand for short breaks to and from the continent.

The UK currently has only one high-speed rail line – HS1 – which links London with the Channel Tunnel. HS2 is under development and, when completed, will offer fast travel from London to Birmingham and beyond.



Eurostar services link the UK to a number of European destinations (courtesy of Siemens)



Activity 20

Carry out some research into the current position with the HS2 rail project and create a presentation of your findings.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A3

The rapid growth in international tourism over the last 50+ years has been closely linked to the growth in air travel. Advances in aircraft technology have meant that planes can now carry more passengers and fly greater distances using less fuel. Deregulation of air travel has increased competition between airlines and helped to keep fares low on an expanding network of routes.

Generally, air travel has become more affordable and booking flights online is now commonplace. Full-service airlines, such as British Airways, have become very successful, carrying millions of passengers on short-haul and long-haul flights each year.

Low-cost airlines (sometimes called no-frills or budget airlines) have grown rapidly on the back of low fares. They have a business model which aims to keep their costs as low as possible. They charge passengers for 'extras', such as food on the flights, seat selection and carrying baggage, thereby enabling them to offer low fares. Ryanair and easyJet are the market leaders in low-cost airlines used by UK passengers, offering scheduled services to many UK and European destinations. The competition from low-cost airlines has forced traditional full-service carriers to lower their prices and introduce extra charges on some flights for services which used to be free.



Activity 21

Carry out some research into the trend in the number of passengers carried by either Ryanair or easyJet in the last 10 years.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A3

Cruising is an area of travel and tourism that is growing steadily and attracting different types of customers. Whereas in the past cruising was seen as the preserve of the elderly, rich and famous, today it appeals to a far wider cross-section of customers, including families, young people and groups. The cruise 'product' varies enormously depending on customer demands. At one end of the spectrum are all-inclusive cruise holidays on mega-ships catering for thousands of passengers at a time. At the other end are small, intimate ships meeting the needs of customers looking for luxury, exploration and cultural experiences.

Customer spending behaviour on holiday

The amount spent by people on holiday varies a great deal depending on the type of customer and the holiday they choose. A family with young children staying in a self-catering apartment might only spend money on food which they cook themselves. A 'stag or hen' party of young adults might spend far more on food, drinks and entertainment.

Some tourists are very much aware of the amount of money they can afford to spend when they are away from home whereas others are happy to use a credit card to pay for items and worry about the cost later. All-inclusive holidays have grown in popularity since tourists know before they travel the total cost of their holiday.

Many businesses rely on the spending by tourists while on holiday and are interested in the trends in spending patterns. For example:

- A small company offering boat and jet-ski hire may rely on tourists using its facilities
- A coach company might rely on package holidaymakers taking excursions
- An attraction might be interested in the amount spent by visitors on merchandise, food, drinks and other types of 'secondary spend'



Activity 22

Find out the cost of a day's cycle hire for one person from a company operating in a UK national park.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome A3

Increasing environmental and cultural awareness

As more areas of the world experience the negative impacts of travel and tourism, organisations need to be aware of the concerns of their customers and show that they are taking steps to reduce

their environmental and cultural impacts. Market research can provide information on the views of customers and tourism organisations can then adapt their products and services to take account of these views. For example, most customers would expect accommodation providers to use more locally-produced foods and to take all reasonable steps to reduce the company's carbon footprint.

Increasing environmental awareness

Issues concerning the environment are high on the agenda of the travel and tourism industry. Governments and the public are concerned about issues such as climate change, global warming, the conservation of rain forests, pollution by plastics and the use of fossil fuels. Today's tourists are more aware of the impact they can have on destinations and are anxious to reduce their carbon footprint as much as possible. Carbon offsetting is a way of transferring emissions by, for example, making a contribution to a development project in a third world country or pledging money to a conservation charity.

The growth in environmental and cultural awareness amongst tourists has led the travel and tourism industry to invest further in projects that promote sustainable tourism, such as building eco-lodges that blend in with the environment, championing indigenous cultures, the employment of more local people in tourist destinations and the use of local produce whenever possible.

Climate change is beginning to influence some people's behaviour in respect of their holidays and travel plans. To reduce their carbon footprint, some travellers are opting to fly less or choose more environmentally-friendly modes of travel, such as travelling by train or ship and riding bicycles. When in destinations, many tourists are more conscious of their impact on the environment and are choosing to buy locally-made goods and stay in eco-friendly accommodation.

All sectors of the travel and tourism industry are recognising the importance of adopting policies and practices that lessen their impact on the environment and reduce their carbon footprint. Airlines are investing in new technology to develop 'greener' aircraft using bio-fuels. Newer generation aircraft are built with much lighter materials, thereby reducing the amount of fuel they use on a given flight. There is also a trend for customers to choose more sustainable tourism experiences and market research can help to determine what types of environmentally-friendly tourism experiences customers might enjoy.



Cycling is an environmentally-friendly way to travel.

Increasing cultural awareness

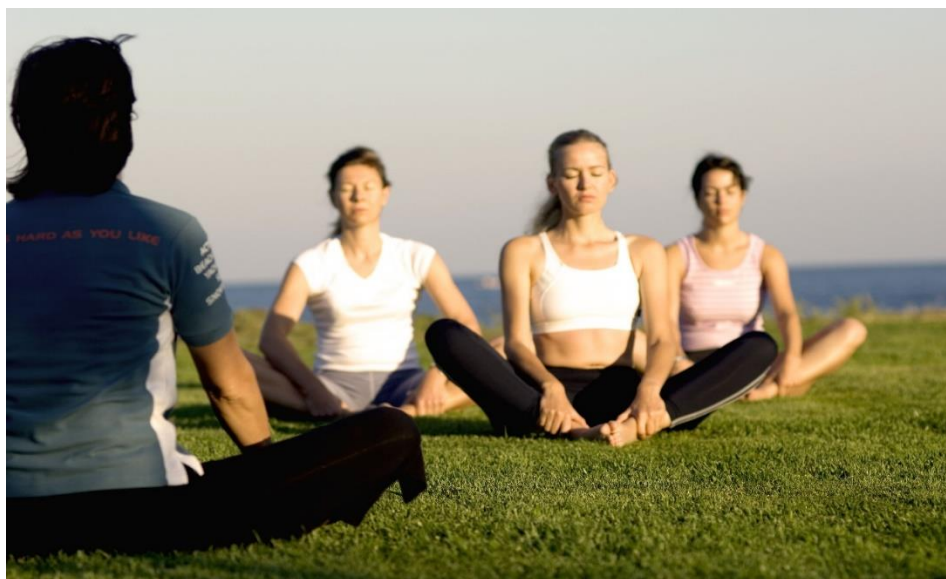
In the past, some sections of the travel and tourism industry have been guilty of ignoring the customs and cultures of local people in tourism destinations and in some cases this culture has been belittled and exploited. There is a growing trend for tourists to respect the local culture of people living in the area they are visiting. Travel and tourism organisations have had to respond to these trends and ensure that the culture of the local population is respected.



Tourists should learn about and respect local cultures.

Changing trends in leisure, health and sport

In recent years there has been a greater awareness of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle through taking part in leisure activities and sport.



There is a growing trend for holidaymakers to take part in health-related activities.

Travel and tourism organisations have become aware of these trends, leading to companies offering more products and services, for example:

- The development of wellness retreats
- Hotels providing gyms, swimming pools and spas
- The growth in sports tourism
- Cruise ships offering a variety of sports, leisure and health-related facilities
- Tour operators promoting the sports and leisure facilities available to their customers
- Food and drink providers offer healthier options and vegetarian/vegan menus

Market research data can be used to monitor trends in leisure, health and sport thereby allowing travel and tourism organisations to provide appropriate products and services.

A3 summary

How travel and tourism organisations may use market research to identify travel and tourism trends

1. There are many ways in which travel and tourism organisations can use primary and secondary market research to identify trends in customer behaviour.
2. Analysing trends can help travel and tourism organisations provide the products and services which will meet the needs and preferences of their customers.
3. Market research can highlight emerging tourism destinations.
4. Past trends cannot predict the future; travel and tourism organisations may be affected by national and global events over which they have no control.

Learning outcome B

Recognise how the needs and preferences of travel and tourism customers are met



Icebreaker

Learning outcome B is all about how travel and tourism organisations try to meet the different needs of all types of customers. Working by yourself, or in small groups under the direction of your tutor, see how you get on with the following tasks to help you make a start on this learning outcome:

- Chat with another member of your group about the needs and preferences each of you has when deciding where, when and with whom to go on holiday.
- Why do holidays usually cost more in the summer months? Which customers does this affect the most?
- Make a list of the different transport options available to somebody wanting to travel from London to Amsterdam.
- What services and facilities do airports offer to passengers with reduced mobility?
- What is the difference between 'stated' and 'unstated' needs? Write down two examples of each.
- Make notes on how the needs and preferences of business tourists and leisure tourists differ.
- Why is it important to use reliable sources when planning holidays and travel itineraries?

When you've finished, show your answers to your tutor and compare them with what others in your class have written.

People travel to a wide range of destinations for many different reasons, using various methods of transport and staying in different types of accommodation, for varying amounts of time. They travel as individuals, couples, families or in larger groups and all have different needs and preferences which must be satisfied.

B1 Customer needs and preferences

Customer travel and needs

Customers are all individuals with different needs and preferences when it comes to choosing holidays and other travel products. Why is it that some people choose all-inclusive holidays to busy resorts in the high season while others prefer a countryside hotel at a quieter time of year? What makes somebody choose a low-cost airline like easyJet rather than a full-service carrier such as British Airways? The answers to these, and many other questions, can be found in the many factors influencing people's travel choices, which we will discuss in the following sections.

Influences on when people can travel

Some tourists are restricted as to when they can travel. Families with school-age children possibly face the most restrictions because their main holiday, and any other short breaks, have to take

place in school holiday periods. It is often the case that travel and tourism organisations charge more for their products during school holidays because these periods are the 'high season' in many destinations when demand is greatest.



Activity 23

Carry out some research to find the cost of a family holiday to a resort in Spain in August and compare it with the cost of the same holiday in mid-September.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B1

Many workers who are not tied to school holiday periods have more choice as to when they can travel, but usually only have so many days of paid holiday each year. Generally, workers get about 20 days of holiday each year, but in some cases it may be less than this amount. However, it is an advantage to be able to travel outside of school holidays when prices are often lower.

Retired people generally have more flexibility as to when they can travel and many choose to take holidays and short breaks outside the peak holiday seasons when prices are lower. However, retired people with families are increasingly choosing to travel with their children and grandchildren in multi-generational groups at peak times.



Some tourists have the flexibility to be able to travel when resorts are less busy.

Climate and weather also have a bearing on when people choose to travel to particular destinations. Many UK tourists travelling abroad are drawn to warmer destinations where they can enjoy the sunshine and spend a lot of time outdoors. Residents of northern European countries often travel south in the winter to find warmer weather to countries such as Spain, Portugal, Turkey and Egypt. This is particularly popular with older, retired people. Some choose

long-haul destinations like Florida, the Caribbean or the Far East. Winter sports holidays, such as skiing and snowboarding can only take place in destinations where there is snow.



Activity 24

Carry out some research to find suitable destinations for customers with the following profiles:

- (1) A retired couple who would like to visit gardens in Europe for two weeks in September.
- (2) A family of four who would like a cheap, all-inclusive holiday in Spain during the summer school holidays.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B1

Did you know?

Many ski resorts in Europe are having to use snow-making machines to create artificial snow as the climate warms.

Climate change is having an impact on when and where people choose for their holidays. Rising temperatures in recent years have resulted in heatwaves in Europe and elsewhere in the world. Some people are choosing not to travel in the summer months to avoid extreme temperatures which can be uncomfortable. Climate change is also having an impact on winter sports, with less snow falling in resorts.

Accessibility of destinations

Some destinations are more accessible than others. Paris, for example, is accessible by road, air and rail from the UK. For domestic tourists, many destinations in the UK can be reached through the motorway network or by train or coach. There is also a network of internal flights which are available to tourists. Furthermore, many island destinations can be accessed by ferry and it is also possible to take a cruise holiday around the coast of the British Isles. However, for most long-haul destinations the only option is to take a flight, although tourists will usually have a choice of airlines and can opt for an indirect flight or a stopover.

Did you know?

Direct, non-stop flights are now available from London to cities in Australia – lasting over 18 hours!

On most occasions travel between tourists' homes and their destination involves using more than one mode of transport. For example, a family from Nottingham going on holiday to Corfu may take a **taxi** to their departure airport, board a **plane** to Corfu and travel on a **coach** transfer to their hotel. In most cases, only tourists using their own private car can travel door to door. Also, a car can make it easier to travel within a destination when touring or travelling to visit attractions.

In considering the needs of tourists when travelling to and within a destination a number of factors need to be considered. These can be summarised as:

- **Cost** – a bus or coach transfer from an airport to a hotel is likely to be cheaper than taking a taxi or hiring a car.

- **Convenience** – having your own transport is often more convenient when travelling, especially for families.
- **Comfort** – some people are willing to pay more for a comfortable journey by, for example, paying more for business class travel with an airline.

However, the size of the group travelling (couples, families, larger groups) may also be an important consideration when deciding how to travel to a destination.

Accommodation requirements

The variety of accommodation available to tourists is expanding all the time, with Airbnb and similar companies creating a trend towards more self-catering accommodation in recent years. Another recent development is that of 'glamping' which is a form of luxury camping in yurts and camping pods.



Activity 25

Carry out some research and find **three** UK companies which offer 'glamping'. For each company, make notes on the type of accommodation on offer, the facilities provided and prices charged.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B1

A fundamental choice that tourists have to make when choosing accommodation is to opt for serviced or self-catering.

Serviced accommodation

Serviced accommodation is when services and facilities are provided for guests in addition to their room. These could include:

- Reception services
- Restaurant and bar facilities
- Housekeeping
- Gym, health club and other leisure facilities
- Conference and business facilities
- Entertainment

Hotels are the most common type of serviced accommodation, but the category also includes guest houses, bed and breakfast (B&B) establishments, inns, golf resorts, chalets, youth hostels and farm accommodation.

Hotels are either independently-run or part of a hotel group or chain. Popular hotel groups with properties in the UK and worldwide include Holiday Inn, Intercontinental Hotels, Accor, Marriott Hotels and Resorts, Crowne Plaza and Hilton. Hotel chains benefit from 'economies of scale' in terms of purchasing, recruitment and marketing. The core activities of hotels are to provide accommodation, food and drink to guests. Many also provide leisure facilities, conference and banqueting services, and business facilities.

The fast growth of the budget hotel sector in recent years has added a further 1,000 UK hotels offering a 'no frills' service for a fixed, low price. Brands such as Travelodge, Premier Inn and

Holiday Inn Express are key companies in this growing part of the market, offering a consistent product and level of service regardless of where the hotel is located.

Bed & breakfast establishments (B&Bs) and guest houses offer a more personalised experience for guests, often in the home of the owner who lets out rooms to get a little extra income. Guest facilities are not as extensive as those found in hotels, although some B&Bs offer evening meals, packed lunches and perhaps even cycle hire. Local knowledge and the chance to learn about the lives of the owners make this type of accommodation particularly popular with visitors from overseas.

Catered ski chalets offer their guests the chance to concentrate on skiing while staff clean the accommodation and prepare meals and drinks.

Self-catering accommodation

Self-catering accommodation is when guests look after themselves, doing their own cleaning and making meals. It includes all rented premises used for holiday purposes, self-catering holiday centres and villages, all types of caravan accommodation, camping, self-catering youth hostels and chalets, motels (roadside accommodation geared to motorists), second homes, aparthotels (a cross between an apartment and a hotel), Airbnb accommodation and boats (excluding cruises). Holidaymakers like the freedom and value-for-money that self-catering accommodation offers – families with young children and/or older relatives find it particularly convenient and flexible.

Self-catering accommodation in the UK comes in many types. The former holiday camps, now renamed holiday centres and villages, converted much of their accommodation to self-catering in the run up to the new millennium in response to customer demand. The market leaders in the UK are Butlin's, Pontin's, Haven Holidays and Parkdean Resorts, with centres throughout the country. Butlin's invested more than £100 million in the 1990s to upgrade its holiday centres. Center Parcs offers self-catering accommodation that is aimed at the higher end of the market at its UK holiday villages in Sherwood Forest, Elveden, Longleat, Whinell in the Lake District and Woburn.



Self-catering accommodation is a popular choice for people on fly-drive holidays.

Self-catering cottages throughout the UK are particularly popular with the more affluent AB social groups, who appreciate the rural locations of many of the properties and the convenience of booking through one of the many agencies specialising in self-catering accommodation, for example English Country Cottages, Hoseasons, Wales Holidays and Country Cottages in Scotland. The National Trust and the Forestry Commission also offer self-catering accommodation throughout Britain in houses, cabins, lodges and cottages.

Camping and caravanning are excellent choices for those looking for good value self-catering accommodation. The owners of many camping and caravanning sites have invested heavily in recent years to provide their customers with an enhanced range of facilities, including swimming pools, fitness suites, entertainment and restaurant facilities, aimed principally at the family and youth market.

Accommodation standards

Customers look for different types of accommodation to suit their budgets and needs. In most destinations nearly all accommodation is inspected and graded according to the overall standard of the accommodation and the range of facilities and services provided. Hotels are often given a star rating to reflect the quality of facilities and standard of service. A customer booking a 5-star hotel will pay more than somebody staying in a 3-star property, but will benefit from luxury rooms and suites, prestigious dining and perhaps even a spa, swimming pool or massage/beauty treatments. Business customers often look for hotels in convenient locations with good wi-fi and early breakfasts.

Meal arrangements

Accommodation can be booked using a variety of meal arrangements, which include:

- *Room only* – the guest pays just for the room and no meals
- *Bed and breakfast* – the price charged includes the cost of the room and breakfast
- *Half-board* – normally includes bed, breakfast and an evening meal
- *Full-board* – as above but with lunch included as well
- *All-inclusive* – all meals and alcoholic drinks are included in the cost of the accommodation



Activity 26

Find out the cost of an 'all-inclusive' 7-night holiday for a family of four to Barbados or Trinidad in the last week of July, flying from Heathrow or Gatwick.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B1

Budgets for travelling

Buying holidays and travel products is classed as 'discretionary spending', i.e. it is not totally necessary like buying food, clothing and paying for housing. When the cost of living is high, people often cut back on their holiday spending by perhaps buying a cheaper holiday or choosing a cheaper form of travel. Setting a budget when buying a holiday is less likely to lead to overspending. Booking the different parts of a holiday yourself, such as the accommodation,

travel, transfers and activities, can work out cheaper although a travel agent may have access to better deals at the time of booking. Also, any holiday that you create yourself will fall outside of the Package Travel Regulations, so you will have little protection if something goes wrong.



Activity 27

Compare the costs of booking a package holiday to a named hotel in Spain through a tour operator to booking the flights, accommodation and transfers yourself. Use the same dates and party size when making your calculations.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B1

Not everybody can afford to take a holiday, while others can afford to travel first class to luxury destinations two or three times a year. Tour operators, accommodation providers and transport operators can charge more for their products when demand is highest, so people travelling on a budget should be flexible about when they can travel if possible.

Tourists who have a limited budget and are able to travel outside of the peak holiday seasons are more likely to be able to take advantage of discounts and last-minute deals offered by companies which need to fill seats on an aircraft or hotels rooms in a resort

Did you know?

About 8% of the population of the UK have never travelled abroad and 22% have never flown on a plane.

Generally, the cheapest holidays for UK residents are self-catering domestic holidays, such as camping, staying in a mobile home or a self-catering cottage, especially outside of the main holiday season. Travelling outside of the UK by air or ferry adds extra travel costs to a holiday.

Many tourists who enjoy package holidays choose the all-inclusive option because most of the cost of the holiday is paid in advance and there may be only a small amount of extra spending while on holiday. On the other hand, tourists staying in self-catering accommodation and choosing to eat in restaurants may spend a lot more money than they had budgeted for.

Although many travel and tourism organisations are able to offer discounts and special offers, most of these companies are commercial operators and have to make a profit. Although it may be important to meet the needs of customers for cheaper travel, it is vital to stay in business for the long term.

Purpose of travel

We saw earlier (see page 38) that a person's reason for travel can be grouped into one of three categories:

1. Leisure
2. Business
3. Visiting friends and relatives (VFR)

Leisure tourists travel for a variety of reasons, and the travel and tourism industry provides a range of products, services and destination options to meet the needs of different types of leisure traveller. Some tourists travel for relaxation and may therefore choose hotels with spa facilities or those located close to a beach. Those travelling to take part in activities will travel to destinations where their chosen activity is available, such as winter sports enthusiasts visiting the Alps in winter.

Figure 1.5 below shows the wide variety of tourist activities available to leisure tourists with different reasons for travel and examples of destinations visited.

Business travellers do not usually have a choice of destination when travelling, since their meeting, conference or trade fair will be in a fixed location.

People visiting friends and relatives travel to where the other members of the family live, or to where a family event or celebration such as a wedding, is taking place. For example, a wedding, attended by a number of family members, could take place on a Caribbean Island.

Reason for travel	Tourist activities	Example destinations
Adventure tourism	Involves travelling to more remote locations, taking part in extreme sports or enjoying activities such as riding a snowmobile, white water rafting or trekking across a desert.	Colorado River in the USA
Special interest tourism	Where a certain amount of the time is taken up with one activity, such as wine-tasting, bird watching or cycling. Education tourism, such as a residential geography field trip or an international summer school, would also be included in special interest tourism.	Wine-tasting in the Bordeaux region of France
Cultural tourism	Where most of the visits are to cultural and heritage attractions with the possibly of a series of talks and guided tours.	The Louvre art gallery in Paris
Dark tourism	This has become more popular in recent years and includes visits to battlefields and sites associated with death and tragedy.	Visiting war graves in France or trips to the former Nazi concentration camps
Religious and faith tourism	Involves visits to Holy sites associated with different religions and visits to celebrate religious festivals.	The Haj in Mecca or a visit to St. Peter's Square in Rome
Ecotourism	This is tourism to explore nature and conservation, which has become popular in recent years. Increasingly, ecotourism involves volunteering to support a conservation project.	A holiday in Costa Rica
Sports tourism	This has always been a popular form of leisure tourism with fans travelling to away matches, to watch important games or to take part in sporting competitions themselves.	Watching global sporting events such as the Olympic Games or the Rugby World Cup

Health and wellbeing tourism	Includes travelling to obtain health treatment not available in the area where the person lives or enjoying spa and beauty treatments or activities such as yoga and pilates.	A holiday at a yoga retreat on the island of Crete
Voluntourism	This is volunteering while on holiday by, for example, taking part in beach cleaning, helping to build wells in developing countries or taking part in other community projects.	Teaching English at a school in Bali

Figure 1.5 Purpose of travel examples

 **Activity 28**

Carry out some research and find **two** UK tour operators specialising in weddings taking place outside of the UK. For each company, make notes on the services that they offer, the destinations they use and typical prices charged.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B1



A turtle conservation project in the Maldives (courtesy of Responsible Travel).

Customers with specific needs

Travel and tourism organisations have to be aware of the needs of **all** their customers, including those with specific needs. Many international tourists are not familiar with the language of the

country they are visiting and organisations such as tour operators have a responsibility to ensure that their clients are able to ask for assistance or information in their own language.

Many travel and tourism organisations also need to consider the cultural needs of their customers, such as providing certain meals in hotels or facilities for praying in airports. Similarly, any restaurant, hotel or other place selling food needs to be aware of any food allergies which may affect its customers to ensure that their needs are met.

Customers may also have specific physical needs, relating to hearing, vision or mobility, such as those requiring a wheelchair. Not all physical needs are obvious and customers may have medical conditions which are not always apparent. It is important for all travel and tourism organisations to ensure that their staff working with customers are trained to be aware of the range of specific needs which could be encountered and do their best to meet the needs of every customer. Customers travelling alone, or families with babies and young children, also have specific needs which organisations must address.



Activity 29

Carry out some research into the facilities and services offered by the Legoland Windsor Resort for visitors with specific additional needs.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B1

Organisations providing travel and tourism products and services have a duty of care, and in some cases a legal obligation, to provide certain facilities for customers with specific needs, such as:

- Assistance with travelling through airports and train stations
- Help with embarking and disembarking planes and trains
- Ramps, wider doors and bathroom facilities in hotels and other accommodation
- Catering for specific dietary requirements



Some customers have specific mobility needs which must be met by organisations.

Unstated needs

Unlike stated needs, which are those that customers will tell you about, unstated needs are those which a customer may not reveal. For example, a stated need is when a customer asks for a ground-floor room in a hotel. An unstated need could be that a family with a baby expects there to be a cot and high-chair provided in their accommodation. Unstated needs are not always obvious to members of staff since customers may assume that certain needs will be met anyway or are perhaps embarrassed to ask for extra help. Unstated needs also cover the expectation of good service and the provision of accurate information at all times.

Desirable preferences

Tourists have certain basic needs when going on a package holiday – a safe and reliable means of travel, suitable accommodation for the size of group and convenient transfers. Over and above this, many tourists have personal preferences which they feel makes their holidays or travel more comfortable and enjoyable. A simple example would be that of choosing a window seat or an aisle seat on an aircraft. Some passengers enjoy looking at the landscape below as they fly, while others would rather enjoy the in-flight entertainment provided. Another example is hotels providing soft or hard pillows in bedrooms. In some cases, personal, desirable preferences can be met free of charge, but sometimes the tourist has to pay an additional cost, for example booking a sea view room in a hotel or travelling business class rather than economy on a flight. Meeting customers' personal preferences is not essential to satisfying their needs, but it may give a travel and tourism company an edge over its competitors.

Two areas that have grown in interest with tourists in recent years are choosing more responsible holidays and minimising their carbon footprint when travelling, i.e the amount of carbon dioxide generated on a holiday or trip. Travel and tourism organisations have responded to these trends by offering holidays and other travel products which follow responsible tourism principles.

Responsible tourism

Responsible tourism is all about conserving the natural and cultural resources of tourism destinations for continuous use in the future, while still bringing benefits to the present society. Travel and tourism organisations are responding to the growing interest in responsible tourism by creating holidays and other travel products that minimise the negative and maximise the positive impacts of tourism. This includes a number of activities, such as:

1. Employing local people for jobs in tourism
2. Developing holidays that don't damage the local environment
3. Involving local communities in decisions about tourism development
4. Supporting local businesses that supply products and services
5. Using local food and drink
6. Developing holidays that support local cultures and languages
7. Reducing waste and energy use through recycling
8. Contributing to conservation projects in tourist destinations

An increasing number of holiday companies are following these responsible tourism principles when developing their products.



Activity 30

Carry out some research to find **three** UK tour operators which specialise in responsible tourism holidays. For each company, make notes on the range of holidays that they offer, the destinations they use and typical prices charged

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B1

The negative environmental impacts of travel and tourism are now widely understood and many tourists like to reduce their environmental impact where possible. This may involve choosing destinations, accommodation and travel methods where a real effort has been made to reduce the carbon footprint of tourism or to support local communities in the destination. Examples of how tourists can be environmentally friendly and reduce their carbon footprint include:

- Using public transport to get to, or travel within, the destination they are visiting
- Staying in eco-friendly accommodation which supports sustainability
- Preferring to take part in low-impact activities such as walking and cycling
- Visiting natural attractions and protected areas such as national parks
- Eating in restaurants which use local produce



Some tourists prefer to visit natural attractions in protected areas.



Activity 31

Carry out some research for a couple who live in York and want to take a two-week holiday to Bordeaux in France by train. Create an itinerary for them leaving on the first Saturday in September and staying away for 14 nights before returning to their home in York. Include all timings, costs and accommodation (they have a budget of £100 per night in total).

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B1

Convenience of travel

Tourists want as little stress as possible when going on holiday or taking a day trip, particularly when travelling with children, older people or in large groups. Customers look for convenient services and facilities, while at the same time feeling safe and secure.

Where tourists have a choice of departure airports, ports and methods of transport to destinations, they may prefer to choose those which are most convenient for them, even though the cost might be higher. This could mean:

- Flying from a nearby regional airport rather than Heathrow or Gatwick.
- Choosing not to take the fastest/most direct route to their destination, but taking a more scenic route by car or an indirect route by air allowing for a stopover.
- Preferring a departure time for a flight or ferry crossing which is more convenient and doesn't involve a very early start or an overnight stay near the port or airport. Also choosing to travel from a port or airport where departures are more frequent, such as the ferry crossing from Dover to Calais.
- Using an airline which offers a range of on-board services for customers travelling with babies and young children.
- Booking a hotel where airport transfer times are shorter, rather than having a longer transfer to a resort where accommodation may be cheaper.
- Hiring a car at the destination airport rather than using a transfer coach.

Did you know?

There are more than 30 flights per day, in each direction, between London and New York.

Transport options at destinations

Some tourists will drive their own cars to their destination, whether in the UK or abroad, and have the use of the car while they are there. Those travelling by air and rail will have to choose from different options while they are staying at their destination, such as:

- Hiring a car which gives a great deal of flexibility and convenience
- Travelling by public transport which will be cheaper, but they will have to understand bus and train schedules
- Going on organised excursions when they will be limited by the times and itineraries available
- Renting a bike or moped



Activity 32

Find out the cost of daily car hire in a Spanish resort such as Benidorm or Salou with one of the major car rental companies.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B1

Levels of flexibility

Booking a holiday or travel product which comes with a degree of flexibility can be an important consideration for some travellers. For example, business tourists may need to travel at short notice or change their travel plans at the last minute, so will often pay more for flexible tickets and accommodation. Older, retired people generally have more time available and can often be flexible about when they travel in order to benefit from cheaper holidays and travel. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, people are looking for more flexibility when they travel in case their circumstances change suddenly and they need to cancel.

Generally, people choosing package holidays don't have a lot of flexibility with their travel arrangements once they have booked. Typically, they will fly out to the resort on a specific flight and return a week or two later and stay in the same accommodation for the duration of their holiday. Making changes to a holiday once it is booked can result in extra charges and fees. However, many holiday companies and travel agents will now 'mix and match' travel products to meet a customer's specific needs. This is known as dynamic packaging and gives greater flexibility in terms of the accommodation, transport, transfers and activities on offer to customers.

Package holidaymakers have a wider choice of accommodation than they did in the past. Some prefer to have a room in a large hotel, others a low-rise villa within a complex. It is also possible to choose a rural villa with a private swimming pool for those who prefer a quieter holiday experience. Hotels sometimes offer inter-connecting rooms for families and large groups, and may be flexible in terms of the check-out time for guests. Also, some package holidaymakers may book a series of excursions organised by the tour operator while others prefer to make their own arrangements to explore the attractions around their destination.

Other tourists may choose to have far more flexibility with their travel arrangements. For example, it is possible to buy an open return ticket for a flight or ferry crossing, so the tourist can choose when they make the return journey. This arrangement suits backpackers, who may have no clear plan about where they might travel, and independent travellers, such as couples, who have no specific date by which they have to return home. These tourists tend not to book accommodation in advance and have a great deal of flexibility as to where they travel and how long they stay in one destination.

Travellers can choose from a variety of transport options when arranging a holiday or trip. They can select:

1. **What type of transport they want** – for example taking a plane, train, car, coach, cruise, etc.
2. **Which company to travel with** – they may choose an airline that they have travelled with before or that has good online reviews.
3. **A particular service level** – for example travelling *Standard Premier* class on Eurostar or flying premium economy (*World Traveller Plus*) with British Airways.

It is usually the case that customers have to pay more for enhanced levels of service or extra facilities.

There is a great deal of flexibility when deciding which meal arrangements to choose for a package holiday in a hotel. We saw earlier (see page 57) that accommodation can be booked using a variety of meal arrangements, which include room only, bed and breakfast, half-board, full-board and all-inclusive. Self-catering is popular with families since it offers more flexibility on meal times than hotel accommodation.

Levels of service standards

It is generally accepted in the travel and tourism industry that if tourists want a higher level of service or higher quality facilities they have to pay more. For example, it costs more to book a room in a five-star hotel than it does to stay in two-star accommodation. Most tourists understand how star ratings are used in the accommodation sector to provide customers with a guide to the overall quality and range of services provided by different organisations. All tourists accept that first-class air or rail travel costs far more than economy class, even though the flight or train journey lasts the same amount of time. Tourists are showing their preference by paying more money for a higher level of service, not for a faster journey.



A first-class cabin on the British Airways' 787 Dreamliner (courtesy of British Airways).

Some airlines offer passengers a variety of services and facilities on their flights, depending on the price paid for the ticket. With British Airways (BA), for example, passengers can choose from the following classes:

- Economy – named *Euro Traveller* for flights in the UK and Europe, and *World Traveller* on long-haul flights, these are the cheapest tickets.
- Premium economy – called *World Traveller Plus*, travelling in premium economy is a little more expensive, but guarantees a wider seat, more legroom and priority boarding in a separate part of the plane.
- Business – named *Club Europe* and *Club World*, business class travel at BA includes airport lounge access, dedicated check-in facilities and fully-flat beds on long-haul flights.
- First – this is the most expensive class on BA flights and offers passengers dedicated service staff, fine dining, exclusive lounges and a private suite on the plane.

Low-cost airlines, such as easyJet and Ryanair, don't currently offer different classes of travel, but may sell customers more flexible tickets for a higher price. They may also offer a range of extras which are added to the ticket price, such as speedy boarding, fast-track security, seat choices on the aircraft, meal choices and a variety of baggage options in the cabin and in the hold.



Activity 33

Find out the latest prices for extra services, over and above the ticket price, offered by either easyJet or Ryanair.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B1

Hotels and other tourist accommodation provide a range of room types which allow customers to select the room they would like in order to meet their needs. Some customers opt for 'premium' rooms or 'superior' rooms with additional services and a higher level of comfort, for example with bath robes, free fruit, complimentary champagne or a better view. Other tourists may decide to upgrade to a higher-quality room when they arrive at their accommodation and are happy to pay any additional charge.

Did you know?

Some airlines allow business class passengers to take 2 small pieces of hand luggage on to the plane and 2 suitcases in the hold as part of the cost of the ticket.

Levels of service standards do not only apply to the quality of service provided. For example, business and first-class passengers on airlines often have a bigger baggage allowance than passengers flying in economy.



Heathrow offers a variety of assistance services to passengers (courtesy of Heathrow Airport).

Practical assistance when travelling

Some tourists need practical assistance to make their journey less stressful and their stay at their destination more manageable and enjoyable. These groups include people with mobility issues,

families with small children and babies, etc. Help with travelling through an airport or station, embarking and disembarking planes and trains, plus adapted vehicles for resort transfers are now common in the travel and tourism industry.

Did you know?

Jet2 Holidays has a 'special assistance' area on its website which customers can use to contact the company for help on the ground before travel, in the air and while in their resort.

Image, status and exclusivity

The image of a tourist destination or travel service is very important to its success – poor media attention or negative feedback from customers can badly affect visitor numbers and sales. Travel and tourism organisations and destinations spend a lot of time and money developing a positive reputation, through PR (public relations) activities, advertising via a variety of channels, celebrity endorsements and investment in staff training.

Some tourists are very image-conscious and look for exclusive holidays and travel products which enhance their status. They like to tell their friends and followers on social media about how they travelled first class to their five-star Caribbean resort or luxury hotel in Dubai!



Some hotels attract customers looking for exclusivity and status.

Some destinations and hotels are very expensive because they have a certain luxurious image or reputation. Good examples include the Ritz and Savoy hotels in London. Some tourists prefer to stay in these hotels because of their image and exclusivity, even though hotels of a similar standard could be found which cost a lot less.

In the same way, some destinations are associated with wealthy tourists who visit regularly, giving the destination an exclusive image, mainly because it costs more to stay there. Examples include some islands in the Caribbean, such as St. Kitts, Barbados and Bermuda, plus the French resort of St. Tropez. Winter sports resorts, including Verbier and St Moritz in Switzerland, also have an exclusive image and are very expensive to visit.

B1 summary

Customer needs and preferences

1. Tourists have a wide range of factors which influence their holiday and travel choices.
2. Customers have both stated and unstated needs which need to be satisfied by travel and tourism organisations.
3. Some tourists are willing and able to pay more for desirable preferences.

B2

How travel and tourism organisations provide different products and services to meet customer needs and preferences

In section B1 the different needs and preferences of various customers were identified and discussed. In order to be successful, travel and tourism organisations have to meet these needs and preferences, especially those of their main target markets. No organisation can meet the needs and preferences of every type of customer. For example, a tourist who regularly travels first class is unlikely to require accommodation on a campsite when they arrive in their destination. Similarly, an elderly tourist who usually takes a coach holiday in the UK is unlikely to be interested in a fly-drive tour of the USA.

Successful travel and tourism organisations are those which understand the needs and preferences of their customers and provide the necessary products and services. The range of products and services offered varies a great deal according to the type of organisation and the types of customers targeted.

Pricing and booking options

The pricing of travel and tourism products and services is important to both organisations and their customers. Companies must price products at the correct level in order to make a profit, while customers must feel that the prices being charged represent good value for money. Larger travel and tourism organisations, including airlines, online travel agents and tour operators, have very complex pricing systems which use algorithms to change prices continuously. The cost of an airline ticket on a particular route and date, for example, will go up and down in response to customer demand.

Did you know?

The Alton Towers theme park offers a discount to visitors who book in advance. They also sell annual passes which give entry outside of peak dates for 12 months, plus discounts off food and drinks at the attraction.

Many organisations, including tour operators, airlines, visitor attractions and accommodation providers, charge higher rates during peak periods and provide cheaper prices during off-peak times when there is less demand. Generally, groups are charged less than individuals when a group booking is made. Higher prices are charged for premium products such as first-class travel or superior rooms in

accommodation. Families are sometimes offered free places for children when travelling outside of the main holiday seasons. Discounts on published prices may also be available and 'last-minute' deals are used to attract customers to book holidays and other travel products at short notice.

The traditional way of booking a holiday, by visiting a travel agent, has changed dramatically with the introduction of new technology. Customers can now use the internet and apps to make their own bookings for holidays and other travel products, receiving instant confirmation. New technology and a desire to have more control of the booking process mean that customers can use the internet, mobile apps and call centres to book their holidays direct. This development has made travel companies change their business models, with many now investing heavily in mobile and digital technology to meet changing customer needs and preferences.

Some online travel companies, such as Expedia, eBookers, Travel Republic and lastminute.com, have no bricks-and-mortar retail travel shops at all, but still offer a full range of holidays and travel products via their online channels. These companies have elaborate websites and apps that allow customers to put together their own holidays – this is known as ‘dynamic packaging’, which better meets the needs and preferences of many travel and tourism customers.



Activity 34

Working with another member of your group, make notes on the different channels you could use to book a holiday from the UK to Greece. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each booking method.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B2

Customer service and assistance

Excellent customer service is often what separates one company from another. Tour operator A may sell holidays to exactly the same hotels as tour operator B, but if A looks after its customers better than B, they are much more likely to recommend company A to their friends. The company also gains by getting more repeat business and customer loyalty.

Organisations need to provide service and assistance to their customers during four stages of the tourism process:

1. At the booking stage, which may be face-to-face in a travel agency, over the telephone or, increasingly, online. The booking process needs to be efficient and any concerns the customer may have should be dealt with effectively.
2. During travel the customer should receive the support and assistance they require and any issues raised during the journey dealt with. However, some travel problems may be out of the control of the organisation involved. Delays and disruption such as those created by severe weather or civil unrest may affect all types of transport.
3. While staying in their accommodation, customers will expect to receive a high level of service and be provided with any assistance they need. To a certain degree this will depend on the type of accommodation booked and the type of holiday or tourism experience.
4. Customer service should also be provided in the post-sales stage when an organisation can gather feedback from customers relating to their experience and make any adjustments to its products and services as necessary.

Did you know?

Many travel and tourism companies have responded to customer needs by offering a variety of communication methods for customer service enquiries, including email, phone, mobile app, live chat on their websites and WhatsApp, Facebook or Instagram messaging.



Good customer service is important at all stages of a journey (courtesy of National Express).

Child-friendly facilities

Many travel and tourism organisations have families with children among their customers. These organisations need to provide child-friendly facilities which make the travel and tourism experience more comfortable and enjoyable for both the parents and the children. For example, children's menus are available in hotels and restaurants, on ferries and aircraft and in food outlets at visitor attractions. Highchairs are available in virtually all premises serving food and drink. Family rooms with cots or bunk beds are widely available as are family areas and children's entertainment. The needs of families with younger children tend to be greater, with facilities for baby-changing and feeding being a necessary requirement.



Activity 35

The Waltons are a family of five from Sheffield – mum, dad and 3 children aged 10 months, 3 and 7 years. They have booked a 10-night package holiday to a hotel in the Algarve, Portugal. Thinking of the different stages of the journey the family will make – taking a taxi to Manchester Airport, a flight, a coach transfer to their hotel and checking into their accommodation – make a list of their needs and the facilities and services they will use to ensure a trip that is safe, comfortable and as stress-free as possible.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B2



Child-friendly facilities at TUI Suneo in Greece (courtesy of TUI).

Accessible facilities

Travel and tourism organisations are required to make reasonable adjustments to any barriers that may prevent a person with disabilities using or accessing their product or service. Businesses have made a number of adjustments to meet the terms of the Equalities Act, including providing wider entrances in buildings, extra signage, information in Braille format, induction loops for the hard of hearing, audio guides, etc. However, challenges have been faced in visitor attractions where, for example, it may not be possible to make theme park rides or staircases in medieval castles accessible to every customer. There are also people whose disability is not immediately obvious, but their needs also have to be met.



Activity 36

Investigate the website of a major UK visitor attraction and summarise its accessibility policy and facilities for customers with special needs.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B2

There is still a concern that having a disability creates a considerable barrier to travel. The Responsible Travel website suggests that adults who are disabled travel far less than those without a disability. The website identifies a number of areas where more could be done to support accessible travel, including:

- **Travel websites and products** – poorly-designed travel websites and a limited (or non-existent) choice of trips can make planning a holiday difficult for somebody with a disability. On top of that, there is a general lack of information from travel companies about the availability and suitability of accessible holidays.
- **Airports** – the EU passed legislation in 2006 so that passengers with disabilities are legally entitled to free special assistance when travelling by plane or ferry; similar rights apply in the US. However, this is not the case across the globe. Those with hidden disabilities can often find seeking help extremely difficult at airports. The noise, queues and busy retail areas can be overwhelming and extremely challenging for many.
- **Airlines** – wheelchairs are not allowed on aircraft, so they must be put in the hold. However, for those reliant on wheelchairs for their independence, handing over this essential and trusty equipment to untrained staff can be terrifying. Many wheelchairs are mishandled or damaged by airlines. This often means leaving passengers immobile at their destination. Wheelchairs and other personal mobility aids are treated as 'special luggage' for insurance purposes. Compensation for lost or damaged equipment will rarely cover the actual cost of replacement.
- **Public transport** – around 40% of UK train stations remain inaccessible to physically-disabled people and in Paris only 3% of the metro is fully accessible. Although some city buses reserve areas for wheelchair users, there is typically just one space, which is often shared with the space for prams and pushchairs.

Clearly, although there has been considerable progress in terms of equality and disability, the travel and tourism industry still has to put in place further measures to ensure that all tourists have the same opportunity to travel and to enjoy their holidays and trips.

Did you know?

The Titanic Belfast visitor attraction has a very comprehensive set of accessibility policies and facilities, including a sensory guide for visitors with autism, free access for carers, full accessibility for wheelchairs and accessible public toilet facilities.

Business facilities

As we discussed previously, not all tourists travel for holidays and day trips (leisure purposes). Business people travel in the UK and abroad to attend meetings, training sessions, sales conferences, trade shows, etc. Many hotels, particularly in city centres, rely heavily on the income from business tourists and provide a range of services and facilities to meet their specific needs, including:

- Fast WiFi
- Early breakfasts
- Executive rooms
- Room service
- Laundry services
- Concierge services for restaurant bookings, car hire, etc.
- 24-hour business suites

More importantly, hotels generate income from holding conferences and providing rooms for meetings – from small private rooms to larger conference suites with ‘breakout’ rooms, i.e. rooms where conference delegates can meet in smaller numbers. Many hotels can hold events and functions for several hundred people, some of whom will stay in the hotel overnight, thereby generating extra revenue. Also, some hotels provide accommodation for business tourists attending large events at venues such as the NEC in Birmingham or the Excel centre in London.


Transport operators also have special services and facilities for business travellers. Eurostar, for example, currently offers a service to specifically meet the needs of business travellers. Its *Business Premier* class includes:

- Exclusive *Business Premier* lounges
- A three-course meal with drinks
- Fully-flexible tickets
- Dedicated fast-track ticket gates
- A boarding guarantee (there will always be a seat even if the passenger turns up late)
- A generous luggage allowance

The trend in working from home (WFH) which became popular during the Covid-19 pandemic has continued for many people with office-based jobs. As well as reducing travel for work, with an impact on commuter train services in some parts of the UK, it has meant that people can, in theory, work from home anywhere in the world, subject to a reliable internet connection.

This has led to the growth in the numbers of so-called ‘digital nomads’ who work in far-flung locations around the world. Some countries have seen this trend as an opportunity to attract business tourists, who will contribute to local economies in tourism destinations.

✎
Activity 37



Carry out some research into the digital nomad visa scheme operated by the Portuguese government and create a presentation of your findings.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B2

Pet-friendly facilities

We all know that the UK is a nation of pet lovers! Owning pets grew in popularity during the Covid-19 pandemic, when many people were forced to stay close to home under government regulations. People were encouraged to visit the countryside for health and activity, so lots of people bought dogs to add to their enjoyment when exercising.

Many people also like to take their pets on holiday with them and there is a growing market for pet-friendly accommodation and travel services, both when holidaying in the UK and travelling overseas. Taking a pet on holiday in the UK is relatively straightforward – it’s just a case of finding suitable accommodation that accepts pets. Most people with pets travel in their own car in the UK

to give flexibility and convenience. Travelling abroad with a pet is an altogether more complex operation. Countries and transport operators have different rules and regulations which must be followed.



Activity 38

Carry out some research on the gov.uk website and make notes on the current regulations for taking a dog from the UK to France in a campervan.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B2

Many types of accommodation in the UK, particularly self-catering cottages and cabins, accept well-behaved dogs. Some even specialise in this market and provide extras like pet blankets, toys and treats. There are even holiday companies which *only* offer pet-friendly accommodation, thereby making it easier for pet owners to book. Booking platforms, such as Airbnb and booking.com, have filters which allow searches for dog-friendly accommodation.

Health and fitness facilities

Throughout society there is a greater awareness of the need to follow a healthy lifestyle and to keep fit. This has affected the choice of holiday and tourist activities of many UK tourists. The stereotypical holiday with plenty of hot sunshine combined with lots of food and alcoholic drinks is increasingly seen as being unhealthy. Today, more people want to enjoy tourist activities where they can be active and enjoy the sports or outdoor activities they enjoy, such as walking, cycling and water sports.

Within the accommodation sector of the travel and tourism industry many hotels have added health and fitness facilities in recent years. These are generally not available in budget accommodation and B&Bs. It is quite common to find a gym and/or a swimming pool in most hotels. Saunas and spas, as well as beauty treatments and massages, might also be provided and in hotels within major resorts there may well be fitness classes available.

Some smaller hotels offer products such as 'wellness breaks' where guests are encouraged to 'de-tox' and relax by eating healthy foods and taking regular exercise.



Activity 39

Find a hotel close to where you live that offers health and fitness facilities. Make notes on the range of services and facilities on offer and include prices.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B2

Health and fitness activities are not restricted to hotels. Many destinations now produce details of signed walks which visitors can follow, and fitness trails have been provided along some beaches or in country parks and similar areas. Off-road cycle tracks are popular in many countryside areas, particularly national parks.



Maps and information boards encourage tourists to take walks and keep fit.

B2 summary

How travel and tourism organisations provide different products and services to meet customer needs and preferences

1. Travel and tourism organisations need to provide the products and services their customers are most likely to need in order to be successful.
2. The pricing of products is very important – the price must attract customers while allowing the organisation to remain profitable.
3. Customer service and assistance needs to be provided in various forms, from the time of booking to the point at which customers provide feedback after their travel experience.
4. Different types of customers, such as families and business tourists, require very different products and services.

B3 Customer needs and different types of travel

People travel away from home for a wide variety of reasons and the travel and tourism industry has to provide a range of products and services to meet the needs and preferences of these people. Very often, as in the case of package holidays, tourists make choices relating to their needs, expectations and preferences when they plan and book their holiday. They choose the destination, length of stay, type of accommodation, departure airport, flight times, etc. that best suit their needs. The tour operator is then obliged to provide the holiday to the standard shown in a brochure or on a website/app.

The vast majority of travel and tourism organisations are commercial operators, which aim to make a profit by satisfying the needs of their customers. While it is difficult to cater for every single need that a customer may have, it is possible to make general comments about the likely needs of different types of customers undertaking different types of travel and tourism experiences. These are summarised in the following sections of this component.

Leisure travel

Leisure travel involves travelling for pleasure, enjoyment, relaxation or following a special interest. It can be divided into three distinct categories:

- Short breaks
- Holidays
- Special events

Short breaks

Short breaks at weekends and during weekdays have grown in popularity in recent years, both to destinations in the UK and abroad. As people have generally become more affluent and are living longer, short breaks offer the chance to escape everyday life and to do something different to 'recharge the batteries'.

Each customer's needs will vary when taking a short break, but it is possible to identify general needs and preferences for the most popular types of breaks – city breaks, countryside breaks and stag and hen parties – as described in the following table.

Type of short break	Customer needs and preferences
City breaks	Tourists visit cities where there are a variety of cultural and purpose-built attractions, including historic buildings and iconic attractions such as the London Eye, Edinburgh Castle or the Eiffel Tower. Tourists need good transport options to travel to the city and to get around once they arrive. There should be a range of accommodation and eating places to suit all tastes and budgets, preferably within easy reach of popular attractions and entertainment areas. It is important that tourists feel safe and secure while travelling in the city on their short break.

Countryside breaks	Most countryside areas offer a quiet atmosphere where tourists can relax and unwind. They can choose from a variety of accommodation including campsites, self-catering cottages, B&Bs, youth hostels and small country hotels. Using a car is the most common way of getting to the great outdoors, but some visitors will seek out rural areas with good public transport links. Access to good public conveniences is also important for some visitors. Countryside areas offer a wide range of relaxing and adventurous activities as well as the opportunity to visit natural attractions like rivers, mountains and forests. They can also include less-populated coastal destinations, such as the Jurassic Coast in Dorset. Relaxation and the opportunity to take part in a range of outdoor activities are the main needs of people visiting countryside areas for short breaks.
Stag and hen parties	Groups of young men and women on pre-wedding stag and hen parties generally need accommodation in cities with a range of entertainment options, especially clubs and bars. They also require a range of activities, which may be sports-based or cultural. The main need of these groups is accommodation that can accommodate a large group and a range of entertainment and dining options, including bars, restaurants and clubs near to where they are staying.



Activity 40

Find out the cost of a 2-night short break at a 3-star hotel in either Bournemouth or Scarborough in the first weekend of November for a couple.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B3

Holidays

Holidays in the UK and abroad come in all shapes and sizes! From a two-week all-inclusive package holiday in Greece or a skiing holiday in Poland to a camping holiday to Brittany or a cruise in the Caribbean. People look to holidays to provide relaxation and a break away from everyday life. Others prefer a more active holiday, perhaps canoeing in Scotland or mountain biking in Wales. Some people choose to travel alone on holiday and enjoy the company of others while away. Families want a relaxing holiday, with all elements being as stress-free as possible. Couples, whether young or old, will enjoy each other's company. Large groups, perhaps on a school trip in the UK or overseas, are often looking for new experiences, perhaps visiting tourist destinations for the first time.

Each customer's needs will vary when taking a holiday, but it is possible to identify general needs and preferences for the most popular types of holidays – package holidays, independent holidays and cruises – as described in the following table.

Type of holiday	Customer needs and preferences
Package holidays	<p>Package holidays are booked online or through a travel agent. The customer is expecting the tour operator to provide transport to the destination and the type and standard of accommodation to be as described by the company.</p> <p>Package holidaymakers express their preferences when planning and booking their holiday. Most work to a budget for all travellers. They can choose the departure airport, destination, type of accommodation, board arrangements, excursions and other activities to meet their needs and preferences. Customers will expect the services of a holiday representative (rep) for local advice and if problems need to be sorted. Customers with specific needs should inform the tour operator prior to travel to ensure that the appropriate support is provided.</p>
Independent holidays	<p>An independent holiday is 'tailor-made' to meet the specific needs of the customer. A travel professional may assemble the different parts of the holiday, or the customer may make their own arrangements by booking the different parts of the holiday themselves. Independent holidays don't offer the same degree of customer protection as package holidays.</p> <p>Independent holidays are an excellent way of satisfying the different needs and preferences of all those travelling on holiday, whether travelling alone, as part of a family or as part of a group.</p> <p>Their needs may be to visit a particular destination or attraction, tour around a region, stay in a variety of resorts in different types of accommodation or take part in different activities. Some independent travellers, such as backpackers, may not have a definite itinerary and may choose to visit different destinations from those that they originally planned to visit.</p>
Cruise holidays	<p>As with package holidays, those taking cruise holidays can express their needs and preferences at the time of booking the holiday. One option could be a fly-cruise, when they take a flight to meet their ship, or they may prefer to take a cruise which starts and ends at a UK port. They can choose the destination of the cruise, such as the Caribbean, Mediterranean or Norwegian fiords.</p> <p>Passengers can also choose the style and class of cruise, with more or less entertainment and formal dining. They can also choose which type of cabin they prefer, accepting that outside cabins with better views will cost more.</p> <p>Passengers can choose to pre-book and take part in organised excursions during their cruise or they may prefer to make their own arrangements to explore the city they are visiting. Overall, cruise passengers' needs will be met if they feel that the cruise offers good value for money and they receive excellent service from the on-board staff.</p>

Did you know?

The UK cruise industry supports around 70,000 jobs.

**Activity 41**

Working with a partner, discuss and summarise the main benefits and drawbacks of booking a package holiday rather than an independent holiday.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B3

Special events

Special events are, by their very nature, 'one-offs' with different types of people attending, various venues throughout the UK and abroad, different accommodation and eating choices, specific themes, etc., so establishing and meeting everybody's needs is a challenge. However, it is possible to identify general needs and preferences for events such as major sporting occasions and seasonal events – as described in the following table.

Type of special event	Customer needs and preferences
Major sporting occasions	<p>Major sporting events, such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Rugby and Football World Cups and Commonwealth Games, are held throughout the world every four years. In the UK, events such as the FA Cup Final and the British Formula 1 Grand Prix are held every year.</p> <p>Tour operators and event organisers provide a range of options to meet the needs and preferences of tourists wishing to attend major sporting events. These range from an extended stay of two or three weeks in Qatar to watch matches during the FIFA World Cup to buying a ticket to watch tennis at Wimbledon for a single day.</p> <p>Tourists attending major sporting events will need to relate their needs and preferences to the budget they have and the availability of tickets. It will cost several thousand pounds to travel to a major event held in a long-haul destination and tourists need to be sure that tickets will be available.</p> <p>When attending major sporting events, tourists usually prefer to stay near the venue and will need easy transport access to the venues where the events are being held. They will also look for a variety of accommodation and eating options as part of their trip.</p>

<p>Seasonal events</p>	<p>Seasonal events range from Christmas markets in the UK and Europe to events such as the Chelsea Flower Show in London. Tourists visiting these events may prefer to travel as part of an organised tour or to make their own arrangements. For example, coach operators offer tours to Christmas markets in a number of European cities.</p> <p>Accommodation and eating places close to the event venue may be expensive, due to increased demand from visitors. Some tourists may choose to stay further away from the venue and travel to the event to save money.</p> <p>Music festivals, such as those in Reading and Leeds, have become increasingly popular, mainly with younger visitors who stay in campsites at the festival site. The major needs of these tourists is to listen to the music of their favourite bands and to enjoy the festival atmosphere, while sampling the food and drink options on offer.</p> <p>A range of cultural festivals featuring music, art and literature are also organised in the UK each year. These events tend to attract wealthy tourists who have different needs and preferences. At some of these events, such as the Henley Festival and the annual Glyndebourne Festival, visitors prefer to dress up and enjoy high-class food and drinks, including champagne.</p>
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Did you know?

More than 200,000 people attend the Glastonbury Festival.

Corporate travel

Corporate (business) travel is associated with work or a job, but it takes place away from a person’s usual place of work. It may or may not involve an overnight stay.

Each customer’s needs will vary when travelling for business, but it is possible to identify general needs and preferences for the most popular types of corporate travel – meetings, conferences, exhibitions and training events – as described in the following table.

Type of corporate travel	Customer needs and preferences
<p>Meetings</p>	<p>Meetings generally involve a fairly small number of people, usually less than 20, and tend to last no more than a day at the most.</p> <p>The main needs of the person organising the meeting, as well as for those attending, is a convenient location making it as easy as</p>

	<p>possible to travel to the venue. Most meetings take place either in hotels or on the premises of a company. It may be that not all of the people attending the meeting have to travel away from their usual place of work. Suitable refreshments will need to be available depending on the length of the meeting. Audio-visual equipment, such as a projector or screen, may be useful for some meetings.</p> <p>Meetings which take place in hotels can either be held in private rooms, which must be paid for, or in open public areas such as coffee lounges. Many people prefer meetings to be held in private rooms if confidential information is being discussed.</p>
Conferences	<p>Conferences may involve hundreds or even thousands of attendees or delegates, some of whom may travel internationally. The main needs of the person or organisation holding the conference is a suitable venue with facilities for speeches in a main hall and for meetings to be held in smaller 'breakout' rooms. The venue should also provide technical equipment for video conferencing and other methods of communication.</p> <p>For delegates attending the conference, their main needs will be ease of travel to and from the conference and suitable accommodation at the venue or close by.</p>
Exhibitions	<p>Exhibitions are either open to the general public or limited to business people only – these are known as trade exhibitions, where organisations from the same sector of industry show and demonstrate their latest products and services to prospective buyers. The main requirement of the exhibition organiser is a space large enough to accommodate all of the stands needed by the companies demonstrating their products, which will be paying for the space.</p> <p>The staff of companies demonstrating at the exhibition will usually stay overnight near the venue and so will need accommodation. Most visitors will only attend the conference for a day and will not require accommodation, but would prefer easy travel from their home area to the conference venue. This is one reason why the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) near Birmingham is so successful, since it is located in the centre of the country and has good road, air and rail links.</p>
Training events	<p>Although many organisations use remote training via Zoom, MS Teams and similar platforms, face-to-face training is still important, especially for new members of staff. As with other forms of corporate travel the main need is for the training facility to have all of the necessary technical equipment and to meet any specific needs required by the trainer or those being trained.</p> <p>Trainers and trainees also like to operate in a comfortable environment with access to refreshments and good transport links for those travelling to the event.</p>

	Organisations also offer team-building events for their employees, which may include training as well as providing the opportunity to work in different environments taking on a range of challenges. The main needs for these events are suitable accommodation and possibly the expertise of qualified instructors to manage activities such as canoeing, canyoning and climbing.
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 **Activity 42**

Find details of **three** events being held at the NEC in Birmingham within the next six months.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B3

Specialist travel

Specialist travel is any type of tourism activity that is linked with a hobby, sport or special interest. It has grown in popularity in recent years as people look for new experiences beyond ‘sun, sand and sea’ holidays. As the definition is so broad, it is an excellent way of meeting the very specific needs of certain customers.

Specialist travel is geared to a person’s specific needs and preferences, so establishing and meeting everybody’s needs and preferences is difficult. However, it is possible to identify general needs and preferences for popular specialist travel activities such as adventure, health, education, heritage/culture, gap year, responsible holidays, special interests and weddings/honeymoons – as described in the following table.

Type of specialist travel	Customer needs and preferences
Adventure	<p>Adventure travel may involve visiting more remote, wilderness locations and taking part in outdoor activities which have an element of risk, such as mountaineering, climbing and white-water rafting.</p> <p>The needs of those taking part in adventure travel include transport to their destination, which could involve different types of transport with less-reliable schedules. For example, it could be that transport links are disrupted due to bad weather.</p> <p>The type of accommodation is not always an important consideration for this type of traveller, although they would prefer their accommodation to be located close to where the activities are taking place. Accommodation options are more important for customers buying luxury adventure travel holidays.</p> <p>It may be that the customers taking part in the adventure activities are experienced and qualified. Alternatively, organisations offering</p>

	<p>adventure activities would need to employ well-qualified staff to lead groups of customers who are taking part in the activity, perhaps for the first time. Customers would expect to be reassured that their instructors have the necessary qualifications and that the correct safety equipment is available.</p>
Health	<p>We saw earlier that people are generally more aware of the need to follow a healthy lifestyle. Many are choosing to take part in activities while on holiday to stay fit and healthy.</p> <p>People may choose to travel to an overseas destination to receive health treatment if this is not readily available in their own country. These 'health tourists' might prefer to use a specialist tour operator which can organise the travel and work in partnership with the medical organisation providing the treatment abroad.</p> <p>Alternatively, it is possible to make independent travel arrangements in which case the main need will be for suitable flights and accommodation close to where the treatment is taking place, plus good aftercare arrangements.</p>
Education	<p>Educational travel includes day trips and residential visits for school and college children, as well as exchange travel, mainly for young people of university age. School and college travel ranges from a day visit to a local farm to a winter sports week in the Alps or a sports tour of the Caribbean.</p> <p>Safety and security are the two main needs when organising an educational trip. Parents are entrusting the safety and well-being of their children to teachers, who must make sure that every safety precaution is followed. This includes travel to visitor attractions in the UK and abroad, as well as undertaking an outdoor activity, which could be canoeing, abseiling or sailing. School and college organisers must carry out a risk assessment for every trip involving pupils.</p> <p>Other than safety, the other expectation for the trip organiser is that the experience has an educational value and that learning in a different environment takes place.</p>
Heritage and culture	<p>Generally, those taking part in heritage and cultural tourism are knowledgeable and have high expectations relating to what they might experience. Their interests might lie in literature, history or art. Battlefield tours, along with visits to stately homes and museums, are popular examples of travel undertaken by heritage and cultural tourists.</p> <p>The main needs of these tourists are to increase their knowledge and experience of whatever they are interested in, so they expect that guides and those presenting or demonstrating will be knowledgeable and professional.</p> <p>These tourists will generally expect a high standard of accommodation and catering on any organised tour.</p>

Gap year	<p>The main needs of young people travelling on a gap year experience are safety and flexibility. These tourists travel with the knowledge that their plans will often change during the course of their trip and will make bookings at short notice. If a particular destination does not meet their expectations they want to move on.</p> <p>Many gap year travellers and backpackers have a limited budget and expect to travel cheaply. They also prefer to stay in budget accommodation such as hostels in order to save money. Good communication facilities are also important so that gap year travellers can keep in touch with friends and family.</p>
Conservation, sustainable and responsible travel	<p>These tourists have an awareness of the negative effects of tourism and wish to reduce the impacts as much as possible. Therefore, they expect that the travel companies they use have done as much as possible to reduce their impact, such as having recycling policies, using renewable energy, reducing food waste or using local food whenever possible. Some responsible tourists prefer to travel over land rather than flying.</p> <p>Some people undertaking responsible travel also like to visit conservation projects and take part in activities which have a positive environmental and cultural impact on destinations.</p>
Special interests, hobbies and sports	<p>People travelling for special interests, sports or hobbies expect that, for a lot of the time, they will be engaged in their hobby or sport. For example, a keen birdwatcher will expect to spend much of their time birdwatching.</p> <p>Specialist tour operators must ensure that the itineraries they offer meet the specific needs and expectations of their customers. Alternatively, individuals and organisations can make their own arrangements to meet their needs and preferences.</p>
Weddings and honeymoons	<p>Couples booking weddings and honeymoons through specialist tour operators will expect high standards to ensure that the experience is memorable and enjoyable with every detail covered. Their main needs will relate to the quality and atmosphere of the accommodation, plus the professionalism of the staff at the venue. Honeymooners expect to spend their time quietly, often relaxing in an exotic location. Staff should be attentive, but not overbearing, at all times.</p>



Activity 43

Carry out some research to find **two** UK-based tour operators which specialise in educational tours for schools and colleges. Make notes on the type of holidays they offer, the destinations used and typical prices.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B3

Visiting friends and relatives (VFR)

Travelling to meet friends and relatives for a special event or to spend time together is very important to many people in the UK, especially since the lockdowns associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. VFR tourism can be:

- **Domestic** – for example, Jimmy from Mansfield catching a train to visit his gran in Nottingham.
- **Inbound** – e.g. a family from Taiwan coming to the UK for a family gathering in Newcastle.
- **Outbound** – for example, a couple from Exeter flying to Germany to see their son.

People travelling to friends and relatives in the UK have fairly straightforward travel needs. In terms of accommodation, it's likely that they will stay in the home of the person they are visiting. However, people may travel to an event such as a family wedding and stay in the hotel where the wedding takes place or in accommodation nearby.

Perhaps the greatest need relating to VFR tourism within the UK or abroad revolves around travel arrangements. Nobody wants to be late for a wedding or arrive at an airport with nobody there to meet them! Many people will use their own car when visiting friends and relatives in the UK, but will need to arrange suitable transport when travelling abroad.

Also, it is often the case that groups of friends meet up to spend a holiday together. In this case the preferences and expectations of the group will include suitable accommodation and activities which meet everybody's needs.

Day trips

Day trips can be defined as visits by tourists which do not involve an overnight stay. People on day trips travel from home to their destination and return home the same day. Therefore, one of the most important needs and preferences is for the journey to and from the place they are visiting to be as convenient as possible without any holdups.

On bank holidays, during the summer months and at other popular times, traffic congestion around some tourist destinations is common and major attractions can be very busy. Increasingly in the UK, day visitors have to pre-book visits to popular attractions and even pre-book car parking spaces in some national parks.

Everybody has their own idea of what makes a successful day out, so establishing and meeting everybody's needs can be difficult. However, it is possible to identify general needs and preferences for popular types of day trips, such as visits to attractions, cities and countryside areas – as described in the following table.

Type of day trip	Customer needs and preferences
Visitor attractions	The precise needs and expectations of customers will depend on the nature of the attraction. For built attractions, such as major theme parks, the expectation will relate to thrilling rides, with preferably short queues and good weather. Good transport links, a variety of catering outlets and good public conveniences will also be important to visitors.

	<p>For natural attractions, such as a walk on a well-known mountain such as Mount Snowdon, appropriate weather and not too many people would be the main preferences.</p> <p>For cultural and other indoor attractions, weather is not important, but the preference would be for the attraction not to be too busy and the needs of all visitors to be met. Many attractions will have interpretive displays or guides which tell a story and add to the visitors' enjoyment.</p>
Cities	<p>Many day visitors travel to cities for events and specialist shopping, as opposed to everyday shopping for food, etc. The events could be sporting, entertainment or cultural. For example, it is possible to visit a number of cultural attractions in each of the UK's capital cities in a single day. Cities also offer a range of entertainment such as theatres as well as a range of eateries, pubs and clubs. Also, most major sporting events take place in cities and the majority of fans can travel from their home and back on the same day.</p>
Countryside areas	<p>Many people who live in large towns and cities like to visit countryside areas for the day. They may like to relax by a stream or lake or alternatively take part in a range of activities, which could include walking, mountain biking, fishing or canoeing.</p>

Did you know?

In the nine months to December 2021, there were 654 million tourism day visits within Great Britain by GB residents. England was the most popular destination with an 88% share of trips (574 million visits).



Activity 44

Find the Great Britain Days Visits Survey (GBDVS) on the VisitBritain.org website and make notes on the latest data on the total number of day visits, the breakdown across England, Scotland and Wales, plus the total spending figure.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B3

B3 summary

Customer needs and different types of travel

1. It is possible to make general statements about the needs and preferences of people travelling for different reasons, but these do not apply to everybody.
2. People travelling for business have very different needs to leisure tourists.
3. People visiting friends and relatives have relatively simple needs and preferences.
4. Specialist travel is growing rapidly as tourists look for new experiences while on holiday or taking a short break.

B4 Travel planning to meet customer needs and preferences

Planning a holiday or trip is an exciting part of the whole travel experience, whether doing it yourself or using a travel professional. People research and book in the hope that their plans will work out as expected and their needs will be fully met, if not exceeded!

Before setting out on any journey, be it a holiday, short break or business trip, tourists are likely to have a travel plan or itinerary with information about where they are going and how they will travel to their destination.

Travel plans can be produced in one of three ways:

1. By a travel agent
2. Through a tour operator
3. Independently by the tourists themselves

Travel agents are professionals who can interpret a customer's needs and suggest a suitable holiday that will fit their budget and preferences. Many customers will know exactly the type of holiday they want, while others may be looking for ideas. This is where the skill of the agent comes in, by listening to their clients and suggesting suitable destinations and travel companies. Some agents have years of experience in the industry and may have visited many destinations overseas on their own holidays or 'fam trips' – these are familiarisation trips paid for by travel companies



for agents to get a first-hand view of a destination, hotel or cruise ship. Using a travel agent or tour operator can save time, since they handle all the bookings and paperwork associated with arranging a holiday or short break. Package holidays bought through a travel company will also give customers greater financial protection if things go wrong, when compared to making a booking themselves. Travel agents and tour operators also have access to databases of information which are not available to the general public.

Many people like to do their own holiday and travel planning rather than using a travel professional. They like the flexibility and control that making their own arrangements offers. The development of the internet and mobile apps has made it much easier for individuals to make their own travel arrangements – they can meet their own needs and preferences by booking the type of travel, accommodation and visits to attractions which suits them best.

Travel planning

Travel planning can be broken down into three stages:

Stage 1 – Establishing the needs and preferences of the customer.

Stage 2 – Researching suitable destinations using a range of information sources.

Stage 3 – Producing the travel plan.

Establishing customer needs

A person travelling on holiday by themselves will instinctively know the type of needs which have to be met when travel planning. Families and other groups will consult with all members of the party to find out people's preferences and try to meet these whenever possible. If using a travel agent or tour operator, establishing customer needs could be face-to-face in a travel agency, over the phone to a travel shop or a call centre, by email or live chat on a website.

Whichever method is chosen to establish needs and preferences, they will be influenced by a variety of factors, including:

- The type of holiday or travel service
- The composition of the group
- The budget they have available
- The type of destination and resort they prefer
- The preferred type of accommodation
- The length of time they have available for their holiday or trip
- The departure and return dates
- The type of attractions to be visited
- The type of excursions and activities to be included
- The ages of the travelling party
- Any medical conditions
- Where they live in relation to departure ports and airports



Activity 45

Think about the type of holiday you would like to go on next year. Choose a partner in your group to take on the role of a travel agent and ask you questions in order to find a suitable holiday that you could take, with all travel details and prices included. How do you think your partner did? Once completed, swap roles and carry out the exercise again with you taking the role of the travel agent.

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B4

Using different information sources to research suitable destinations

Having established the needs and preferences of the customer, the travel agent or tour operator will then research destinations and travel options to present to the customer. The agent can either

use printed materials or online sources to help with their research. Printed information can be in the form of guidebooks, atlases, brochures and leaflets.

Today, however, most research is carried out using online sources, such as the websites of:

- All types of tour operators
- Transport organisations, including airlines, airports, train operators, cruise lines, ferry operators, car hire firms and coach companies
- Accommodation providers, such as hotel chains, campsites and caravan parks, self-catering cottages and canal boats
- UK and overseas destinations and tourist boards
- Major natural, cultural and purpose-built attractions, as well as those of tourist areas such as national parks
- Government agencies, which provide up-to-date travel advice, visa regulations, passport requirements, health advice and other travel information

People who are developing their own travel plans will have access to the above websites and may also use review sites, such as Tripadvisor and Trustpilot, plus social media sources. For accommodation, they may research on Airbnb or similar websites, and use destination guides produced by tourist areas or those available from commercial publishers, e.g. the *Rough Guides* and *Lonely Planet* guidebooks.

Many travel agents and tour operators use global distribution systems (GDS) as their primary reservation tool. Originally developed by the major airlines, a GDS is an online system that gives agents real-time access to flights, hotels, transfers, cruises, car hire, etc. in order to compare prices and make bookings. Sabre and Amadeus are two of the best-known GDS systems in use across the world.

Tourist information centres (TICs) are another useful source when travel planning, particularly when staying in a destination. Staff can suggest suitable attractions, transport and accommodation, while some TICs offer a 'book ahead' service, where they will book accommodation for tourists who are touring an area.

It is important to check the reliability of different information sources when travel planning. Always try to find the official website of a holiday company, transport operator, accommodation provider, etc. Fraudsters sometimes scam customers by offering products and services which do not exist. Local and national government tourism websites are also reliable sources of information. Review websites are a useful way of getting an overview of destinations, holidays and other travel products, but it is not always possible to know if a review is genuine or not.

Producing a travel plan

Some trips are very straightforward and require very little planning, for example a day visit to a local museum. For longer holidays, complex journeys involving a large number of people, more than one mode of transport, a number of destinations or different types of accommodation, more detailed travel plans are needed.

Travel plans have a number of benefits, including:

1. Helping tourists to know the exact times of travel so they turn up at the correct times
2. Giving them full details of their accommodation to make transfers go smoothly

3. Detailing booking references, flight numbers, etc. to speed up checking in
4. Giving the travel professional an agreed plan should there be any complaints or claims from customers after the event

What's included in a travel plan?

Every travel plan will be specific to a customer, but there are certain basic requirements which need to be included, for example:

- **Customer details** – full name and contact details of the lead traveller, plus names of any other people travelling (including ages and dates of birth for under-18s).
- **Dates and duration** – departure and arrival dates (in local time), plus number of nights away.
- **Destination(s)** – details of the destination to be visited, or destinations in the case of a multi-centre trip.
- **Accommodation** – full details of the accommodation, including address and phone number. Details of the accommodation rating, board basis, room type(s), facilities and services. Full check-in and check-out dates and times.
- **Transport** – name of the operator, departure and arrival dates, points and times (using local time), flight numbers, seat reservations and transfer arrangements.
- **Activities, attractions and excursions** – full details of any pre-booked activities, with name of the operator and contact details. Information on activities, attractions and excursions at the destination or nearby.
- **Additional information** – this will depend on the location and type of destination, but may include entry requirements, health precautions, safety and security advice (with a link to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) travel advice website/app). Details of any travel insurance may also be included here. Information on local customs and traditions that visitors should be aware of during their stay should also be included.
- **Costs** – a clear total cost, plus an itemised breakdown of all costs. Details of any payments to be made locally for car hire, room upgrades, guided tours, excursions, etc.



Clearly, travel plans will vary a great deal according to the type of customer and the holiday they are booking.

*A bus tour of New York City
(courtesy of Civitatis).*

The outline travel plans set out in the following pages give an indication of the detailed content required and how plans can vary depending on customer needs.

Travel Plan 1 – Mr and Mrs Merchant, High Street, Newtown	
Customer needs and preferences	A couple wish to visit New York and drive through New England in September/October. The couple want to spend a few days in New York City and then drive through New England and fly home from Boston. They want to enjoy outdoor activities and admire the famous autumn scenery of the region.
Duration and dates	Outbound – Sept 23 rd – BA778 London Heathrow (LHR) to New York (JFK) departs 11.40 arrives 14.25. Inbound – October 12 th – BA789 Boston (BOS) to London Heathrow departs 19.15 arrives 06.50 (+ 1 day). Cost £535 return per person (economy)
Accommodation details	New York City – three nights in a four-star hotel near 5 th Avenue. Cost – approximately £350 per room per night. New England – 3-star and 4-star hotels while driving through New England – approximately £120 per night. The couple plan not to make reservations but book the day before they arrive at each stop on their drive through New England. They will spend their last night in a 3-star hotel in Boston at £120 for the couple.
Transport details	Car hire (one-way) from JFK to BOS – approximately £340 – plus fuel.
Additional costs	Visits to attractions in New York city, such as the Empire State Building, Liberty Island, a Broadway show, museum entry – approximately £120 per person. The couple have asked the travel agent to book a ‘hop-on, hop-off’ bus tour (approximately £80 for the couple). Transfers to and from JFK Airport – approximately £40 each way (per couple). Meals while they travel through New England – approx. £40 per person per day.
Essential information	UK residents will require a valid passport and complete an ESTA form before entering the USA. All entrants should be fully vaccinated against Covid and have appropriate travel insurance.
How the travel plan meets the needs of the customers	The couple have three days in which to visit the ‘must see’ sights of New York City staying in a good location. They can then explore New England at their own pace enjoying the spectacular scenery and a range of activities.
Total cost	£5,980 (excluding fuel for the hire car)

Travel Plan 2 – the Edwards family, New Street, Stevenage	
Customer needs and preferences	A couple with two children, aged 2 and 4, want to spend a week in a Mediterranean resort in mid-September, when the weather is not too hot. The couple do not have a car and would prefer to self-cater to make it easier to feed and look after the children.
Duration and dates	Saturday Sept 17 th for seven nights (the dates are fixed because of the couple's work commitments).
Accommodation details	Lido Planet Costa Dorada – apartment with two bedrooms and kitchen, 750 metres from the beach. Cost £707
Transport details	easyJet return flights from London Luton to Barcelona – approximately £600 in total. Taxi from Stevenage (where the family lives) to Luton – approximately £50 each way. Shuttle transfer from Barcelona Airport to Salou – approximately £25 each way.
Additional costs	Budget £200 for meals cooked in the apartment plus other items.
Essential information	All travellers, including the children, need current UK passports valid for at least 6 months before the expiry date. From November 2023 the family will also need to have ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorisation System) which is a visa waiver system in order to enter any EU country.
How the travel plan meets the needs of the customers	The couple and their children can feel comfortable and safe in their apartment and prepare food which the children will like. They can walk to the beach or use the hotel's swimming pool complex. Tour operators have package holidays available for those dates which meet the family's needs and preferences. These might work out cheaper for the family.
Total cost	£1,657



*Lido Planet
Costa Dorada*

Travel Plan 3 – Jimmy Taylor, Green Street, Wantage	
Customer needs and preferences	A backpacker plans to fly to Australia, stay in Sydney for a few days and then possibly meet up with friends, who are currently in New Zealand. The tourist also wants to visit Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Cairns during his stay in Australia.
Duration and dates	Departing September 23 rd for approximately 6 months.
Accommodation details	4 nights sleeping in a bunk in a 4-bed room in a YHA hostel in Sydney – approximately £30 per night. Further accommodation to be arranged.
Transport details	Emirates 355 flight from London Heathrow to Sydney with a change of flight at Dubai (5-hour changeover). Flight time 22 hours. Cost £780 (one-way – return flight to be booked later).
Additional costs	Ongoing transport and accommodation, plus return flight.
Essential information	UK passport with more than 6 months remaining. Also, an entry form must be completed before entering the country.
How the travel plan meets the needs of the customers	The travel plan meets the needs of a backpacker who wants to keep his options open. Young backpackers can make bookings and keep in touch with friends using their smartphones. The four-night stay in Sydney gives the tourist the opportunity to explore the city and recover from any jet lag before moving on to the next destination.
Total cost	£900 for outbound flight and accommodation in Sydney (the following costs are not included – return flight, accommodation, transport and food while travelling).



Australia is a popular long-haul destination for backpackers.

Travel Plan 4 – The Pryce group, Islington, London	
Customer needs and preferences	<p>A group of four friends living in north London who want to visit Paris, but do not want to stay in a hotel. They want to stay for at least four nights and can travel on or after August 30th.</p> <p>They need to return to the UK before September 8th.</p> <p>The group wants to visit cultural attractions and enjoy good nightlife.</p> <p>Budget – £300 per person to cover transport and accommodation.</p> <p><u>Note</u></p> <p><i>The four friends are happy to share a room together if necessary.</i></p>
Duration and dates	<p>Depart from the UK on Thursday September 1st returning on Monday September 5th (4 nights away).</p>
Accommodation details	<p>Since the group do not want to stay in a hotel, they have two alternatives. They can either stay in a hostel or find a self-catering apartment through Airbnb, booking.com or a similar website.</p> <p><i>Option 1</i> – The 3 Ducks Eiffel Tower hostel is charging £180 per night for a four-bed en-suite room for the dates the group has selected.</p> <p><i>Option 2</i> – Airbnb has a number of flats and apartments available for approximately £200 per night, just inside the group's budget. Most of these have one bedroom with a sofa bed in the lounge plus a kitchen and a bathroom.</p>
Transport details	<p>Eurostar from London St Pancras to Paris Gare du Nord:</p> <p>September 1st departing 14.31, arriving in Paris at 17.47. Cost £59.50 per person.</p> <p>September 5th – Paris to London – departing Paris at 19.13 and arriving in London at 20.30. Cost £39.00 per person.</p> <p>There will be additional transport costs relating to travel to and from St. Pancras and within Paris.</p>
Additional costs	<p>The cost will depend on the activities, attractions and nightlife options which the group choose. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Eiffel Tower – approximately £20 per person. ➤ Bateaux Mouches boat tour on the river Seine – approximately £12 per person (or £50 for a lunch cruise). ➤ Visit to the Moulin Rouge Cabaret – approximately £40 per person. ➤ Hop-on, hop-off bus tour – approximately £25 for one day. ➤ Visit to the Louvre Museum – approximately £15. ➤ Visit to the Palace of Versailles – from around £15, various options are available, including cycle tours of the palace grounds.

	Also, the group will need to budget for evening meals in areas such as Montmartre and Les Marais as well as possible entry to nightclubs.
Essential information	The group will need to have valid passports with more than 6 months remaining before the expiry date. From November 2023 they will also need to have ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorisation System) which is a visa waiver system, in order to enter any EU country.
How the travel plan meets the needs of the customers	<p><i>Accommodation</i> – hostel or self-catering accommodation will help the group to keep within their budget of £300. However, the group may have to share a double bed or sleep on a sofa bed. They may be able live cheaply by self-catering and not always eating out. (They will need to be sure that the self-catering accommodation they book meets the needs of the group).</p> <p><i>Travel</i> – the Eurostar service is convenient from the group’s home in north London and saves travelling to a departure airport in the UK, as well as travelling into Paris. Travelling from London to Paris by car might be cheaper, but would take longer. Driving and parking in Paris is extremely difficult. Also, most attractions in Paris are accessible using the Metro and RER systems which are cheap ways to travel.</p> <p><i>Attractions and activities</i> – The group could spend a great deal of money visiting all of the most famous attractions and eating out in fashionable areas. They would have to decide how much to spend on different activities and perhaps spend time walking around the city visiting locations such as the Arc de Triomphe and the Champs Elysees.</p> <p>They might use alternative guidebooks such as the <i>Rough Guide to Paris</i> or the <i>Lonely Planet</i> series to get ideas about cheaper options for eating out and nightlife.</p>
Total cost	<p>Using Option 1 accommodation £278.50 per person</p> <p>Using Option 2 accommodation £298.50 per person</p> <p>The group should consider increasing their budget beyond £300 per person in order to be able to enjoy their trip.</p>



Activity 46

Using the travel plans shown on the previous pages as a template, produce a travel plan for a couple with the following profile. They live in Oldham, are both over 70 and wish to take a short break (4 nights) to Rome. They would like to fly from an airport close to their home, departing on the first Saturday of next May. They will travel to, and return from, both airports by taxi. They have a total budget of £1,800 to cover accommodation (central and 4-star), taxis and flights. Suggest attractions to visit and include entry prices for these (they will pay locally).

This activity will give you practice in completing Learning Outcome B4

B4 summary

Travel planning to meet customer needs and preferences

1. Travel plans vary a great deal in complexity depending on the type of holiday and the needs and preferences of the customer.
2. Travel plans can be developed by travel agents, tour operators or independent tourists.
3. It is important for travel professionals to ask lots of questions when establishing a customer's needs and preferences.
4. Increasingly, travel plans are developed using online research rather than printed sources.
5. The reliability of sources should be checked when gathering information to compile a travel plan.