One Mission for Airport Web Site: Customer Service

Great Southern Travel is now running the online reservation system on the Airport’s website, flyspringfield.com. It’s the convenience of online booking with the peace of mind that comes with a travel agent.

“Customers who choose flyspringfield.com to book air travel to and from Springfield will have access to friendly customer service representatives right inside the Airport,” says Kris Conley, managing director of Great Southern. “We can provide this unique service because our travel office is located in the terminal. Our staff is there to provide personal service.”

“One of the big challenges air travelers have is making changes to their itinerary once it’s booked. They get on the phone to their airline and get stuck on hold,” says Gary Cyr, Airport director of aviation. “Great Southern’s toll free customer service number is answered by a real person in the agency’s Airport office.

“The majority of air travel is booked using an online service or through a travel agency. We are excited to offer this service as it provides travelers the best qualities of both,” says Conley. “Customers have the convenience of booking online, but also the personal service that a travel agency offers.”

“Flying is a challenge these days,” says Cyr. “This partnership is one way the Airport can help make the travel experience less stressful.”

The reservation system is available on the Airport website: www.flyspringfield.com/booking.htm.

Besides making reservations, the page offers general tips for finding low fares:

- Flexible travel plans can save money. Airlines frequently have lower fares if you include a Saturday night stay over. If you’re thinking about a return flight on Friday or Saturday, check out the cost for returning on Sunday or Monday. Tuesdays and Wednesdays can be good return days too.
- Buy at the last minute. Yes, it sounds crazy, but sometimes airlines cut prices at the last minute. This only works if you’re ultra flexible.
- Subscribe to the email alerts offered by travel web sites and airlines. This is a good way to get a quick heads-up on low fares.
- Search multiple sources. Don’t depend on just one travel web site. Have several in the mix and be sure to include airline web sites.
- Put a travel agent in your mix. Remember, they keep track of fares day-in and day-out. A good one can anticipate price drops. Don’t be put off by the fact that they charge fees. Travel web sites charge fees too.
- Search often. Airlines have a game of sorts that they play with fares. Example: XYZ Airline advertises $30 fares to Rome. What the airline doesn't say is that there are only ten seats available at that price. So if you search often, you’ll have a better chance of snapping up one of those bargain fares. Not only that, but fares can change from day to day, hour to hour—another reason to search often.
- Plan ahead. Book your flight as far out as possible. Fares start going up considerably when you purchase less than 21 days before the flight. Why? As the departure date gets closer, the supply of seats gets smaller—and the price goes up. Bottom line: if at all
possible, plan ahead. If you put off the purchase until the last moment, you'll pay a premium.

- Don’t fall into the trap of assuming that prices are always the same. They’re not! Just because they’re high one day, doesn’t mean they’ll be high the next.

About the Airport

With direct flights to 12 cities, the Springfield-Branson National Airport (SGF) enjoys connectivity to the national air system that is unusual for a small hub air market.

While passenger numbers have not consistently increased every year, the overall average growth over the past 15 years is 4% a year, with total boarding passengers over the period growing by 93%.

In 2009 SGF was the only major airport in the region to finish the year with positive passenger growth. The four percent increase in total passengers, when compared to the year before, came despite an 11 percent cut in the airport’s 2009 flight schedule. Similar cuts occurred at airports across the country. As a whole, the nation’s airports experienced approximately a 6% decline in passengers.

About Great Southern Travel

Founded in 1977, Great Southern Travel, a division of Great Southern Bank, is one of the largest travel agencies in Missouri and is ranked among the top 75 agencies in the nation. The company has offices open seven days a week, 364 days a year and operates offices in Springfield, including a full-service office in the Springfield-Branson National Airport, Branson, Columbia, Joplin, Lebanon, Lee’s Summit, and St. Louis. Great Southern Travel corporate headquarters is located in Springfield, MO., at 3424 S. National.

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