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Introduction

The Direct Reference System (DRS) provided by Sabre Travel Network is an effective marketing and reference tool that provides Sabre ConnectedSM travel agents with real-time marketing and reference information that is input and maintained by participating travel suppliers. The DRS allows travel suppliers to reach virtually thousands of Sabre Connected travel agents worldwide.

This handbook section is designed to assist in writing an effective DRS as well as creation and maintenance process.

Objectives

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

• Create effective marketing and reference pages
• Create category page by following a recommended category convention
• Access the online Direct Reference System
• Modify existing category pages
• Create custom category pages
• Remove category pages from publication

Benefits

• Reduce Costs
  • Easy to update and modify pages
  • Link content from your own Web site
  • Eliminates need to call help desks
• Deliver effective marketing and reference information
  • Accessible via web browser from any workstation
  • Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week

Tips

Bookmark the Direct Reference System Administration login page for easy single-click access.
Direct Reference System as a Marketing Tool

The DRS is a powerful marketing tool. Travel agents around the world book about 70 percent of all travel today. The Sabre® global distribution software enables our agency customers, with approximately 56,000 locations worldwide, to make reservations with more than 400 airlines, 50 car rental companies, 232 tour operators, nine cruise lines, 36 railroads and 234 hotel companies covering approximately 60,000 hotel properties.

The DRS is your "online brochure" and a great deal of planning and preparation should be placed into its creation and maintenance. A creatively designed and well-maintained DRS will increase both visibility and bookings, providing a competitive edge.

It is important to include all topics that are relevant to promoting your products and services. Some examples of the type of information to include are:

- A company overview/history
- Commission
- Frequent Customer Programs
- Special offers/contests/promotions
- Travel industry discounts
- Bulletin Information

These are only a few of the possible categories to include in the DRS. Individual choice will vary depending upon the nature of products and services available in the Sabre system. We highly recommend categories that are requested by our travel agency customers. These categories and procedures will be covered in more detail in this section.
It is recommended that your marketing department be involved when creating and updating the marketing side of the *DRS*.

Once a *Sabre Connected* travel agent accesses the *DRS*, it is important to keep the reader moving to different categories or topics. This exposes the agent to the many types of products and services offered and any special promotions advertised.

Advertise within a page and give the travel agent the *DRS* category to access the page containing the promotional material. For example, give a high level overview of a seasonal promotion in the Promotions category, then refer the travel agent to the Ticketing category for ticketing instructions.

As a basic rule, all pages should have advertising and a category reference guiding the travel agent to other areas within the *DRS*.

Another example of creative marketing is the use of contests or “fun” topics that motivate the travel agent to access and read your content.

Some ideas used by some of our travel supplier customers are:

- Horoscopes
- Jokes
- Soap Opera Updates
- Recipes
- Contests

If you are using any of these methods, remember that a travel agents basic function is to book travel for clients. Keeping these topics short and uncomplicated will make this type of marketing successful. Tie in product and service information to make it educational and productive for the agent as well.
Contests are one method of increasing bookings and have been used quite successfully by some travel suppliers. Travel agents can be alienated by poorly designed contests, as owner/managers prefer that agents not participate if the contest makes them unproductive. When designing a DRS contest keep these points in mind:

- **Productive**

  Consider tying booking activity to the contest. For example, base the contest on fulfilled travel arrangements.

- **Educational**

  List questions about the product or service being promoted.

- **Simplicity**

  Simplifying the rules of the contest will ensure that less time is needed to participate.

- **Bigger is not better**

  An elaborate contest is not always the most successful. Smaller, fun and educational contests that offer more chances to win have proven to be very successful with travel agents.

- **Have objectives when designing the contest**

  Remember that the purpose of the contest is to increase bookings or increase awareness of new products and/or services offered to travel agents via Sabre Travel Network. Design the contest accordingly.

- **Legal Obligations**

  Remember to have your legal department or legal advisor review any proposed contest to ensure it complies with all applicable laws and regulations.
Some travel suppliers have successfully used a fictitious character or spokesperson, like "Dear Direct Reference System," to increase company awareness and visibility in the travel agency community. Creating a column that generates interaction between the travel supplier and the travel agent can increase discretionary business, as agents feel more comfortable recommending a company they are most familiar with.

Remember, the idea is to tie product and service information into this area to increase awareness, bookings, and create additional advertising opportunities as these pages will be accessed more frequently.

The DRS is also an excellent travel agent reference source. The more questions that can be answered through the DRS the fewer follow-up calls to the travel supplier’s call center. When designing this section, think of the types of calls that are answered by the toll free number and then address those questions in the DRS.

Some examples of topics are:
- Special booking formats/procedures
- Travel agent commission
- Frequent customer program information
- Group policies
- Sales representative and contact information

The DRS is used to train travel agents as well. An electronic format guide, or pages that include training tips and information to help sell products and services, can have a positive effect on bookings. Training can also be turned into a contest opportunity by having agents queue answers to a DRS quiz, set up on a monthly or quarterly basis for a prize drawing.

Toll Free phone numbers and Web site addresses in the DRS defeat the purpose of a travel agent using Sabre Travel Network products. Our goal is to have an environment in which the travel agent can take care of the customers’ needs all in one place. The agent should be able to make a booking and have all questions answered through the Sabre system without having to pick up the phone or go to a separate Web site.
A Toll Free Phone or local contact number is permissible on the Contacts, Group and/or Help category pages. The Help category page informs the travel agent of the resources available for travel supplier automation assistance. In addition to the phone numbers, also include the hours of operation, applicable time zones and calling area.

Advertising should be concentrated on frequently accessed categories. Categories that have low access counts or are not being accessed at all should be re-evaluated for an update. Usage reports are available by contacting your Sabre representative.

Think “Global” From Australia to Africa and Alaska to Argentina - Sabre Travel Network covers the globe. The following points are important to remember when “globalizing” the DRS to develop information that addresses the needs of all customers worldwide.

- **Target Marketing:**

  Ensure the content is directed or targeted at a specific group of travel agents in terms of geographic location

  Example:

  **Attention Canadian Travel Agents**
  
  Or
  
  **Attention ALL Sabre Travel Agents Worldwide**
• **Price Reference:**

Does the data reference a price? If so, place the currency code in the price quoted so that the travel agent knows which currency to convert. The product must be available to sell through Sabre Travel Network.

**Example:**

Total Price AUD 450.00

• **Time Reference:**

Time should be stated using the 24-hour clock along with the specific time zone and country. Including the country is very important as other countries have different time zones.

**Example:**

Office Hours 0900 – 1700 U.S. Pacific Daylight Time /PDT/

• **Date Reference:**

When a date reference is included, do not use numbers such as 2/15/04. Ensure that the 3-letter abbreviation for the month is used, as in 15FEB04. The reason for this is that 10/7/04 is October 7th in some parts of the world and July 10th in others.

**Example:**

Information effective from 06Jun04 – 15Nov04

• **Season Reference:**

Change the reference of a season, like spring or fall to a dated time frame. To state that a product will be available in the "Fall '04" does not clarify which part of the globe's "Fall '04"!

**Example:**

Product will be available 3rd Quarter04
Direct Reference System Style

The way information is presented will directly affect the way it is received and utilized by travel agents. Keep the audience in mind while writing and designing.

Some key points to remember:

• Avoid the use of jargon or abbreviations
  Words, phrases or terms that are unique to your company may not be universally understood.

• Keep information current and accurate
  All information should be current, accurate, and updated on a regular basis. Data integrity is a major concern of Sabre Travel Network since the travel agent is depending upon us to provide accurate information. The lack of current updates reflects upon the quality and commitment of your business.

• Interaction with Sabre Travel Network marketing programs
  The DRS "interacts" with virtually all Sabre Travel Network marketing programs such as Bulletin Updates advertising and Sign In messages. All of these programs can refer the travel agent back to the DRS. *Note: When participating in these programs, it is very important to keep your content up to date, reinforcing the credibility of the data.

• Check for correct spelling
  Spelling mistakes reflect poorly on the quality of the product. Proofread your content to ensure that all words are spelled correctly.

• Write clearly and concisely
  Clarity will prevent misunderstandings. Customers appreciate simplicity when the DRS gets directly to the point.

• Use proper grammar and sentence structure
  Your content should be well organized, logical and grammatically correct.

• Be creative
  Let personal and professional style work to help sell the product. Fun and humor, combined with the marketing message, can assist in producing an effective page.

Example:**************************************************
  Attention ALL Sabre Travel Agents
  Special new agent rates are available!
  See the Travel Agent Rates category for Details
  ***************************************************
The DRS should look like a high quality brochure or newsletter. While writing and designing, consider the following items:

- What style and design will be easiest for the travel agent to use and read?
- Are the topics in logical order and easy to find?
- Is it concise and to the point?

A few important design points to keep in mind are:

- **Ensure that all entries are aligned properly**
  Keep margins clearly defined and maintained.

- **Avoid large gaps in displays**
  Spacing plays a vital role in appearance and will affect how easily the material is read. Topics should be separated, computer screens can make eyes weary and effective spacing will help alleviate the strain.

**Sabre characters are available for use in the Direct Reference System:**

1. Cross of Lorraine 🍫
2. Change Key [x]
3. Slash Key /
4. Letter X Key X
5. Display Key *
6. Period Key .

*Note - The Cross of Lorraine and the Change Key may be copy/pasted into the DRS Template for a precise conversion.*
Recommended Category Convention

The purpose of a recommended category convention is to provide consistent information within a travel suppliers category as well as consistent placement of the information within the DRS. The categories represent topics that travel agents have identified as information most likely to be requested and should be included in the DRS by all travel suppliers in the industry.

Remember that a category is one or two words and should be simple to recall. Always refer the travel agent to a category whenever advertising through marketing programs or on a DRS page. The following pages list recommended categories with explanations of the type of information to be included:

NEWS

The News category should highlight news on topics listed to receive special attention.

Example:

Fun in the Sun!!

Special Florida Promotional Rates Available

Thru Jun04

See the Promotions category for details!

The news “clip” should always refer the travel agent to another DRS category for more details.

PROMOTIONS

Special promotions and discounts offered for sale via Sabre Travel Network products should be listed on the Promotions category page. Specials and discounts are what the travel agent looks for on this page.

SERVICES

List and explain the types of special services offered that are distinguished from the competition in the Service category page. Express, shuttle, hotel pick-up, facilities for the disabled etc., are the types of services to advertise on this page.
INFORMATION

The Information category should contain any special information that cannot be addressed under the recommended category convention such as company history, special accomplishments, or anything that differentiates the product and services from the competition. Brochure ordering and sales representative contact information are other possible topics to include.

TRAVEL AGENT RATES

The Travel category is one of the most popular category in DRS. This page highlights the discounts offered to Sabre Connected travel agents. Through these discounts, travel agents will have an opportunity to sample products and services first hand.

COMMISSION

The Commission category is also one of the most popular pages in DRS. Place travel agent commission structure here. Be sure to highlight any special commission structures as well as the standard policy.

HELP

The Help category explains the procedures to be used when a travel agent has a question about a booking in the Sabre system. If applicable, place the phone number, hours of operation, time zone and calling area for your travel agent support desk on this page. It may be more efficient to have the agent queue a message stating the problem and then return the message with the answer. The travel agent should call as a last resort. A suggested format for the agent queue message to add to the Help page is shown below.

Example

Should you have any problems or questions with a booking please QUEUE a message to our travel agent help desk as follows:

5ATTN ABC HELP DESK
5FROM CDE TRAVEL/B4T0
5RE ENTERING CD NUMBERS
5.
5I AM HAVING A PROBLEM ENTERING MY CLIENTS FRENTE FLYER NUMBER INTO MY BOOKING
5WHAT IS THE CORRECT FORMAT TO USE - THANK YOU.

Please Queue to QP/XXXG. All messages will be answered within XX minutes of receipt with the return message sent to your GENERAL /G/ QUEUE.

If immediate help is required call 1-800-123-1234.
ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL CATEGORIES

You may elect to include additional categories in addition to the recommended categories. This is at your discretion, some optional categories to consider are:

- PAYMENT
- REFUND
- DOMESTIC
- PROTECT
- REFUND

- AWARD PROGRAM
- CREDIT
- MOBILITY IMPAIRED
- GLOBAL INFORMATION
- PETS
Direct Reference System Access

Access DRS  **Step 1.** Go to URL: http://drs.sabre.com/

Login to the *Direct Reference System* Administration Site and click Submit

Please Log in

User ID

Password

Submit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>User ID</td>
<td>Your <em>Sabre</em> account representative will administer and provide you with your User ID.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Password</td>
<td>Your <em>Sabre</em> account representative will administer and modify your password.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** This product will automatically time out if there is 15 minutes of inactivity.
Step 2. To modify existing categories, click on the name of the category.

### Direct Reference System Site Administration

#### Travel Supplier Name

To edit/modify an existing page and category details, select the category title from the list.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Category Title</td>
<td>Click on the name of the category to modify your content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Content Location</td>
<td>Provides information as to where your data is stored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Post Date</td>
<td>Indicates the date content is published in the Agency eServices Web site for travel agencies to view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Remove Date</td>
<td>Indicates the date that the content will be removed from the Agency eServices Web site. <strong>Note:</strong> The remove date will override the Post Date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Last Updated</td>
<td>Indicates the date and time content was last modified. This time stamp is based on Greenwich Mean Time minus 6 hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Logo Management Button</td>
<td>Upload your corporate logo. The logo should be 55x55 pixels in a .gif (only) format.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Usage Report</td>
<td>This report is a downloadable Excel spreadsheet that reveals the number of times a category has been accessed in the last 30 days. Expanded reports may be obtained by contacting your Sabre Account Manager.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Step 3.** Fill in the required fields

### Direct Reference System Site Administration

**Travel Supplier Name**

Enter the details about the category.

- **Category:** Commission
- **Publish Date:** [mm/dd/yyyy] (mm/dd/yyyy)
- **Remove Date:** [mm/dd/yyyy] (mm/dd/yyyy)
- **Data Location:**
  - DRS Database
  - Link to Travel Supplier Web Site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Publish Date</td>
<td>Select the publish date by using the calendar or type the date using the mm/dd/yyyy format. The default date will reflect today’s date however a future date may be specified for time sensitive material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Remove Date</td>
<td>This is an optional field and is typically used for promotional information that is offered for a limited time. Setting a remove date will only remove the content and the category name from the travel agent’s view on the Agency eServices Web site. Setting a remove date will not remove the content from the Travel Supplier’s view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Data Location</td>
<td>There are two options for publication:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DRS Database – This is an easy to use template that the travel supplier will use to enter their content. This data is saved in the DRS database.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Link to Travel Supplier Web Site – This option is visible to the travel supplier if a signed contract has been executed, granting Sabre-Holdings permission to link to the travel suppliers web site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Buttons</td>
<td>Next - to save changes (if any) and continue. Submit - to save changes and return to the Administration home page. Cancel - to return to the Administration home page. This will not save any changes that were made to the category detail page.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** To delete a category from the list on the Site Administration home page contact your Sabre account representative. If you simply want to remove the category name and its contents from the travel agencies view, set a remove date of yesterday.
Database Location Option One:

DRS Database

---

Direct Reference System Site Administration
Travel Supplier Name

Category Contacts
Fill in this section to store information about a category.

Section One Title:

Section One Text:

Contact Us

For Travel Agents

Inside Sales Desk: 1-800-123-4567
6:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. (PT)
Monday – Friday

Travel Agent Help Desk: 1-800-123-4567
7:00 a.m. - 11:30 p.m. (PT)
Monday – Sunday

Group Desk: 1-800-123-4567
8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. (PT)
Monday – Friday

---

Item | Feature | Description
--- | --- | ---
1 | Section One Title | This is an optional field. If utilized, up to 100 characters may be entered and the text will appear in black with a bold style.

2 | Section One Text | This template may be used for manual input or you may copy and paste content from another program. The tool banner is available for modifying text as desired. When typing data into the editor use the shift/enter keys to keep the content within the same paragraph. Up to four text sections are available.

3 | Buttons | Preview – Previews the entire content for the category for all sections.
Previous Page – Will save changes and return the user to the previous page.
Next Section – Will save changes and continue to the next section.
Submit – Will save changes and return the user to the Administration home page.
Cancel – Will cancel the transaction. This will not save changes and it will return the user to the Administration home page.

4 | Note: | The default setting is double space when you hit the Enter key. To single space, hold down the Shift key and hit the Enter key.
Database Location Option Two:

Link to Travel Supplier Web Site - This option is visible to travel suppliers who have a signed contract granting Sabre-Holding’s permission to link to your Web site.

Direct Reference System Site Administration
Travel Supplier Name

Category Contacts

If using data from your website, fill in this section

* Page URL:  
http://www.travelsuppliername/contacts.htm

Copy From:  
If Copy From is left blank, the whole page will be displayed.

Copy To

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Page URL</td>
<td>Type or copy and paste your Web site address in the URL box provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Copy From</td>
<td>Enter text or source code to indicate the ‘start’ point for the portion of the page to be displayed. The start point should begin below page headers and tool bars. Up to 100 characters may be placed in this field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Copy To</td>
<td>Enter text or source code to indicate the ‘end’ point for the portion of the page to be displayed. Up to 100 characters may be placed in this field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>*Note</td>
<td>Web site addresses or links entered into the DRS should not promote, direct, or suggest that bookings be made outside of Sabre Travel Network.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example

Travel Agency view via *Agency eServices* Web site, linking to a Travel Supplier’s Web site:

![Travel Supplier View via Agency eServices](image)

**Travel Supplier Name**

*Note:* Sabre provides this easy way to sort information about Travel Supplier data to make your task of locating information faster and more productive. By displaying information using common category names, there will be some page displays from specific web sites containing page links that may be inactivated.

**Contacts**

Phone numbers below are for demonstration purposes only

**Domestic Reservations**

For domestic reservations calling from the U.S., Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Canada, please call 800-856-1212. If you would like to speak to a representative in Japanese, call 800-123-1234. If you would like to speak to a representative in Spanish, call 800-321-4321.

For hearing & speech impaired reservations (TDD), call 800-322-1111.

For travel to Canada, please call 800-444-1234.

**International Reservations**

For international reservations calling from the U.S., Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Canada to over 451 cities in 90 countries, call 800-856-1234.
**Create a New Direct Reference System Category**

**Step 1:** From the Administration home page click on “Click here to add a new category”.

**Direct Reference System Site Administration**

**Travel Supplier Name**

To edit/modify an existing page and category details, select the category title from the list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Title</th>
<th>Content Location</th>
<th>Start Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Last Updated GMT &amp; ADT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Step 2:** Select from an existing category name in the Add a Category box or create a new, custom category name.

**Direct Reference System Site Administration**

**Travel Supplier Name**

**Add New Category**

1. **Add a Category:**
   - Select from the following

2. **Create a New Category:**
   - Type a custom category name not to exceed 26 characters.

**Item** | **Feature**               | **Description**                                                                                                                                 |
---------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
1   | **Add a Category**        | Select from a predefined list of categories by clicking on the drop down menu.                                                                 |
2   | **Create a New Category** | Type a custom category name not to exceed 26 characters.                                                                                        |
3   | **Buttons**               | Add Category – Will add the category name and advance you to Step 3 (the template) in the Access DRS section of this guide.  
                                      Cancel – Will not save changes and return you to the Administration home page.            |
Remove a Direct Reference Category

To remove a category page from agency view, set a remove date of today for the category. Within fifteen minutes the category will be removed from the Agency eServices web site. To delete a category from the index on the Administration home page contact your Sabre account representative.
Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why am I unable to single space in the text box?
A. The text box is an HTML editor and as such you must hold down the Shift key while hitting the Enter key to single space.

Q. I was typing my content in the editor, received a phone call and when I returned to the application I was timed out. My changes did not save!
A. The timeout feature is set at 25 minutes. It is important to periodically save your changes every 20-25 minutes in order to retain your content. Typing in the text editor box is still considered idle time, hence, you could be timed out if your typing time exceeds 25 minutes. Always submit your changes every 20-25 minutes to ensure that your data is saved.

Q. Can more than one person log in with the same username and password at the same time?
A. Yes.

Q. The text editor box is displaying HTML code and the box is very small, why is this?
A. If you are using Internet Explorer as your web browser, please ensure that it is version 5.5 or later.

Q. How do I modify the spelling of a category name?
A. You must create a new category with the correct spelling and move over your data to the new category. Next, set a remove date for the old category. Last, email your Sabre Administrator to have the old category removed from your Index page.