



THINKING BEYOND...™

Should You Use a Travel Agent or a Tour Guide in Planning for your Family's Wealth?

Let's imagine that you wish to visit a foreign country called "Gardenia" that is world famous for its spectacular natural wonder. Gardenia, however, is strikingly different than America in a number of ways.

An example is how Gardenians greet one another. In our country, a handshake is the customary greeting between strangers. In Gardenia, if you greet a stranger with a handshake, you are saying that you find them offensive and wish to challenge them to a duel to the death. Their greeting is to put both hands on each side of the stranger's head and kiss them on the forehead.

There is also a major difference in their language. No one in Gardenia speaks English. In fact, their language is considered by most linguists as the most complex and difficult language in the world to understand and speak. Even if you could get a dictionary of the language, you would find it nearly impossible to say the words because the language requires you to articulate sounds that you have never learned to make.

Then there is Gardenia's economic system. In America, we have been taught to negotiate with people to get the best prices. In Gardenia, sellers set prices too low. The buyer is expected, as a show of generosity and kindness, to negotiate the price up to ensure that the seller will make

enough money to stay in business. To try to negotiate the price down, or to not negotiate the price up, would be the ultimate insult and violation of business ethics. You could alienate yourself from the business community overnight. The country is very small, and word of your offense would spread quickly. In a very short time, you would not be welcome in any business establishment, including restaurants and inns.

There are also hundreds of other cultural differences. And, as you can see, to not know them in advance could prove to be disastrous, if not fatal.

Now, if you were planning a trip to Gardenia, would you want to use a travel agent or a tour guide for this trip? A travel agent

will buy your airline tickets, make your reservations at the appropriate inns, get your reservation for a car rental and possibly get you a road map of the country with some of the better sights.

A tour guide goes with you on your trip as a personal escort. He may or may not be the one who buys your airline tickets, makes inn and car reservations, but he will be right by your side on the entire trip as your personal guide. Your tour guide has been to Gardenia many times. He speaks fluent Gardenian and intimately knows all their unusual cultural differences. He will

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also be able to show you all the sights and experiences that uninitiated tourists will never see or find, because only the locals and seasoned tour guides know about these incredible sights and adventures.

Which would you prefer to use for this trip, a travel agent or a tour guide? The answer is obvious. You would much prefer to have an experienced expert take you on this trip than brave it alone or with only the help of someone who has bought your tickets and made your reservations.

The same is true with planning for your family's wealth. Do you want to only use people who can tell you how to get there but leave you on your own to figure out what to do. Or would you rather use someone who can carefully walk you through the entire planning thought process? How about a professional who has personally been there and taken many others there, someone who can explain all your travel options and sightseeing possibilities? The guides of Family Wealth Counseling can show you possibilities that you may never recall hearing of from the "travel agents" you have used in the past who only specialize in "buying tickets and making reservations."

You need someone who can ask you all the critical life questions that must be answered to best plan for your family's wealth. You need someone who can help you reduce the answers to these questions to a written family mission statement. You need someone who knows how to put

everything together into a tight, efficient and fulfilling plan that allows you to leverage your time, talent and treasures to everyone's benefit. You need someone who can then help you choose just the right planning tools and techniques to achieve the highest and best good for you, your heirs and your fellow human beings.

Others in the business will simply ask you where you want to go and then plan accordingly, help you make your arrangements, and send you on your way.

A guide will take the time to ask you numerous questions, find out your interests and offer many suggestions for your consideration. He will help you plan and then go with you for the entire trip.

For affluent families, Family Wealth Counselors are life's tour guides. We specialize in investing significant amounts of time helping you ask and answer the questions why, who, when, where and how. We deeply care about you and your heirs, and want to help you use all your resources wisely. Because we take the time to get to know you, we understand what kind of heritage and legacy you want to leave both now and after you're gone. When it finally comes time to plan the "trip," the process is really quite easy and very fulfilling.

If you have never considered using a guide for planning your family's wealth, you might find this to be one of the most significant and rewarding experiences of your life.