



venture
events • expeditions • adventures

Job Description: Venture Group Leader

The primary aim of the Group Leader role is to ensure the overall successful operation of each trip as detailed by Venture management with particular focus on the health, safety and enjoyment of the group members. The Leader must:

- Consistently deliver a high level of Customer Service and Passenger Satisfaction.
- Run all trips to Budget in accordance with Venture accounting procedures.
- Run trips in adherence to Venture Itineraries, Guidelines, Policies and Company Core Values.
- Carry out administrative requirements in a thorough and timely manner.

Qualifications and experience

- Level 2 Senior First Aid Certificate (must be completed prior to commencement).
- Demonstrated experience working with, and developing rapport with, a broad range of individuals and groups.
- Basic computer skills including E-mail, Word, Excel and Internet Explorer.
- Extensive travel experience preferred.

Other skills and attributes

- An understanding of and commitment to Venture's Responsible Travel philosophy.
- High standards of customer service.
- Sound leadership skills.
- Passion for travel in the Venture style.
- Ability to work and solve problems independently.
- Excellent organisational skills.
- Experience in budgeting and handling large sums of money.
- Fluency in English skills – spoken and written.
- An ability to communicate with people from varied cultures and backgrounds.

- To be physically fit and healthy to withstand the combination of long hours, and often mentally and physically challenging conditions.
- A sense of humour.

What does a Venture group leader do?

Trip preparation

The majority of Venture's trips have set itineraries, as described in our brochure. This means that passengers already know (hopefully) where they will be on each day of the trip and what the planned and included activities will be. Your job, as the leader, is to make sure that it all happens according to plan, as smoothly as possible or to come up with alternate arrangements if something goes astray. The leader is responsible for running the entire trip. This includes booking and paying for all accommodation, transport, local operators, guides, etc. Venture does not have local operators run the trips, with the leader purely an escort. The leader runs the trip, using local people for specialised aspects, such as trekking.

Leaders must maintain daily expenditure accounts according to a standard format and always be aware how much money they have remaining. At the end of the trip the leader completes a simple analysis of the expenditure.

The trip

Passengers may arrive up to several days prior to the commencement of the trip. The first included aspect of the trip is a group meeting, held in the evening of day one, at which the leader explains about the trip and culture of the country.

The trip soon gets under way. During the trip we include some organised activities, while having other times for the passengers to spend as they wish. Leaders are expected to spend time with the group even when there are no structured activities. It may mean that you take people to places or help them organise things to do. Leaders should eat with the group as much as possible and have daily meetings to provide ongoing communication about the itinerary. You will find that trips run much more easily the more time that you spend with the group.

While running the trip you will find that you are very busy. As well as spending time with the passengers, you will be making arrangements with local guides, booking hotels for future trips, paying hotels, arranging transport for the next few days, etc. You need to be well organised! However the mechanics of running the trips soon becomes second nature and somewhat automatic. This is important as it gives you the freedom to concentrate on the passengers and that great variable - group dynamics.

Group dynamics is the most challenging area of leading and one that is difficult to describe. At times it might mean you have to be the sole entertainer of the group or counsellor for a passenger with a problem. You may have your authority challenged by individuals making 'power plays' or have people wanting you to be a porter. Your nursing skills will definitely be called upon. More positively, you will often be a resource, a font of knowledge and someone there to make travel arrangements while the passengers go off by themselves. Leaders teach travellers how to be more independent, advise travellers on suitable behaviour towards local people and other travellers, while also being bearers of infinite wisdom regarding matters important and trivial.

You will also need to develop good relationships with local operators and all local people you deal with. We expect leaders to know the more subtle cultural rules of Japan and to pass this information onto our travellers. You will also need to learn as much as you possibly can about Japan: the history, politics, religion, etc. And all that information that is not included in guide books; like where to eat, what to eat, where to shop, how to behave, etc.

At the end of the trip the leader does a written report outlining certain aspects of the trip. The purpose is to let head office know what is happening in the field and to let other leaders know about any issues with local operators, hotel or transport. Many leaders enjoy writing and choose to write additional material for the email newsletter.

WARNING! Think carefully about the points below - do not take the position of group leader lightly!

There is no doubt that being a Group Leader is one of the most exciting and challenging jobs available. Some of our ex-leaders say it was the best time of their lives. You meet hundreds of different people, from all walks of life, you have innumerable stories and experiences to remember for years to come and you get the chance to visit, and get to know, many places that you might otherwise never even have known about, but:

- You are not on holiday - your passengers are. It is your primary responsibility to make sure their holiday is as enjoyable, safe and runs as smoothly as possible.
- You will no longer be an independent traveller - our itineraries are largely fixed and you will have to follow them over and over again. During your first year or so you may just run the same two or three trips over and over again. The initial excitement of the job and destination could very well diminish. More varied itineraries and destinations come only with experience and seniority.
- Your passengers may get sick, suffer culture shock, become emotional, complain a lot or even take a personal dislike to you. You may not get along with particular passengers or

even the whole group. Some leaders have a series of difficult groups. You are still expected to do a great job and provide excellent service to all of your passengers regardless of any of the above.

- You are on the go most of the time - every week or two you will have a new group of passengers to meet and befriend and then farewell. Consequently, under these circumstances, long-term relationships are very difficult to maintain. Despite the continual flow of new people, some leaders find the experience very lonely. If you have a partner think very carefully about being away from home for extended periods. Partners cannot join you on your trips.
- Realistically this is not a career job, nor is it designed for people with a family to support. It should also be noted that, apart from training trips, leaders run trips alone - we do not have couples working as a team. If your partner is also recruited as a Group Leader your schedules and weeks off may not coincide at all.
- For local leaders, the role can provide excellent opportunities for a career in tourism. We expect leaders to be committed to Venture and do not permit them to work for other companies as freelance guides. Be aware that Venture cannot provide sponsorship to work in other countries.
- While we make every effort to support you in whatever (reasonable) way we can, you will find yourself in situations where no support is possible (due to the time difference, the distance, the phone lines being down, you're in a remote area, etc). You need to be confident in your decision-making skills and ability to think on your feet - and be prepared to deal with the consequences.
- If you are searching for some answer to your life, beware! Long-term travel often just leaves you with more questions! Similarly, you should not see Group Leading as an escape. The pressures and stresses of the job are more likely to exacerbate any personal issues that you might have or be facing. This includes relationship issues, career dilemmas, personal identity, substance abuse and even questions of "who I am".
- A final note: this job is all about people. Honestly ask yourself how comfortable you are working/living/sharing with people of different races, ages, gender, religions, ethnicities, backgrounds etc. This is not a job for snobs, elitists, racists, sexists, xenophobes, ageists etc.