

AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM For Travel Personnel

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Travel Contacts

Is the travel business a profession? Persons earning a living within any one phase of the industry prefer to believe that they do enjoy professional status because of their specialized knowledge. A true profession, however, implies preparation by a course of study and training to properly equip an individual for his chosen career.

Put the question, "How did you happen to enter the travel business?" to any number of persons now so engaged. The replies will be varied but the great majority will indicate a predominant element of chance affecting the decision. No particular training influenced the action, and knowledge of the business was gained through trial and error on the job.

There is no question that there are many capable and experienced persons in the travel business. Unfortunately, the trial-and-error method of learning on the job results in acquired information which is pertinent only to the immediate job. To attain real professional status such specialization should be augmented by a broad knowledge of all phases of the travel field.

Physicians, lawyers, and certified public accountants may specialize in certain phases of their professions. Because of a broad background of study and training, however, such specialists are also thoroughly grounded in the fundamentals of their respective vocations. Due to the lack of a formalized general educational program for the travel interests, the industry is composed of a group of specialists who are experts in their own narrow field.

There is definite need for a comprehensive educative program supported by all branches of the travel business to prepare young men and women for entrance into it. Recognizing such a need, the hotels have fostered the establishment of a complete 4-year course in hotel management at several leading universities. This example might well be followed by the railroad, steamship, air transport, bus, and travel agency branches. Rather than establish separate schools for each branch, however, a single school of travel could be created at a selected university. Many advantages would result from a unified school or schools for such study, since training and knowl-

edge along all lines of activity in the travel field would be highly desirable for the personnel engaged in any one particular branch.

A school of travel could logically be established within a school of business at a specified university. A 4-year business course with a major in travel would ground young men and women in the fundamentals of industry practice.

With the cooperation of the several component segments of the travel business, employment could be furnished to students during vacation periods which would actually be in the nature of an apprenticeship. Practical on-the-job experience could be gained by working in ticket offices of carriers, at travel agencies, at hotels and resorts, and by actual travel via various types of carrier.

As a further refinement, a graduate institute of travel could be established. This could be a year of intensive advanced study for graduates of the basic course who had entered any one phase of the travel industry and satisfactorily completed a required period of private employment. The prerequisite of such private employment is analogous to the young physician's internship.

Trained students entering private employment would probably enjoy little economic advantage in the early stages of their employment. However, such students, on the average, would progress more rapidly than untrained personnel without formalized background.

The advantages to be gained by the establishment of such an educational program are: A better service would be rendered to the public by travel business personnel; a definite improvement in the professional status of travel personnel would be realized, thereby attracting persons with a background of educational training in their field; the functions and problems of all phases of travel would be understood and appreciated by travel personnel as a whole.

The various businesses associated with travel in the United States which could support such an enterprise would no doubt find direct and ultimate benefits accruing to their own interests. Certainly this would provide a happy solution for the travel executives who have tried over and over again to find the right man for the job.