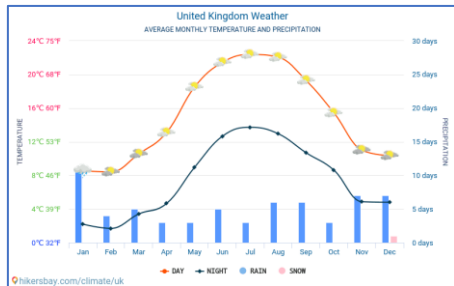
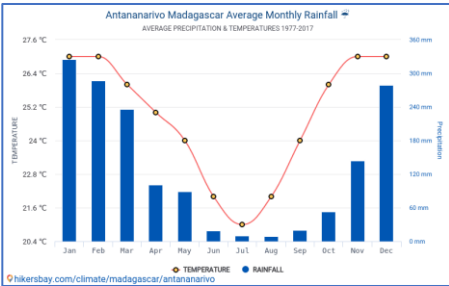


Whether customers select a tour operator for their holiday or whether they book the components themselves, **dates and time of year** are important. Different destinations operate high and low seasons with prices that reflect this. Many things can influence this but one of the main considerations is the climate. A ski holiday needs snow, and a beach holiday needs sun. Within Europe, the seasons tend to be similar to the UK, but across other continents, the considerations are different. High and low season prices are an important consideration and can be the deciding factor for many people when selecting the time of year that they choose to take their holiday. Families are often restricted to school holidays, particularly with recent changes in law that make it difficult for parents to take their children out of school. Holiday prices can double during school holidays. People who have retired and have more free time have much more flexibility to shop around and get the best deals that are often last minute.



Climates are not as reliable as they used to be. Winters are becoming milder with less snow, which is problematic for ski resorts. Summers are seeing record-breaking temperatures which will have an impact on domestic tourism figures. Spring is becoming warmer and, being less crowded and with cheaper travel, Europe is becoming more popular at this time. August is the busiest month of the year in Europe, which can mean crowds, queues and higher prices.

People have very different needs and preferences when it comes to **travel requirements and accessibility**, getting to and moving around a destination. Transport options will very much depend on the destination itself as it may be reached by road, air, rail or sea.

- People who don't like flying may select a domestic holiday or a European destination that can be reached by rail or sea.
- Families may prefer short travel times if they have younger children. In addition, road travel can be popular with families who need to carry a lot of luggage.
- People who require special assistance will look closely at the transport provider to make sure that they get the assistance they need.
- Cost is also an important factor and can largely sway a traveller to a particular destination if they do not want to spend a lot to reach their destination.
- Visa requirements for certain destinations will also be a factor when thinking about the accessibility of getting into the country

Information is key to planning a great holiday, so using a travel agent to book a holiday can help ensure that any travel requirements are met.

## Component 2 Customer Needs in Travel and Tourism



# B1 Customer Needs and Preferences

Most people will need to think about how much they can afford when it comes to booking a holiday and must ensure that they stick to a **budget**. Mass-market tour operators offer a range of products under their brand to cater for different budgets. The type of accommodation can change the price of a holiday in terms of its quality rating and board basis. Travel times, distance and method of transport will also impact on cost.

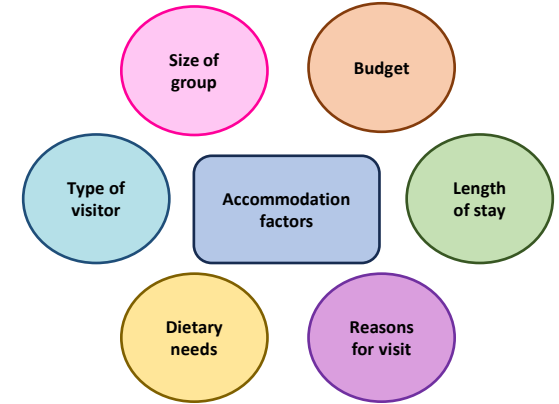
There are many different holiday types to choose from to give customers a choice of holidays linked to their **purpose of travel**:

- Activity
- Adventure
- Celebration
- Clubbing
- Culture
- Festivals
- Relaxation
- Sport
- Volunteering
- Well-being



<p><b>Counting the pennies</b></p> <p>Disposable income and budget will decide the type of holiday that people can afford. People may select the travel organisation depending on their budget.</p> <p>When customers began travelling again after the pandemic, some had saved money and could afford a luxury break, while others were feeling the effects of the 'cost of living' crisis.</p>	<p><b>Booking</b></p> <p>Making your own travel arrangements can work out cheaper if you are prepared to shop around and look for discounts, but quite often a good travel agent can find you a bargain.</p>
<p><b>Supplementary charges</b></p> <p>Families or single travellers can often pay increased supplements for family rooms or sole occupancy.</p>	<p><b>Discounting</b></p> <p>For people who are flexible and can travel at short notice, last-minute deals can offer a healthy discount. This is because tour operators have already chartered the aircraft and if they don't sell the seats, they will lose money.</p> <p>Tour operators such as TUI offer early bird discounts for people who can book early. Free child places are also offered by tour operators to encourage bookings.</p>

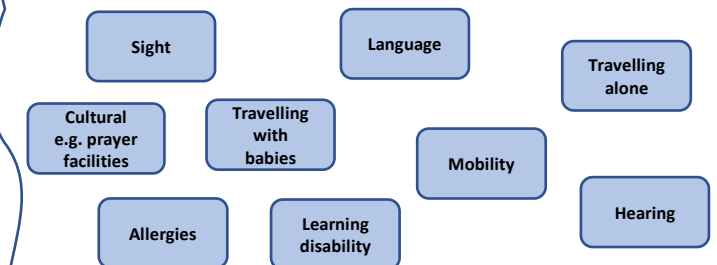
**Accommodation** needs will vary depending on customer needs. For instance, a solo traveller working their way around the world will most likely look for cheap, no-frills accommodation, however a business traveller visiting a city, who must work and host meetings, will look for top-quality hotels with dedicated working space. The reason for the trip or holiday away will influence the choice of accommodation.



**Stated needs** are those that customers tell you about directly. **Unstated needs** are those that a customer may not necessarily tell you about but that they will expect to be met. These are not always easy to identify. Customers may not tell you everything if they feel embarrassed by something.

- An example of a stated need could be if a customer tells you they need disabled access for a hotel room or reliable Wi-Fi.
- An example of unstated needs could be if a customer assumes there will be a cot available or facilities to heat their baby's milk.

It is important to understand that not all specific needs are linked to mobility and not all disabilities are visible. Below are examples of some of the **specific needs** travellers may have:



**Convenience of travel** is becoming more important to customers. The expansion of regional airports and frequency of flights means that customers have more choice where to travel from and who they travel with. ABTAs Travel Trends Report 2018 shows that other forms of transport are increasing e.g. train travel. What is convenient for one customer may be different to another customer, so there needs to be a variety of travel options to meet every customer's desired needs.

Flying does remain the most popular method of travel overseas and this means that airports are becoming more congested, and the airport experience is becoming less attractive overall. On-board services were once complementary and now they need to be paid for in most cases, so airlines differentiate themselves on these options. Choosing convenience to meet time needs:

- Destination routes - most people will travel from airports closest to them
- Departure times and frequency
- This will increase the amount of time people spend in their destination
- On-board services - these are important to certain customers and will change their preferences.
- Transfer times and methods of destination transport - families with young children may not want to spend hours on a coach reaching their hotel so different types of transport from the destination arrival place will alter their decisions.
- Destination infrastructure - includes things like health and hygiene and being able to get around.

Most tour operators now offer more **flexibility**, allowing customers to 'pick and mix' the elements of the holiday to suit their specific needs. Different options can be applied to transport, accommodation, activities and meals. This can benefit the tour operator by increasing sales and meet customer's needs by providing the flexibility that they want.

- Transport – some customers may prefer a particular airline based on experience and loyalty, for example.
- Accommodation – some customers may prefer a basic accommodation, whereas others opt for luxury.
- Meals – many families prefer all-inclusive meals so children can eat and drink when it suits them, for example.
- Excursions – these differ depending on the destination and the market segment. TUI offers a service on their website where customers click on their holiday destination and explore the excursions and activities suitable for them ahead of time.

On many modes of transport there are different classifications and levels of service. Scheduled airlines such as British Airways offer different cabin classifications such as economy, business class and first class. Sea, rail and road travel can have similar classifications depending on the customer's budget. Eurostar, for example, offers three classes of travel. Similarly, accommodation operates within a star rating quality system so customers can make a choice that suits their budget and their needs.

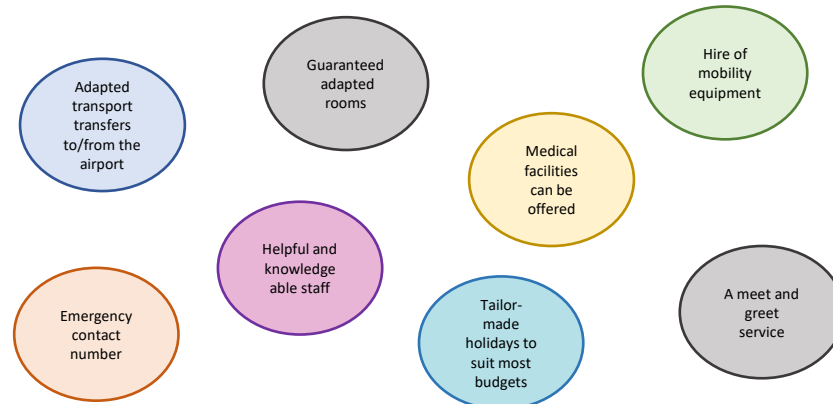
Star rating	Usual location	Products and services
1-star	Usually situated in less developed areas of towns or cities	Few, or no additional services, just the room
2-star	Usually situated closer to towns, cities and airports	Comfortable and functional with limited facilities
3-star	An accessible location	A good level of comfort with some additional facilities and levels of service, such as room-service
4-star	A prime location	High-quality accommodation with fitness and leisure facilities, business facilities, room-service and a range of food and drink options
5-star	Premium locations	Luxury accommodation with high-quality design. Provides extra products and services such as pillow menus and upgrades.

## Component 2 Customer Needs in Travel and Tourism

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



It is more important than ever that organisations meet specific customer needs relating to **practical assistance**. Customers have choice and want to be certain that any specific practical assistance needs are met.



People are more aware than ever before of social and environmental responsibility. Tour operators and providers of travel and tourism products need to be equally aware and need to act to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive impacts of tourism.

**Responsible tourism** is about making changes for the long-term benefit of local people, tourists and travel companies.

While customers may be driven mainly by price and location, the responsible travel market is growing. Customers can select a responsible travel company to book a holiday with and many prefer to use an organisation with a responsible travel policy in place. People who have a preference and interest in being responsible may:

- Ask to see the organisations responsible travel policy.
- Check accommodation to see what they do to support responsible tourism is that destination.
- Consider the carbon footprint of the organisations they book with.
- Make travel arrangements that minimise emissions.
- Ask to see the organisations accessibility policy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08Nxj-7RSQ>

#### TUI's sustainable tourism strategy



The image of a tourist destination, or a travel and tourism, is important to its success. Some travellers desire their holiday to have a certain status and exclusivity. The image of the location and accommodation is important to them and may be based on what they have read online or on social media. Other travellers' reviews, including travel influencers and critics, allow customers to build a picture of a destination and this informs their choice about whether or not to visit that location. Marketing can be highly effective in influencing customer's choice and behaviour – tourism agencies are keen to promote a positive image to encourage tourism as this can be a main source of income for the national or local economy.

It is important that the costing and pricing of a travel and tourism product is pitched right to attract customers and to create revenue for organisations. Customers need products that are accessible in terms of meeting their budget and allowing them to book in a way that suits them. Customers want choices that enable them to purchase products with security and peace of mind.

- **Pricing** - Prices of holidays, car hire, transport and days out can change daily. Most tour operators use a dynamic pricing model, which means that prices can go up or down at any time. Many things will influence this, such as when people want to travel and where they want to travel to and from. Mid-week travel is often cheaper than travelling on a Saturday or Sunday. Last-minute flights used to be seen as a bargain opportunity but this is no longer necessarily the case as some flight prices can increase in price nearer to the departure date. Travel comparison sites can help customers to keep track of pricing changes through travel alerts. Supply and demand dictates holiday prices, which is why holidays are more expensive during the school holiday.
- **Booking options** – ABTA predicted the ‘new age of the expert’ in their 2022 trends report, suggesting an increased demand for trusted travel advice following the Covid-19 pandemic. Travel agents are ATOL protected, which provides customers with travel security, Digital booking companies are an alternative to using a travel agent, examples include Booking.com, On the Beach and Skyscanner. Many organisations now use apps as a marketing tool and an easy way for customers to book their holidays and trips.
- **Discounts** - Brand loyalty can count for a lot, so in a competitive industry, first time buyer discounts can be a useful promotional tool to attract new customers. Travel companies may also use an advanced booking offer to secure more bookings. Or they may sign up with other organisations to offer discounts such as Merlin Entertainments and Kellogg's breakfast packs.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZBIO\\_qkpY8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZBIO_qkpY8)



JULY FLIGHTS FROM <b>£75 PP</b> BOOK NOW	AUGUST FLIGHTS FROM <b>£69 PP</b> BOOK NOW	SEPTEMBER FLIGHTS FROM <b>£70 PP</b> BOOK NOW
--	--	---

Leisure time is often defined as free time away from business, work, domestic jobs and education. **Leisure travel** is travelling for pleasure, enjoyment, relaxation and to have a break from day-to-day life. According to research by Statista, UK city breaks were the leading type of holiday in the UK in 2019, which then changed to beach holidays by 2022. Time away for special occasions are still very popular and people living in big towns or cities may enjoy coastal or countryside breaks for peace and relaxation.

After the Covid-19 pandemic, many people experienced a shift in how they prioritised work and wellbeing, with wellbeing becoming increasingly important. As a result, customers often expect **health and fitness facilities** to be available in hotels. If a customer has booked a high-end hotel, they may well expect free use of a well-equipped gym and pool, possibly with spa facilities.

**Business travel** is on the increase and these travellers require business facilities to operate efficiently. Accommodation with conference and meeting rooms may be required for networking and face-to-face meetings, along with flexible facilities for hospitality. ‘Bleisure’ travel is a growing market that is a term for the blending of business and leisure travel, which has become more popular with the increase in remote working and with more businesses encouraging agile working.

More customers than ever want to travel with their **pets**. Staycations became more popular as lockdown restrictions eased and customers became used to travelling with their pets, with more owners wanting to include their four-legged friend in future travel plans.

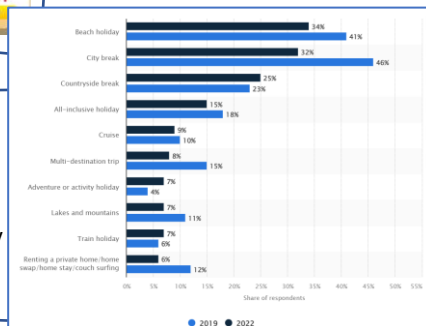


## Component 2 Customer Needs in Travel and Tourism



### B3: Customer needs and different types of travel

**Corporate or business travel** is associated with work but takes place away from the usual place of employment. It may or may not include an overnight stay. During and after the pandemic this type of travel has decreased due to the limits of face-to-face contact and increase of virtual working environments. Companies can often prefer face-to-face meetings, trade shows and training events, allowing them to network and develop business opportunities. This has pushed corporate travel to increase further since the pandemic



**Specialist travel** is usually linked with a hobby, sport or interest, and can include:

- Cultural activities
- Adventure tourism
- Education and gap year travel
- Conservation, sustainable tourism and responsible travel
- Weddings and honeymoons
- Health tourism

Customers will require different types of **service and assistance** depending on the type of holiday they want, which method they use to book the holiday and what their specific needs and preferences are.

- Families may consider flexibility of service as a deciding factor when choosing their travel arrangements or booking a holiday. Family friendly facilities that offer flexibility with mealtimes and flight times can make a difference to their holiday experience. Many families may be attracted to travel and tourism providers that offer child-friendly facilities such as equipment (e.g. highchairs), children's menus, family rooms and outdoor play areas/kids clubs.
- Travelling and visiting tourism destinations can be a stressful experience for people with disabilities, and it can be more stressful for people with hidden disabilities. There are many ways that organisations can help make buildings and facilities more accessible, such as:
  - Markings on glass doors
  - Handrails on stairways
  - Using contrasting colours and tactile (felt through touch) markings to highlight steps, edges and obstacles
  - Good lighting
  - Clear signs

Gatwick airport ensures their facilities are accessible for their customers who require adaptations for hearing impairments, visual impairments, different language needs, limited mobility and hidden disabilities.



People can **visit friends and relatives (VFR)** as domestic, inbound or outbound tourists. It is very lucrative and beneficial to the travel and tourism industry – not only do people spend money travelling to the destination, but they will also spend money en route and during their stay.

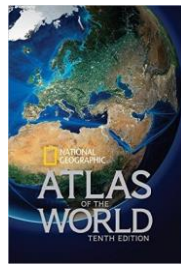
The economic impact of **day trips** nationally is huge. VisitBritain estimated the loss to the economy in domestic tourism spending in 2020 and 2021 (during the pandemic) was more than £97 billion. The following are a number of examples of day trips:

- ‘Special’ shopping trips for items you don’t usually buy
- Going out for a meal
- Going to visitor attractions, such as the zoo, historic house, etc.
- Taking part in sports, including exercise classes, going to the gym, etc.
- Going out for entertainment, such as the cinema or theatre.
- Personal special events, such as a christening, wedding or graduation.

In order to satisfy the needs and preferences of the customer, travel agents will need to know where to find suitable **sources of information**.

- Websites – a quick and useful way to find out information on just about anything.
- Guidebooks – based on information gathered from experience and first-hand information. Guidebooks such as *Lonely Planet* and *Rough Guide* are popular and regularly updated.
- Tourist leaflets – commonly used at visitor attractions and in tourist information centres. Tour operators use them to promote excursions to people on holiday as a visual way of engaging people.
- Atlases – maps can be used to locate different countries but they can also be used to identify other geographical features such as rivers or national parks. They include graphs and data about climate and populations.
- Holiday brochures – a tour operator may print fewer of them but there is still a market for them, particularly with an older market segment.
- Tourist information centres – a great resource for people who are new to an area and like to have face-to-face contact to gather information without having to carry out their own research.

<https://www.roughguides.com/>  
<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/>



### DID YOU KNOW?

A study suggests that in face-to-face communication, the majority of what is actually communicated is portrayed through non-verbal communication:

- Words account for only 7% of the overall message.
- Tone of voice accounts for 38% of the overall message.
- Body language accounts for 55% of the overall message.

Putting together a holiday **travel plan** can be a complex process that needs careful planning to make sure that it provides the customer with a seamless experience that meets their specific needs and preferences. A good travel plan makes for a smooth trip. It should include:

- Customer details
- Dates
- Transport
- Accommodation
- Activities, attractions and excursions
- Health risks and requirements
- Safety and security concerns
- Entry requirement
- Total and itemised breakdown of costs

Travel plans benefit the customer and the travel organiser by helping to:

- Manage time by planning travel times, connections, check-in and admission times
- Budget and manage money
- Make travel between one place and another quicker and easier
- Priorities and make sure that all the essentials are included
- Make sure that everything is included, and that nothing has been forgotten

## Component 2 Customer Needs in Travel and Tourism

### B4: Travel planning to meet customer needs and preferences



Travel Itinerary									
Purpose: Meetings & Training Destination: New York City					Trip Start: 5/14/15 Trip End: 5/22/15				
<b>DEPARTING FLIGHT</b>									
Date	Departs	Airline	Confirm #	Departure	Gate	Arrives	Airport	More Info	
5/14/15	6:00 AM	Southwest	8DJDOPG	Abu-Dhabi -ABQ	B11	9:30 AM	Houston -HOU	CTBL-uk	
5/14/15	9:30 AM	Southwest	8DJDOPG	Houston -HOU	B11	4:00 PM	New York City -LGA		
<b>CAR RENTAL</b>									
Date	Time	Confirm #	Location	Company	More Info				
5/14/15	5:35 AM	Pick Up	88869	Laguardia Airport	Avis	CTBL-uk			
5/22/15	8:00 PM	Drop Off		Laguardia Airport					
<b>HOTEL</b>									
Date	Name	Confirm #	Street	City	Room	Check-Out	More Info		
5/14/15	Hilton	83022	1234 Madison Ave	New York & City	825	8/22/2015 @ 12am	CTBL-uk		
<b>MEETINGS AND EVENTS</b>									
Date	Start	Venue	Street	Topic	Room	End			
5/14/15	3:30 PM	Regal Conference Hall	444 Main Street	Planning	Conference Room 6	6:15 PM			
5/15/15	8:30 AM	Regal Conference Hall	444 Main Street	Budgeting Contracts	Conference Room 5	4:50 PM			
5/16/15	3:30 PM	Regal Conference Hall	444 Main Street	Planning	Conference Room 6	6:15 PM			
5/17/15	8:30 AM	Regal Conference Hall	444 Main Street	Budgeting Contracts	Conference Room 5	4:50 PM			
<b>RETURNING FLIGHT</b>									
Date	Departs	Airline	Confirm #	Departure	Gate	Arrives	Airport	More Info	
5/22/15	9:30 AM	Southwest	8DJDOPG	New York City -LGA	B11	4:00 PM	Houston -HOU	CTBL-uk	
5/22/15	6:00 PM	Southwest	8DJDOPG	Houston -HOU	B11	8:00 PM	Abu-Dhabi -ABQ		



### Vocabulary

Practical assistance  
 Dynamic packaging  
 Carbon footprint  
 Agile working  
 Petcation  
 Travel Plan

To be successful at discovering customers' need, you will need questioning skills. Using the right questioning techniques and asking the right questions is key to obtaining the best information to cater for the needs and preferences of the customer. Some customers will know exactly where they want to go on holiday, some may have some ideas and others will have no idea at all. There are a number of factors to consider when it comes to identifying a customer's **specific needs**:

- Time – people who have more free leisure time can go further and may be interested in travelling to multiple destinations. People who are restricted for time may only consider destinations closer to home.
- Travelling with other people – consider how travelling as a family, alone or as part of a group can influence a choice of destination.
- Weather – people who want a city break to explore will probably not want extreme heat. Sun-seekers who want a beach holiday will want guaranteed sunshine.
- Budget – it is important to establish a customer's budget and decide whether they are a budget or a luxury traveller.
- The experience that a customer is looking for – understanding their motivation and reasons for travel based on the experience they are looking for is important.

Putting together a package to suit customer needs and preferences means getting as much information as possible. Effective communication skills are key to getting accurate information from customers, and this means listening:

