

People who apply for a passport by mail do not visit the Passport Office in person. Again, however, there is an opportunity to make information available when the passport is returned. While the research did not provide a quantitative assessment of the number of people who receive the "Bon Voyage, But..." booklet, no focus group participants recalled getting a copy of the booklet when their passport was returned by mail. In the case of the store-front operations, only the participants in Montreal received the booklet with their passport.

Several participants also pointed out that, while all travelers must obtain a passport, it is valid for a five year period, during which time they could travel without being in further contact with the Passport Office. The participants felt that it would be important to remind repeat travelers (who may have obtained a passport three or four years ago) of the steps they should take to prepare for their trip. Therefore, the Passport Office would not be an effective channel through which to reach repeat travelers who are between passport renewal years.

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Travel Agents. The majority of travelers, whether they are going on vacation or on a foreign trip, make their travel arrangements through an agent. Very few focus group participants (i.e. one or two) booked their travel directly through an airline.

While travel agents were seen as the first point of contact for many travelers, travelers did not view them as an objective source of information. For example, some people explained that travel agents would be inclined to sell packages (and push certain destinations), making them reluctant to give travelers objective advice on precautions they should take. *"The travel agents are biased. It depends on how much you're paying."* *"The travel agents are biased. It depends on how much you're paying."*

Some people also felt that travel agents are not equipped to provide the complete range of information typically required by travelers. *"I find that the information I receive from the travel agency is very limited. They don't tell you exactly how to prepare."*