怎樣抓緊經常光顧的旅客？
How to retain heavy users of travel agents?

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旅行社面對的競爭日益加劇，當中有來自互聯網的，也有來自直接向航空公司和酒店預訂的。競爭越演越烈，旅行社也就越需要達到顧客的期望，務求吸引和抓緊顧客。**儘管營商環境不利，但旅行社也不是沒有轉機的，例如有更多顧客需要專門的服務和尋求新的旅遊勝地，而資訊與通訊科技不斷改良，也使旅行社能夠接觸更多潛在的顧客。**

美國旅行社協會曾經贊助一項研究，旨在瞭解美國的旅行社的顧客有甚麼特質。**研究數據雖然是在美國搜集的，但研究結果對於在其他地方掙扎求存的旅行社也有一定價值，相信香港的旅行社也可從中借鏡。**

研究所採用的問卷列出了旅客對旅行社的期望和挑選旅行社的準則，除了郵寄給旅行社的顧客外，還在某個國際機場直接要求旅客回答，以期得知光顧和不光顧旅行社的旅客的意見。完成的問卷共有三百八十二份，其中一百五十份是郵寄出去的，其餘二百三十二份則是在機場完成的。為了把受訪者分類，所運用的方法是統計學的集群分析法(cluster analysis)。至於區別集群的項目，則有以下三項：在過去一年內光顧旅行社的次數；光顧了同一家旅行

Travel agents are facing escalating competition from the Internet and direct bookings with airlines and hotels. As the competition intensifies, it becomes increasingly important for travel agents to meet client expectations in order to attract and retain customers. However, despite an unfavourable business environment, travel agents have encountered opportunities because of the increase in demand for specialised services and new destinations, and improvements in information and communication technologies which will enhance agents' ability to reach more potential customers.

A study sponsored by the American Society of Travel Agents was conducted in the United States to identify characteristics of travel agents' target markets. Although the data were collected in the US, results of the study could provide potential implications for travel agents which work in other competitive environments, including Hong Kong.

Copies of a questionnaire included items on travellers' expectations and selection criteria of travel agents were mailed to travel agent customers and administered to travellers at an international airport to obtain responses from both users and non-users of travel agents. A total of 382 questionnaires were completed, of which 150 came from the mailed survey and 232 were collected in the airport. A statistical technique, cluster analysis, was used to group the respondents. Items used in the clustering were the number of times a travel agent was used in the past 12 months, the length of time the same travel agent was used, and the number of overnight trips taken in the past year.

Study results

Almost three quarters of respondents (72.5%) had used a travel agent for purchasing travel-related products (e.g., airline ticket, car rental reservation, hotel room reservation, cruise package, attraction ticket and visa/passport application) in the past year. When asked about the number of times respondents had used the service of a travel agent in the past 12 months, 60.5% reported between 1 and 6 times. Over half (53.8%) of the respondents had purchased travel-related products through the Internet.

社多久；在過去一年內在外留宿的旅遊次數。

研究結果

大約四分三的受訪者(百分之七十二點五)在過去一年內曾經向旅行社購買旅遊產品，例如機票、租車預訂、酒店預訂、郵輪旅程、景點門票、簽證或護照申請等。至於在過去一年內光顧旅行社的次數，則有百分之六十點五的受訪者介乎一次至六次之間。超過一半受訪者(百分之五十三點八)曾經在互聯網購買旅遊產品。

平均來說，第一個集群的成員(共有七十七人，屬於經常光顧旅客)在過去一年內光顧了旅行社六點五一次，光顧同一家旅行社超過十一年，在過去一年內在外留宿的旅遊次數是十一點三九次。與第一個集群的成員相比，**第二個集群的成員(共有三百零五人，屬於偶然光顧旅客)平均光顧旅行社的頻率比較低(在過去一年內光顧了三點七八次)**，而光顧目前的旅行社的時間也較短(一點四年)，但在外留宿的旅遊次數則所差無幾(九點四次)。在人口統計數據方面，經常光顧旅客的集群較可能年齡較大(百分之四十三點四的年齡在四十六至五十五歲之間)，收入較高(百分之八十三點三的年薪有七萬五千美元以上)，而且所受的正規教育較多(百分之七十九的學歷是大學或大學以上)。

期望與挑選準則

受訪者需要在七分等級表上，就十七項對旅行社的期望評分。兩個集群之間有明顯的差異(見表一)。**偶然光顧旅客較期望旅行社提出意見和給予建議**，例如給予周全的資訊，開辦旅行團，就目的地和食肆提出建議等。不過，**無論是經常光顧旅客還是偶然光顧旅客都一樣，他們對旅行社的最高期望都是無形的東西，例如期望旅行社信實、可靠、能解決問題等**。由於偶然光顧旅客的期望較高，對旅行社來說，經常光顧旅客就是較佳的顧客，因為他們不僅較多光顧旅行社，而且光顧同一家旅行社的時間也較長，兼且期望較實際，同時大多數都是受訪者中收入最高的一群。

On average, members in the first cluster (who were heavy users with a total number of 77) used a travel agent 6.51 times in the previous 12 months, had used the same travel agent for more than 11 years, and took 11.39 overnight trips in the past year. Members in the second cluster (who were light users with a total number of 305) on average used a travel agent less frequently (3.78 times in the past year) and had used their current travel agent for a shorter length of time (1.4 years), yet took a similar number of overnight trips (9.40 trips) as respondents in the first cluster. Demographic data indicated that the heavy user group was more likely to be older (43.4% were 46-55 years old), have higher income (83.3% had an annual income of US$75,000 or more), and have more formal education (79.0% had a college or advanced degree) than the light user group.

Expectations and selection criteria

Respondents were asked to rate 17 items in expectations of travel agents using a 7-point scale. There was a significant difference between the two groups (see Table 1). Light users had higher expectations of travel agents in terms of advice and offerings (e.g., providing thorough information, offering packaged tours, and giving advice on destinations and restaurants). However, both heavy and light users' highest expectations of travel agents focused on the intangibles, such as being honest, being reliable and solving problems. The higher expectations from the light user group would make the heavy user group a more desirable target market. The heavy user group not only used a travel agent more often, but also used the same agent for longer periods of time; they had more realistic expectations; and they had a majority of respondents in the highest income bracket.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the importance of 18 selection criteria in choosing a travel agent, based on a 7-point scale. There was, again, a significant difference between the two groups (see Table 2). The heavy user group rated intangible service items, such as quality service, travel knowledge, personalised service and past experience, as significantly more important. Even though light users also regarded the intangible service items as important, their ratings of the tangible items (e.g., business hours, service charges, free ticket delivery) were generally higher than those of heavy users. Heavy users may have realised the benefits of using a travel agent through experience and see intangible services as the "must have" characteristics, whereas light users needed to see the tangible benefits for them to use a travel agent. Travel

主題故事

表一：不同組別的顧客對旅行社的期望

Table 1: Expectations by travel agent user segment

期望 Expectations	經常光顧旅客 Heavy users	偶然光顧旅客 Light users
信實 Be honest	6.86	6.82
可靠 Be reliable	6.86	6.74
能解決問題 Get problems solved	6.53	6.45
節省時間 Save me time	6.40	6.52
節省金錢 Save me money	6.30	6.48
澄清細節 Clarify the small print	6.26	6.42
瞭解預訂的各種情況 Know details about the reservations	6.04	5.93
提醒要注意的事情 Provide precautionary advice	5.90	6.00
給予周全的資訊 Provide thorough information	5.45	5.80
推介目的地 Give advice on possible destinations	5.42	6.02
推介酒店 Give advice on possible hotels	5.33	5.55
提供個人化行程 Offer trips with personalised itineraries	5.22	5.50
開辦旅行團 Offer packaged tours	4.91	5.50
就當地的習俗或菜餚提供建議 Give advice on local customs or cuisine	4.74	5.35
有新產品或新服務時通知顧客 Inform me of new products or services	4.60	5.04
為郵輪旅程增值 Enhance my cruise with value-added benefits	4.17	5.15
推介食肆 Give advice on possible restaurants	4.08	4.85

一至七分等級表(一分等於極不同意；七分等於極為同意)

Scale 1-7 (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree)

　　除了上述之外，受訪者也要在七分等級表上，就十八項挑選旅行社的準則評分。在這方面兩個集群之間也有明顯的差異(見表二)。經常光顧旅客把無形的服務項目，像優良服務、旅遊知識、個人化服務、過往光顧的經驗之類，看作遠為重要的挑選準則。雖然偶然光顧旅客也覺得無形的服務項目重要，但他們給實質的項目所打的分數，例如營業時間、服務收費、免費送遞機票門票之類，一般來說卻要比經常光顧旅客來得高。**經常光顧旅客可能憑過往的經驗知道光顧旅行社的好處，並且把無形的服務視為不可或缺的特點；至於偶然光顧旅客則要有實質的好處才會光顧旅行社。旅行社要抓緊經常光顧旅客的話，就應當細察他們對不同挑選準則的評分，並且繼續勉力達到他們所看重的準則。**

agents should pay close attention to the selection criteria ratings and continue to focus on the top rated criteria of heavy users to retain these customers.

Travel arrangements

There was a significant difference between the two clusters in terms of how they purchased travel arrangements. Heavy users were likely to purchase travel arrangements from both an agent and online (49.4%), followed by a travel agent only (37.7%) and online only (6.5%); whereas approximately one-third of light users used both an agent and the Internet (34.1%) or an agent only (34.8%), followed by the Internet (17.0%). Heavy users were more likely to use both a travel agent and the Internet to purchase travel arrangements; therefore, it is a smart business practice for travel agents to have their own websites to provide travel related information. Agents may con-

表二：不同組別的顧客挑選旅行社的準則

Table 2: Selection criteria by travel agent user segment

挑選準則 Selection criteria	經常光顧旅客 Heavy users	偶然光顧旅客 Light users
值得信賴 Trustworthiness	6.79	6.60
優良服務 Quality service	6.79	6.46
旅遊知識或專業建議 Travel knowledge or expert advice	6.61	6.25
個人化服務 Personalised service	6.52	6.04
能找出最便宜的價格 Ability in locating the cheapest fares and rates	6.44	6.33
旅行社親切友善 Friendliness of travel agent	6.42	6.15
過往光顧旅行社的經驗 Past experience with travel agent	6.32	5.76
聲譽 Reputation	5.95	5.86
方便的營業時間 Convenient business hours	5.85	6.07
服務收費 Service charge	5.31	5.69
免費送遞機票、門票等 Free ticket delivery	5.18	5.48
營業地點的形象專業 Professional image of workplace	4.97	5.03
合資格的旅行社 Certified travel agent status	4.96	5.18
朋友或親戚推薦 Friend's/relative's recommendation	4.87	5.11
免費的電話號碼 Toll free telephone number	4.79	5.14
地點 Location	4.52	4.90
能加入喜歡的旅遊俱樂部 Membership in a preferred travel club	3.97	4.75
旅行社的規模 Size of travel agent	3.31	3.78

一至七分等級表(一分等於不重要；七分等於極為重要)

Scale 1-7 (1 = not important and 7 = very important)

旅遊安排

　　兩個集群的旅客在購買旅遊安排方面有顯著的區別。經常光顧旅客購買旅遊安排時，最可能是同時購自旅行社和互聯網(百分之四十九點四)，接着是僅只購自旅行社(百分之三十七點七)，然後是僅只購自互聯網(百分之六點五)。至於偶然光顧旅客方面，同時購自旅行社和互聯網的約有三分之一(百分之三十四點一)，僅只購自旅行社的也約有三分之一(百分之三十四點八)，接着是僅只購自互聯網的(百分之十七)。**由於經常光顧旅客較可能同時利用旅行社和互聯網購買旅遊安排，旅行社以自己的網站提供旅遊資訊的話，那當是明智的營商策略。為了照顧喜歡網上購買旅遊安排的顧客，旅行社不妨考慮在自己的網站上提供預**

sider offering online purchases through their website to capture the market which enjoys online shopping. The online booking option can take care of routine transactions; and when travellers have more complicated itineraries, they will likely think of calling the same agent for assistance.

Those respondents who had never purchased travel arrangements through the Internet were asked the reason why. Heavy users (55.9%) were more likely to indicate the lack of personal service than light users (36.9%) as a reason for not using the Internet. Therefore, travel agents should focus on providing personal service to retain and attract heavy user clients.

Implications for agents

While the heavy user group was smaller in size, members

訂服務。有了網上訂購的選擇後，一般的交易可以在網站處理；而當旅客的行程更為複雜時，他們也更可能致電給同一家旅行社求助。

有一些受訪者從來沒有在互聯網購買過旅遊安排，問卷問他們原因是甚麼。在經常光顧旅客之中，以網上購物缺乏個人服務為原因的，有百分之五十五點九，高於偶然光顧旅客的百分之三十六點九。因此，旅行社要抓緊和吸引經常光顧旅客，就應當着力提供個人服務。

對旅行社的啟示

儘管經常光顧旅客的人數較少，但他們卻可能為旅行社帶來較多進賬，因而也是較重要而較易取利的一群顧客。這情況正好和「八十‧二十法則」相符，意思是說百分之八十的收入來自百分之二十的顧客。因此，旅行社應當加深對這些顧客的瞭解。

在對旅行社的期望和挑選旅行社的準則方面，經常光顧旅客和偶然光顧旅客有一些十分明顯的差異。**一般來說，偶然光顧旅客比較看重旅行社能否提供建議和產品是否齊備。經常光顧旅客則認為，旅遊知識、過往光顧的經驗、優良服務、個人化服務、旅行社是否親切友善等等，是比較重要的挑選準則。因此，要抓緊現有的經常光顧的顧客，旅行社應該在提供卓越服務之餘，還強調本身的專長和旅遊知識。**旅行社也應該維持精密的客戶數據庫，並進行深入分析，以找出經常光顧的顧客和瞭解他們的旅遊模式，從而提供個人化的服務。由於經常光顧旅客重視過往光顧旅行社的經驗，而偶然光顧旅客則對旅行社有較高期望，因此集中精力抓緊現有的經常光顧旅客就來得更為划算。話雖如此，旅行社也不可忽視擴大客源的需要。**旅行社應當制訂計劃，宣傳本身能夠提供專業建議、備有多元化的旅遊產品和種種實質的好處，藉以培養出更多經常光顧的**

of this group may contribute more to travel agent revenues and thus are considered a significant and economically feasible market. This echoes the 80-20 rule that approximately 80% of the revenues are generated from 20% of the customers. Therefore, travel agents should learn more about this group.

Significant differences between heavy and light users were found in terms of their expectations and selection criteria of travel agents. Light users, in general, had higher expectations of travel agents regarding obtaining advice and product availability. Heavy users rated travel knowledge, past experience, quality service, personalised service and friendliness of the agent as more important selection criteria. Therefore, to retain current heavy user clients, travel agents should emphasise their expertise and travel knowledge, in addition to providing superior service. Detailed customer databases should be maintained and closely analysed to identify frequent buyers and monitor their travel patterns in order to provide personalised service. Since heavy users valued past experience with an agent and light users had higher expectations of travel agents, it makes economical sense to place priority on retaining the current heavy user clientele. However, agents cannot ignore the need to expand their customer base. Agents should establish programmes to cultivate more heavy users by increasing the awareness of the availability of professional advice, the variety of travel prod-

顧客。現有顧客稱許的信函，也可以用來證明顧客滿意旅行社的服務和專業建議。

研究結果表明，旅行社在若干方面仍然比互聯網優勝。**經常光顧旅客較可能以互聯網欠缺服務為理由，而不在網上購買旅遊安排。**不過，這項優勢說不定會隨時間推移而消失。比如說互聯網和資訊科技不住發展，網上供應商可能比傳統旅行社更能快捷地為顧客提供適切的服務。因此，**旅行社應該強調自己能夠提供優良服務，以及有能力為旅客解決問題。**這方面的例子如航班更改後主動聯絡旅客，或者航班取消後為旅客另作安排，又或者旅客身在外地而護照或旅行支票丟失或被盜時，幫助他們補領。旅行社提供售後服務，例如寄上感謝惠顧或歡迎歸來的心意卡，甚至是一些與旅遊無關的東西，像生日卡之類，都可以使顧客更能感受到個人化的經驗。**網上供應商能做到的，旅行社也要做到，而且還要有人與人的交流這長處。旅行社憑藉「高科技，多交流(high tech, high touch)」的吸引，當可維持競爭力於不墜。**

當眾多旅行社都力爭在旅遊分銷渠道中保有席位時，有能力繼續提供上佳服務的旅行社，就能從其他旅遊服務供應商中脫穎而出。**一些實質的項目，像方便的營業時間之類，對手很容易仿效，但業已證實的信任、可靠、個人化服務等卻較難模仿。經常光顧旅客特別在意找尋的，是能夠提供一流服務和旅遊專門知識而又可以信賴的旅行社。**因此，旅行社應當繼續致力為現有顧客提供堪作表率的服務，從而緊緊抓住他們。既然旅行社為顧客提供適切適用的旅遊知識和建議，因此要使顧客忠心不二，端視它們與現有顧客的關係，而顧客則憑藉過往光顧的經驗決定會否繼續光顧。**在當前不利的營商環境下，旅行社要生存下去，關鍵在於抓緊經常光顧的顧客，並且把偶然光顧的顧客變成經常光顧的顧客。**🆃🆃🅲

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ucts available, and tangible benefits. Testimonials from existing customers could be used to demonstrate clients' satisfaction with services and expert advice.

Results of the study showed that travel agents still held some advantages over the Internet. Heavy users were more likely to rate lack of service as a factor for not purchasing travel arrangements online. However, this advantage may erode over time. For instance, as the Internet and information technology advance, online providers may offer customised services and offer them at a faster rate than traditional travel agents could. Therefore, travel agents should emphasise their ability to provide good customer service as well as their ability to assist travellers in solving problems. For example, contacting travellers when a flight schedule is changed, making new arrangements when flights are cancelled, or helping travellers abroad replace passports or travellers' cheques which may be lost or stolen. Providing after sales services, such as appreciation or welcome home cards after a trip, and even items unrelated to travelling, including birthday cards, can add to the personalised experience. Travel agents should have the ability to provide everything the online providers can, plus the human touch. The "high tech, high touch" appeal could help travel agents sustain their competitive advantage.

As travel agents compete to remain as a viable entity in the travel distribution channel, those which can continue to provide superior services will differentiate themselves from other travel service providers. Tangible items, such as convenient business hours, can be easily copied by competitors; however, proven trust, reliability and personalised service are more difficult to replicate. Heavy users especially look for trustworthy agents which provide excellent service and travel expertise. Therefore, travel agents should continue to focus on providing exemplary service for their current clients so that they can retain the heavy users. Since travel agents provide a remarkably customised service of travel knowledge and advice, loyalty building relies on their relationships with existing clients who may determine their continued patronage based on past experience. The retention of heavy user clients and conversion of light users into heavy users are the most important task for travel agents to survive the current unfavourable business environment. 🆃🆃🅲

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