

THE AUSTRALIAN TOURISM TOOLKIT



YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO BECOMING TOURISM TRADE READY





WELCOME TO THE AUSTRALIAN TOURISM TOOLKIT



The Australian Tourism Toolkit is proudly presented by the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) with thanks to program partner Tourism Australia (TA).



The Australian Tourism Toolkit is designed to support ATEC's Tourism Trade Ready industry training program. It acts as a complementary learning guide with tools, knowledge and key contacts to enable industry to upskill and/or seek out new business opportunities for those looking to enter and thrive within the tourism marketplace.

This information, combined with advice and assistance from tourism associations, industry bodies and tourism operators, will set you on your learning pathway to trading successfully within the domestic and inbound tourism sectors.

Disclaimer

This toolkit is designed to help you plan and make more fully informed business decisions. The information contained should be used as a guide only, and any facts and figures are correct at time of issue. Use this guide as a tool to direct you on the right path, but do seek further professional advice specific to your business before making any decisions.

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The Australian Tourism Toolkit contains advice on how to:

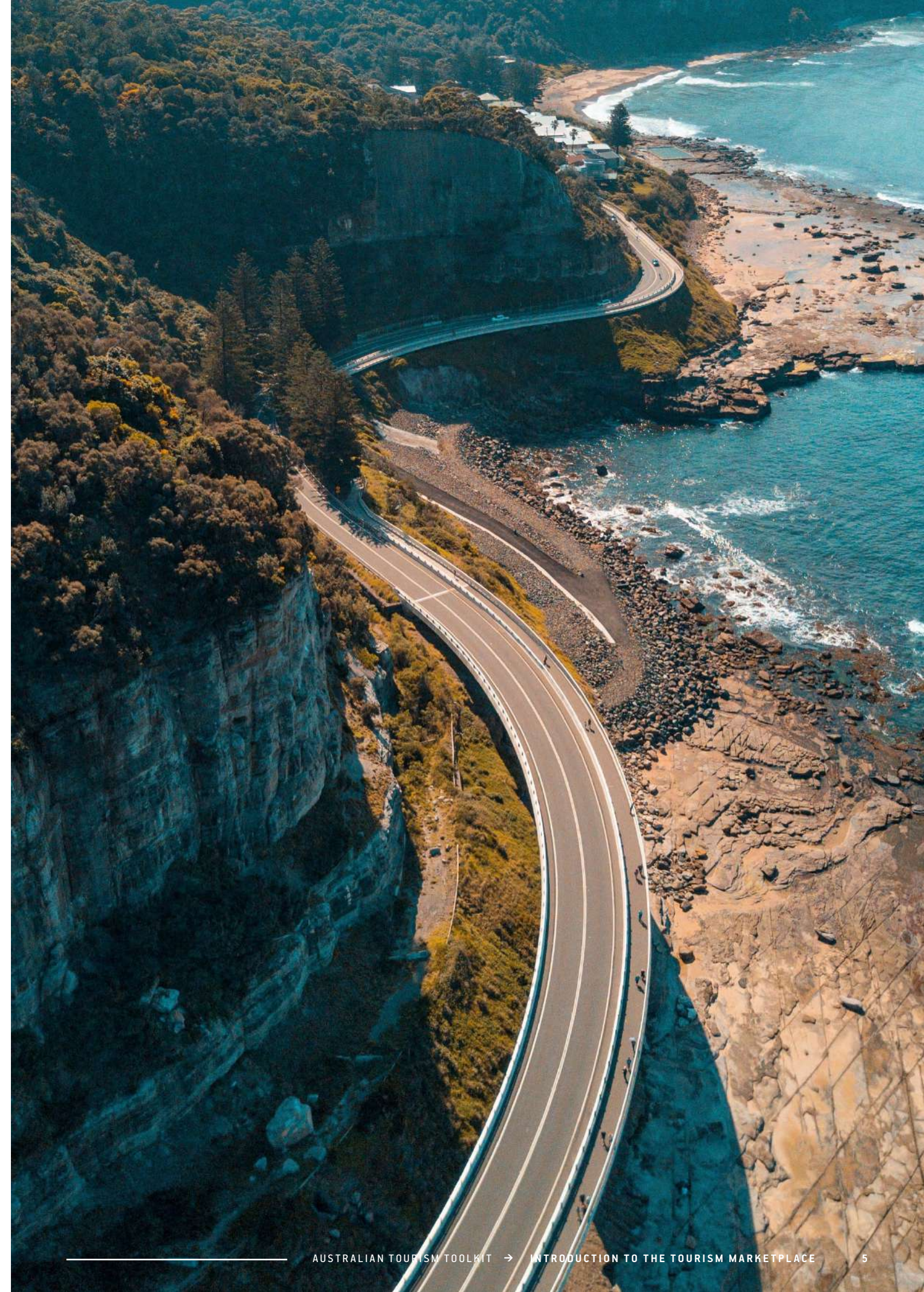
- Research potential markets and customer types to establish best fit with your business
- Recognise key motivations and travel styles of future travellers
- Navigate the varying travel distribution systems and rate structures
- Develop a plan to attract, service and retain target visitors through a range of marketing and distribution channels
- Seek advice from your local, regional, state, and national tourism offices, as well as relevant associations and groups.

The Australian Tourism Export Council acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and acknowledges their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respect to the people, the cultures and the elders past, present and emerging.

Here are the resources in your toolkit

Easy to find information to get you started.

1. **INTRODUCING ATEC'S TOURISM TRADE READY PROGRAM**
Why complete the national industry training & development program
2. **THE AUSTRALIAN TOURISM MARKETPLACE**
Australian tourism landscape
Domestic vs inbound – what's the difference?
Tourism industry research
Understanding research to inform your business
3. **ATTRACTING TRAVELLERS TO YOUR BUSINESS**
Types of future travellers
Exploring different markets
Cultural differences and product tailoring
4. **GETTING DISTRIBUTION READY**
The travel distribution system
Who's who of travel distributors
Working successfully via distribution channels
5. **RATES & CONTRACTING FOR PROFIT**
Pricing your product for distribution system partners
Commission: the cost of doing business
Rate contract agreements
6. **DELIVERING EXPERIENCES FOR FUTURE TRAVEL**
Your product: review, refine and/or bundle
Product bundling or packaging
7. **MASTERING YOUR PITCH & CLOSING THE DEAL**
Developing your pitch
Overcoming objectives
Your unique value proposition (UVP)
Negotiating to close the deal
8. **TRADE PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS - FACE-TO-FACE AND VIRTUAL**
Building key industry relationships - networking
Media and trade familiarisations
The power of publicity - working with the media
Traditional marketing tools - brochuring
The importance of establishing a plan
9. **DIGITAL MARKETING & YOUR ONLINE SHOP FRONT**
Overview of available channels and necessary infrastructure
The keys to a great website and what it needs to do for your business
Connecting to online reservation systems
Google optimisation
10. **TOURISM TALK: ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY**



01

INTRODUCING THE TOURISM TRADE READY NATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM



What is the Tourism Trade Ready program?

Australia will see a return to both domestic and inbound leisure, education and business travel and will require tourism operators to fine tune their products and services to deliver unique, memorable and quality tourism experiences

It is important for participants in the Australian tourism, hospitality and service sectors to first obtain an understanding and appreciation of the marketplace, the target audience, their unique culture and specific needs to appropriately service future visitors.

Acquiring knowledge and insights on visitor motivations and expectations will be the difference between providing mediocre service and attracting visitors to return again, as well as encouraging friends and family to visit Australia and/or holiday at home.

Who is the program for?

The TTR program is for both new entrants to market, and international-ready tourism operators looking to refresh and upskill.

How is the program delivered?

The Tourism Trade Ready program is delivered online, through a NEW interactive, engaging and intuitive platform. The learning is fun and completely self-directed, users can learn at their own pace and access is available anytime from anywhere. For more information, visit the [ATEC](#) website.

TOURISM TRADE READY RECOGNITION

- ✓ Upon completion of the program you will be recognised as a "Tourism Trade Ready" business.
- ✓ All graduates will receive the industry recognised 'International Ready' badge to promote their market readiness.



Welcome to the **Australian Tourism Toolkit** - your essential tourism guide. ATEC's 'Tourism Toolkit' complements the **commercially focused business** development training program 'Tourism Trade Ready'.



Peter Shelley
Managing Director – ATEC



Tourism Australia is pleased to be working in partnership with **ATEC** to develop the **Australian Tourism Toolkit** and deliver the national 'Tourism Trade Ready' training program to prepare industry and business in welcoming future visitors to Australia.



Phillipa Harrison
Managing Director – Tourism Australia

Why become Tourism Trade Ready?

If you are a new entrant to the Australian tourism industry, a very warm welcome!. This program is sure to provide you with a thorough introduction into one of Australia's most vibrant and exciting industries. Perhaps you are an experienced tourism operator looking

to identify new business opportunities and upskill on knowledge gaps. Whatever your background and level of experience, we trust you will find the program insightful and full of practical tips ready for your consideration.

TTR program objectives

TOURISM TRADE READY provides a chance for tourism operators to either revisit or begin to work within the tourism marketplace.

The program aims to:

- Provide fundamental knowledge to help safeguard your business for the future
- Share practical, easy to follow tips from industry experts to help guide your marketing and improve your bottom line
- Achieve a basic understanding of the tourism marketplace and its value

Learners will work on determining their target customer, defining their proposition, customising the experience for future travellers and creating appropriate marketing communications and collateral.

The content includes:

- Insights about future travel trends and government-led marketing initiatives
- A basic introduction to travel segments, key travel motivators, expectations and interests
- Insights on customising product
- Insights to assess market suitability and identify potential
- Knowledge to develop a sound unique value proposition (UVP)
- Tools to help you sell, promote and communicate effectively

Learners will work on understanding service quality expectations of future travellers and assessing areas of service delivery which may require adjustment.

The content includes:

- An introduction to service quality concepts
- Exploring what it takes to deliver exceptional service quality
- Insights on customising service to match (exceed) customer expectations
- Building the image of Australia as a COVID safe destination

Learners will identify the necessary sales and marketing tools and collateral required for effective distribution via the travel trade.

The content includes:

- Understanding the travel trade and navigating distribution systems
- Tips to work effectively with the travel distribution system
- Online marketing essentials
- How to maximise your tourism trade sales efforts

02

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOURISM MARKETPLACE



What are the potential barriers to entering the tourism market?

As an established supplier of tourism product, you may have a level of skill and experience dealing with both domestic and inbound tourists, or perhaps you are familiar with servicing domestic guests but not international visitors. Maybe you have heard other operators talk about specific markets. Perhaps your own experience has been to observe numerous international visitors and note the very different body language and behaviours, particularly a lot of smiling and nodding for those guests where English is a second language. Perhaps your experience has confirmed descriptions you have heard of some markets and types of visitors being easier to service, compared with others which require extra special attention.

Whatever your level of experience, there is one thing we all have in common, that is a commitment and desire to deliver exceptional service quality experiences for all guests. This includes to make them feel safe and welcome, and to be a part of creating memories which will last a lifetime – regardless of guest point of origin, or which consumer segment. In a COVID normal world, we must now rethink our product and service offerings to make sure they will resonate with our target consumer segments and deliver on our brand purpose. Pre-COVID perhaps you were already receiving some inbound visitors and had no idea how they found you. Moving forward, perhaps you are wondering if attaching Google Translate to your website, getting some brochures printed in the appropriate international language and distributing them around at hotels and tourist bureaus, or hiring a young working holiday maker who has turned up on your doorstep looking for work might make a difference.

Already you have encountered the two most obvious barriers to becoming Tourism Trade Ready; being able to communicate effectively and bridge any cultural gaps with guests, and knowing what channels exist for you to reach your future customers and where and how to access them.

As a destination, Australia competes domestically to encourage Aussie's to holiday at home visiting the

states, territories and regions across our great nation, whilst internationally we compete among multiple growing inbound travel markets and consumer segments – be it for business, education or holiday purposes. Geographically Australia is well placed to attract many short haul markets, including our closest neighbours in New Zealand and throughout Asia.

However, today travellers are reminded just how easy it is to reach a multitude of competitor destinations, many which offer lower costs of living, within only a few hours of flying time.

The global stage is fiercely competitive and consideration of cost, time, accessibility and destination appeal all remain key factors.

This new operating environment which we now face also requires market participants to tap into available technology and innovate to offer relevant products and services, and perhaps look at how to supplement domestic business with other sources of visitor income. Enticing visitors to Australia and your location and attracting them to your particular product or service is only half the challenge.

Once you have them, are you confident your staff will consistently deliver a quality service experience, and – while being true to being Australian – provide service with an attitude that will endear your product to guests from across the globe? How do you even know what service quality means for international guests? Does it mean you and your staff need to learn how to speak different languages? And how do you get past that cultural veneer of nodding and smiling and know that you are providing products and experiences which resonate with visitors so they will return home raving with excitement to all their family, friends and work colleagues? Let's explore how to develop effective business and marketing strategies for eliminating or overcoming these barriers, and seize the opportunities by beginning at the beginning. What does Australia's tourism landscape look like?

The potential opportunities

Overview of Australia's visitor economy – historical context

Prior to COVID-19, Australia had a strong, dynamic and growing visitor economy – 2019 broke records for visitor numbers and spending. With export earnings of \$45 billion in 2018-19, it was Australia's fourth largest exporter – ahead of beef, petroleum and wool. It earned over \$166 billion in total visitor expenditure in 2019 and was growing at a faster rate than the Australian economy generally. The visitor economy directly employed almost 665,000 people, and indirectly employed another 370,000, employing one in thirteen Australians directly or indirectly.

It involves over 300,000 businesses and plays an important role in the economic development of regional Australia, with 44 cents in every visitor dollar spent in regions.

The visitor economy achieved remarkable success in the last ten years under the previous long-term strategy, Tourism 2020. Overnight visitor expenditure increased 78 per cent to \$126.1 billion by December 2019, and international visitor arrivals increased to a record 9.5 million, up 70 per cent over 10 years. Tourism 2020 was instrumental in guiding that success.

VALUE OF TOURISM

VISITOR ECONOMY TOTAL VALUE (2019) - \$ 166 BILLION



Source: austrade.gov.au

Domestic vs International Tourism: What's the difference?

What is International Tourism?

International tourism covers all international tourist traffic entering a country. It is also known as 'export tourism' (Australia is the export), because although tourists enjoy their travel experience within Australia, they are paying for it using foreign currency.

Why consider the International Tourism market?

There are many benefits to international tourism including:

- International travel patterns are not focused on key domestic travel periods such as weekends and school holidays and may level out seasonality problems.
- You can work across multiple international markets (think different countries). Spreading risk across a range of international markets can minimise the impact of any changes in the domestic or a single international travel market
- Tapping into international distribution networks opens up new forms of distribution and gives millions of potential travellers around the world access to your product.
- International travellers provide a higher yield and spend, on average, three times more than domestic travellers on each trip.
- Booking lead times are usually longer, allowing better business planning.
- The opportunity to meet people from a range of cultures and backgrounds can be extremely rewarding – many lifelong friendships get established from around the globe.

We need our international visitors back

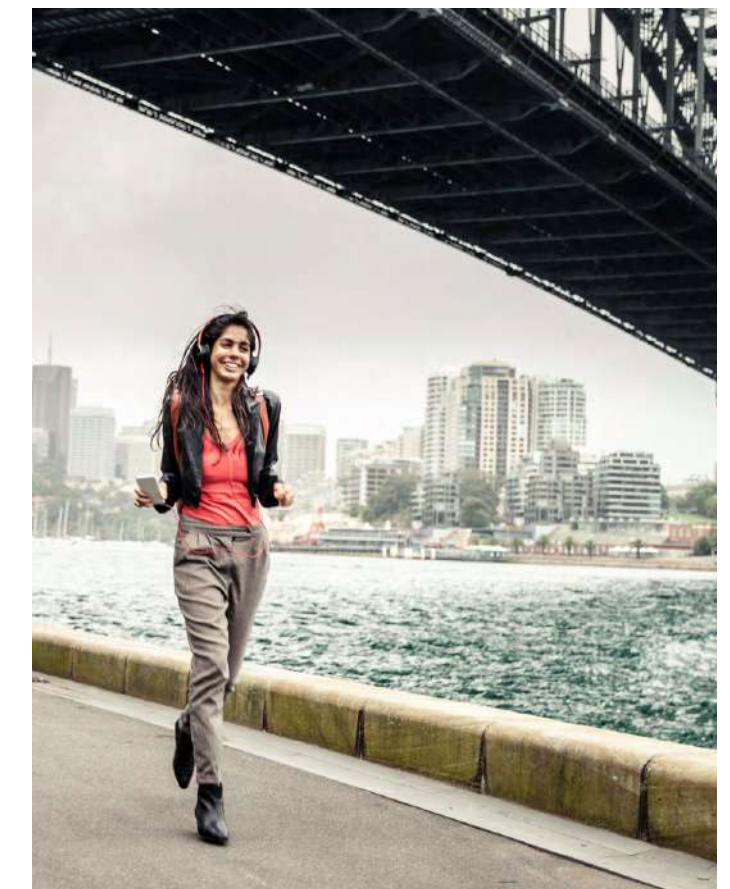


1 INTERNATIONAL TOURIST



7 DOMESTIC TRIPS

Source: 'Planning for uncertainty' Deloitte 2022



Why is International Tourism so important?

As we have learnt so far, international tourism has historically meant big business for Australia. The tourism export sector (pre-COVID-19) was worth an estimated \$60 billion to the economy. While domestic tourism firmly remains a primary focus for Australia’s tourism industry, pre-COVID-19 growth from the South East Asia region was expected to outpace the global average rate. Similarly, the economic growth from Australia’s leading western tourism source markets such as the United States, the United

Kingdom and New Zealand were also expected to exceed the average forecasted rate for advanced economies.

It is also important to highlight the value of international tourism to the Australian economy. Despite the significant difference in size of market share with domestic tourism accounting for approximately 65% of all tourism in Australia, and inbound visitors making up the remaining 35% (Pre COVID-19), International visitors typically travel for longer, spend more money and undertake more experiences than domestic travellers – hence the appeal.

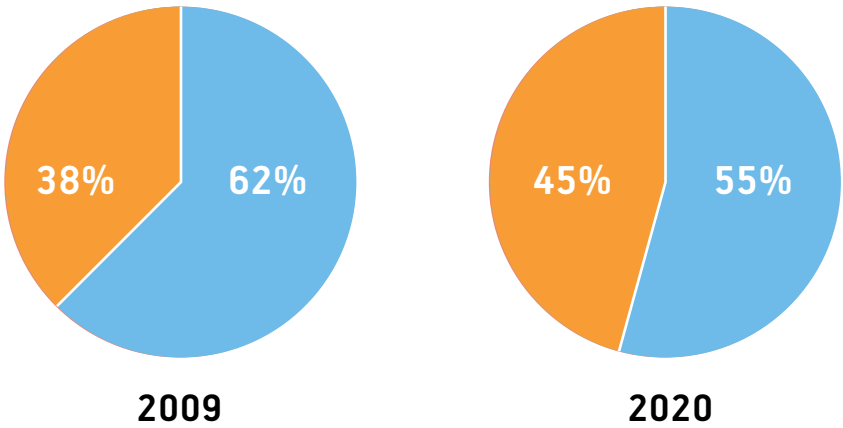


WHY TARGET INBOUND TRAVELLERS

DOMESTIC MARKETPLACE	INTERNATIONAL MARKETPLACE
Weekend & school holidays	Year round, including mid-week, helps address seasonality
Traditionally lower trip spend	Traditionally higher trip spend
Traditionally shorter length of stay	Traditionally longer length of stay

INBOUND V DOMESTIC MARKET POTENTIAL

- DOMESTIC
- INTERNATIONAL



Source: TRA YE 2018-19

Nevertheless, as a first step in becoming tourism trade ready, it makes sound business sense for Australian tourism operators to begin marketing their product domestically and then, once they have secured a foothold on the home front, assess potential inbound market opportunities.

Marketing your product to international travellers offers a range of benefits, however there are several key differences between the domestic and international tourism markets, and it is important to understand these fully and prepare your business for successful tourism trade.

DOMESTIC vs INTERNATIONAL MARKETS DIFFERENCES	
DOMESTIC MARKET	INTERNATIONAL MARKET
Travellers are familiar with Australia	Travellers may have limited knowledge of Australia
Lower marketing costs	Higher marketing costs
Travellers' needs are consistent across segments	Travellers' needs vary across markets and segments
Distribution system is consistent, and operators often deal with consumers directly	Distribution systems vary across markets
Simpler, short break style itineraries	Complex itineraries
Less language or cultural barriers	Language and cultural differences
Easier to enter so return on investment established more quickly	Long term investment to recoup costs

What other factors do I need to consider in advance?

Overseas markets are highly competitive. Not only are you competing against companies that provide similar products, but you are also competing against other international destinations. This requires a new way of thinking: an approach which requires careful planning and commitment to collaboration.

It will pay long term dividends to first develop a clear strategy with defined objectives which are 'SMART' – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. Whilst short-term tactical marketing is useful in converting bookings, it needs to be matched with a long-term strategic business, marketing and communications plan which identifies your core brand purpose – that is your WHY you exist, and defines your potential target customer segments - those who resonate with your product/experience offering.

When considering entering a new market, begin with a thorough review of the current operating environment – this requires careful research and analysis.

ATEC provides a simple SWOT analysis in the Tourism Trade Ready program to help get you started. Use the SWOT tool to highlight your strengths and opportunities to leverage, as well as to identify your weaknesses and threats to convert into opportunities.

When doing your research, analyse key trends and implications to your business and be sure to use multiple data sources including both qualitative and quantitative data to make it robust. Understanding your target customer and their motivations to travel are critical. We will dive deeper into this conversation throughout the toolkit.

Another key factor to consider when entering a new market is the importance of working in collaboration with your local tourism industry partners to jointly promote and sell your destination.

Educating travellers and highlighting why they should travel to your region is a first step in attracting visitors to your destination. This requires a commitment to first sell the destination and then your product to entice international travellers. For example, if you operate a walking tour in the Grampians National Park, before you can sell your tours you need to explain where the Grampians is in Victoria, its distance from Melbourne and other key destinations and experiences nearby.



Tourism industry research

Undertaking research: Identifying your potential target markets and consumer segments

Visitor arrival details are published monthly by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) abs.gov.au and Tourism Research Australia (TRA) publishes forecasts for Australian inbound travel twice a year.

The International Visitor Survey (IVS) tra.gov.au/international is published quarterly by TRA and is the most comprehensive source of information on international visitors to Australia. The IVS samples 40,000 departing, short-term international travellers over the age of 15 years who have been visiting Australia.

Always keep up-to-date with the latest market trends and forecasts by regularly visiting the Tourism Research Australia website.

Where to find all the latest tourism data, reports and trends

What research is available?

Staying up to date on all the latest news, data and trends is critical when operating in any market – be it domestic or the international marketplace. Be sure to register your details with ATEC, Tourism Australia and your STO/RTO partners to receive the latest market reports, newsletters and tap into available marketing opportunities. There is a wealth of statistical tourism information readily available for you to analyse. You just need to know where to find it – and how to use it effectively to guide your business strategy and marketing activity.



Image: Bamurru Plains (NT) Source: Tourism NT

The role of Tourism Research Australia tra.gov.au

Tourism Research Australia provides superior research information that supports improved decision making, marketing and tourism industry performance for the Australian community. Tourism Research Australia is a branch of Austrade. To view their full range of reports, covering international tourism, and research tailored to regional areas, please visit Tourism Research Australia.



The role of Tourism Australia (TA) tourism.australia.com

Tourism Australia (TA) is responsible for identifying and understanding the needs and drivers for inbound consumer segments that give the greatest return on investment. They provide a variety of resources to industry including consumer and market insights gained from the Consumer Demand Project, an annual consumer research study undertaken in partnership with the state and territory tourism bodies. TA also has a series of interactive dashboards covering both TRA, as well as inbound Aviation data.

For further information visit Tourism Australia's corporate website or view their '[Working with Tourism Australia Guide](#)'



The role of State and Territory Organisations (STO)

The respective STOs deliver state/territory specific statistical data and analysis to assist the tourism industry on their corporate (or industry) website. To find out more, visit your STOs corporate website.

- [Visit Victoria](#)
- [Destination NSW](#)
- [Tourism and Events Queensland](#)
- [Tourism Western Australia](#)
- [South Australian Tourism Commission](#)
- [Tourism NT](#)
- [VisitCanberra](#)
- [Tourism Tasmania](#)

Don't be wowed by the numbers – consider all factors

When reviewing any statistics, it is wise to consider them in practical and realistic terms. For example, one market may be showing a significant percentage growth, but ensure you look at what base that growth is from. What is the real size of the market and does it hold the same potential as another market that may be growing at a slower rate yet off a higher base?

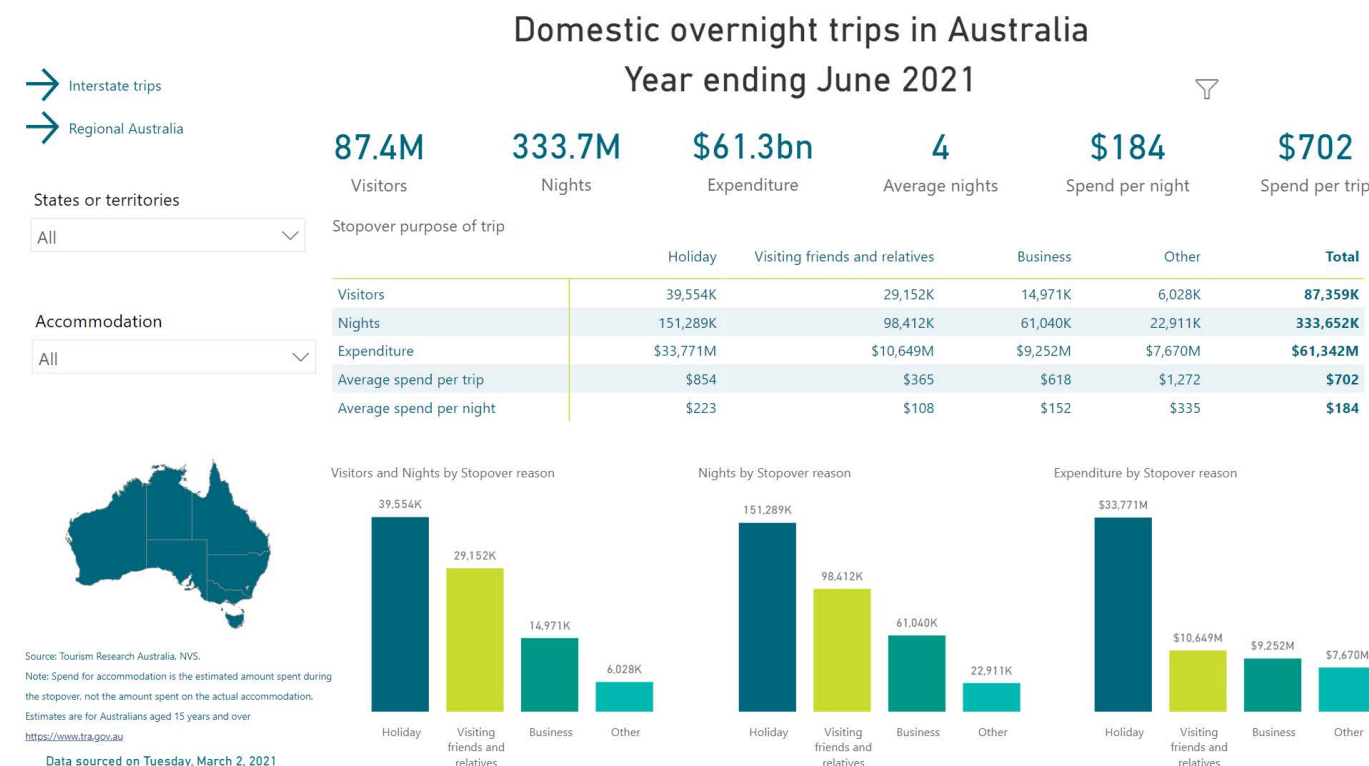
Also remember to consider the suitability of your product to each market. For example, you may see high growth in a particular market, however before you start targeting that market, consider first if your product is an experience that resonates with the target audience, that is, can your business service the needs of that market?"

When looking at the arrival statistics, do not consider them at face value for the total numbers.

It is important to drill down and review in real terms. For example, instead of just reviewing the total arrival statistics for a market, remember there are different types of travellers which we will discuss shortly in further detail.

Be sure to review the specific arrival statistics for your preferred target market, and consumer segment. Then consider what is the average spend of your target segment, not the total market overall spend, and of that, how much has been pre-spent before they arrive in Australia? Will you have opportunities to sell to your target consumer pre-departure and post-arrival?

As an example, let's look at the statistics for Australia domestic overnight trips



Source: tra.gov.au; NVS Year Ending June 2021

Understanding statistics

What do they mean?

ARRIVAL DATA TERMINOLOGY	
Total Visitors:	Visitors who arrive planning to stay (for IVS – that is stay for less than 3 months)
VFR:	Those primarily coming to visit friends and relatives
Holiday:	Those coming primarily for the purpose of a holiday
Leisure:	Combination of Holiday & VFR
Business:	Those travelling primarily for the purpose of conducting business
SPEND DEFINITIONS – WHAT DO THEY MEAN?	
Average Spend:	\$\$ spent in Australia
Trip Spend:	\$\$ spent in Australia plus \$\$ spent on air and pre-purchased product Used for forecast targets and in TA results announcements

★ TOP TIPS FOR REVIEWING IVS STATISTICS ★

- VFR and education typically increase the total average stay
- Education drives spend in many cases
- Leisure statistics of spend and stay are strongly influenced by VFR
- Total trip spend includes airfares and pre-purchased products, so it is not an 'available' buying opportunity
- Shopping (and retail) spend can account for up to 50% of some market's trip spend

The importance of industry associations

In addition to reviewing statistical information and market reports it is critical to keep up-to-date with your travel industry partners and products on a regular basis. This can be easily facilitated by industry organisations, such as The [Australian Tourism Export Council \(ATEC\)](#).

One of ATEC's key roles is to deliver relevant, current and informative guidelines and tools for businesses seeking to become tourism trade ready. Being a member of such an organisation gives you access to a wealth of information, commercial opportunities, industry contacts and market trends across the broader industry network.

How to keep updated – Tourism Subscriptions

To stay up to date with what is happening in the tourism industry you can subscribe to a variety of free e-newsletters. Tourism Australia's [Essentials](#) newsletter contains reports on upcoming marketing opportunities, what's new in Australian tourism, statistics and analysis, global tourism trends and

developments, and special industry offers and opportunities. You can also subscribe to your respective STO and RTO newsletters for state/territory-specific information and opportunities. Please refer to their corporate websites for further details.

Formulate your own knowledge base

Use every opportunity available to undertake your own research and gain market feedback. For example, consider developing surveys to gather direct market intelligence from your customers to assess service quality, and when you are attending trade shows, industry conferences, workshops or events, use these opportunities to ask your fellow industry colleagues for their specific market related feedback. Whilst statistical information is essential to review, you will also gain great insight by asking your industry trade partners. They will have a feel for how the market is tracking and be able to give you some practical advice. This two-way communication will enable you to market test ideas and gain instant feedback. Always focus on building your network of industry contacts as they can be a great resource to you.



03

ATTRACTING TRAVELLERS TO YOUR BUSINESS



Before we begin to invest time, money and other resources promoting our business, we must first attract visitors to our destination. Destination promotion is serious business and governments around the world invest millions of dollars annually to attract high yield visitation to bolster the economy. Tourism Australia (TA) focuses its resources on the global markets which represent the greatest potential. Through its head office in Sydney and international hubs, TA undertakes consumer and trade marketing activity in 15 core markets. As a result of international border closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, throughout this period TA temporarily expanded its marketing focus to support industry by targeting Australian's to 'holiday here this year' and helped the Australian States and Territory Tourism Offices (STO) drive domestic tourism expenditure.

TYPES OF FUTURE TRAVELLERS

What are the different styles of travellers and why is it important to understand them?

A visitor's travel style will influence their choice of experience, tours and activities, accommodation, transport, and the location of the product purchase. Additionally, the maturity of the outbound market from the tourist's home country will significantly influence their preferred style of travel. Preferences will differ greatly from country to country, region to region and even from generation to generation. Choices are influenced by a person's age, budget, cultural background, and previous travel experiences. This means consumers can be segmented by demographics (e.g. age, gender, income etc.) and also by psychographics (e.g. motivations, interests and aspirations).

However it is important to note, you don't have to try to be all things to all people. In fact unless you have an infinite budget and allocation of resources, you will need to do your research carefully and begin gathering consumer insights to help develop a 'SMART' strategic plan, one which identifies and understands exactly who your target consumer segment(s) will be – and confirms a match with your product/experience so that you will best serve their needs and preferences.

Once you understand the key differences between your target markets, styles of travel, and can match your product with a specific customer segment you will be on the right path to attracting your preferred target traveller.

For example, a Japanese honeymoon couple will have very different requirements from a German backpacker or an American family.

How will your business address individual market needs?



Types of future travellers

What is the difference between a short and long haul traveller?

Traveller perceptions are influenced by their knowledge of the destination, the distance they need to travel to the destination, media coverage, advertising, the available holiday time and whether it is a first or repeat visit. In short haul markets, such as New Zealand and South East Asia, Australia is a highly achievable destination.

Short haul visitors often travel to Australia more than once and purchase shorter, more frequent trips. They then become more familiar with the destination and gain the confidence to plan their own trips, travel in a less structured way, more independently and venture beyond the gateways.

Broadly speaking, Australian domestic travellers could also be included in this definition.

In long haul markets such as United States and Europe, Australia is seen as a destination that is highly desirable but requires a large commitment of both time and money, and thus they see it as a single or 'mono-destination' visit. However, a high percentage of long-haul visitors do choose to make a return trip to Australia.

It is important to note that a number of markets have a high propensity to return to Australia – which confirms Australia is a destination that delivers on its brand promise.



What are the different styles of travel?

Visitors choose from a range of different styles of travel based on the purpose of their trip, be it for:

- Leisure
- Special interest
- Business
- Family reasons

Travel styles are constantly evolving, and can vary from market to market, however the table on the following page summarises the most generic styles that you should familiarise yourself with.



Group Inclusive Tour or Travellers (GIT)	Fully Independent Travellers (FIT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Pre-purchase the bulk of their holiday before leaving home via distributors → Prefer structured itineraries → Have highly organised and pre booked tour arrangements → Use distributor's preferred products → Common in less mature markets and with certain segments such as educational groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Like the freedom of planning their own arrangements → Arrange some core holiday components prior to arrival → Organise the bulk of their itinerary independently often after their arrival → Rely heavily on word of mouth, the internet and social media when planning their trip
Partially Packaged Travellers	Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Pre-book 'skeleton package' of airfares, transfers and accommodation prior to arrival → Search for competitive rates → Optional themed extras such as car hire and tours are offered at the point of sale to appeal to different segments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Cite friends and relatives as the primary reason for travel → Often travel beyond the family base to other destinations → Rely on the recommendations and advice of their Australian-based friends and relatives when planning their trip
Backpackers	Education Travellers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Spend at least one night in a backpacker hotel or youth hostel during their stay → Traditionally 18 to 35 year olds but often people aged 35 and beyond travel this way → Prefer a highly independent and unstructured approach towards travel → Rely heavily on the internet and social media for information → Often include voluntourism in their travels - volunteering for a charitable cause → Backpackers often supplement their trip with a working holiday and usually spend what they earn while they're here making them a higher yield segment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Include short course participants, long term university students, school excursions and exchanges → Cite study as the main purpose of their visit but there may be a tourism component to the trip → Have families who may visit and travel throughout the course of study → Often require specialised arrangements depending on the age of students
Business Travellers	Special Interest Travellers (SIT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Include delegates of a large conference or an individual on a business trip → Often include a component of leisure travel during their visit such as pre and post conference touring → Include delegates participating in an incentive tour - a specialised business segment which rewards performance with travel experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Travel for reasons associated with personal interests such as agritourism, health and wellness → Book through agents or operators who possess a high level of expertise and can access specialised tours, guides, expert lectures and location visits that are not part of the traditional tourism infrastructure → Have customised itineraries

Why are experiences so important?

Experiences are very important to travellers. They are often associated with a purpose or reason for travel, and in many instances they compel and even motivate people to select a specific destination. When travellers start planning a trip, they will generally select a destination that can provide the experiences that they are looking for. Travellers are looking for experiences that are unique and authentic to that destination.

For example, these travellers may be looking for:

- **Honeymoon couple** – a five-star accommodation, indulgent local food and wine and romantic experiences that will give them life-long memories.
- **Family** – value accommodation in a safe, central location with family friendly experiences such as seeing Australia's unique wildlife and landscapes.
- **Youth Traveller** – share accommodation close to transport and adventure experiences.

Therefore, always consider the 'experience' your product is offering and focus on communicating this in your brand promise. You should also be mindful your product may resonate with more than one consumer segment from a different global market, who may demand a different style of travel. Later in the toolkit, we will explore what considerations you may need to make to your business model, product / experience and service delivery to ensure it will resonate with more than one target consumer?



It is fundamental to do your research and understand the markets and types of travellers that are best suited to your product – whether it's FIT, Group or family travel, for example

Drew Hamilton, Down Under Tours



Exploring different markets

Australia global target audience

Higher spending international travellers who are motivated by our unique offering and ready to choose Australia for next holiday or business event.

What is the High Yielding Traveller (HYT) and why target?

In addition to learning about different markets and types of travellers, it is valuable for your strategy to target those global markets and consumers as aligned with Tourism Australia and your specific STO efforts, and those travellers who will offer the best fit with your product and will ultimately deliver the greatest return to your business. Tourism Australia has identified the High Yield Travellers (HYT) as Australia's best opportunity. HYTs are consumers whose trip purpose is for a holiday or to visit friends and relatives. They value travel and are motivated by what Australia has to offer. Most importantly, they are more likely to spend more, stay longer and disperse further across Australia during their visit.

Visit the Tourism Australia website for further information on the [High Yielding Traveller](#).



World class nature and wildlife



World class coastlines, beaches and marine life



A safe and secure destination



Culture & Heritage



A destination that offers value for money



Good food, wine, local cuisine and produce

What are the key international markets for Australia?

Tourism Australia is active in 15 international markets within six major regions worldwide as highlighted below:

- North Asia (China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea)
- South East Asia (India, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia)
- North America (US and Canada)
- United Kingdom
- Continental Europe (Germany, France, Italy)
- New Zealand



Be sure to stay updated on all the latest news and review updated information on Tourism Australia's corporate website on a regular basis.

Determining the right market(s) for your business

To succeed in the domestic and/or international marketplace, it is important to tailor your service and product offering to suit your target customer’s specific needs and requirements. Understanding which unique features of your region might appeal to your target consumer will allow you to tailor your product, marketing, and promotional activities to resonate and attract new business.

Furthermore, understanding your consumer target markets will guide the development of your product, how you price your product in the marketplace, where you offer your product for sale and how you promote your product to consumers.

As already mentioned, a key point to remember is to not try to enter every market at once. Select your markets carefully by looking at who is already visiting your region, and take the time to plan your approach, allocating your resources to the markets which will generate the greatest return.

Always keep informed of the market trends and forecasts - visit Tourism Research Australia. tra.gov.au

See Tourism Australia’s [Consumer Demand Reports](#) for consumer insights of Australia’s key tourism markets and seek advice from your STO to determine best options for your business.

★
TOP TIPS FOR SELECTING POTENTIAL INBOUND MARKETS
★

- Review latest Tourism Australia research, arrivals data and consumer demand reports.
- Speak with your STO / RT0 to determine which markets are already visiting the region and therefore potential primary markets for your business.
- Undertake further research to determine suitability of any secondary markets.
- Be realistic and acknowledge it will take time, energy and commitment to establish and grow inbound markets.

What is the travel seasonality of each market?

It is important to know the key booking and travel periods for each market to assist you in contracting with the key distribution partners and product planning. Below is a summary for global markets, but be sure to also do the same for domestic markets as they do differ from region to region.

Country	Key Booking Periods	Key Travel Periods
BRAZIL	September to October and April to May	December to January and July
CANADA	January to March	November to March
CHINA	October to January and May to June	October and December - February (due to National Day and Chinese New Year holidays) and July to August
FRANCE	European Spring & Autumn	July and October to February
GERMANY	January to March	October to March
HONG KONG	November to December and end June/early July	October and December - February to (due to National Day and Chinese New Year holidays) and July and December
INDIA	September to November and February to April	May (Indian school vacation) and December (Indian winter holiday, Christmas and New Year season)
INDONESIA	May to August and December	Lebaran period (July to August) and December
ITALY	September to February	July to August and December. February to November for the honeymooners
JAPAN	Approximately one month prior to travel	January to March and July to September and December
MALAYSIA	January to May and August to November	Chinese New Year (January/February), Hari Raya (July) and the school holidays (March, May to June, August and November to December)
NEW ZEALAND	April to August	February to May and September to November
SINGAPORE	April to June and October to December	June and November to December
SOUTH KOREA	June to July and December to February	July to August and November to March
UNITED KINGDOM	January to March and September to November	June to August
USA	January to March and October to November	December to March and July (July is the most popular for student travel)

Due to market changes, at times these dates and periods can change, therefore it is important to frequently review the markets you are targeting.

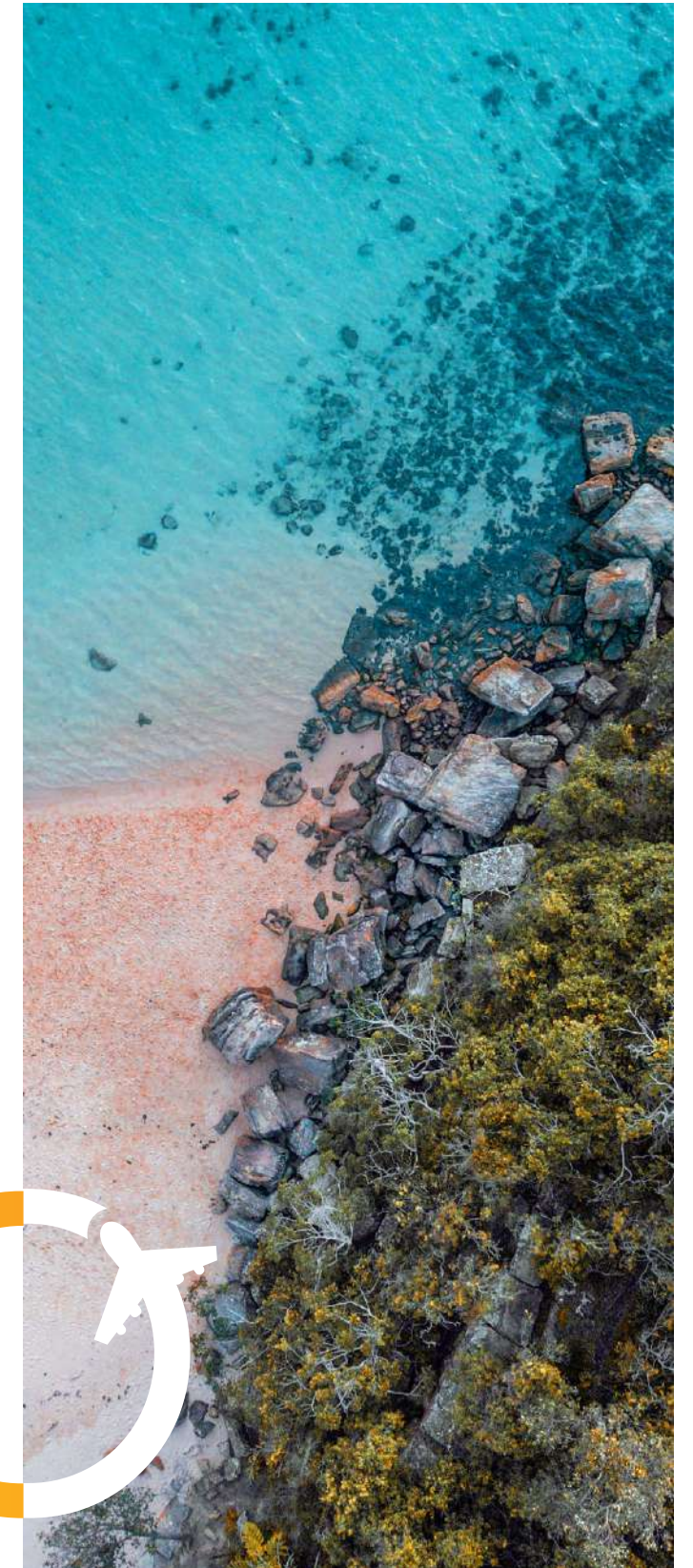


Cultural differences and tailoring your product

The world is full of differences and we need to understand them.

Cultural background greatly influences the way we communicate with consumers from different markets, and the way travellers engage and choose to experience your product. Travellers from different markets often visit the same attractions, but they may each take away something completely different from their experience. For example, an Indian visitor may visit the Sydney Opera House to see the building by helicopter to have their picture taken and share it instantly across social media channels, but an American visitor may want to visit to experience a performance.

Cultural background also drives the types of tours, activities, food, and accommodation requested by travellers during their stay in Australia. A German traveller may want to hire a campervan and visit remote, unpopulated locations; whereas an American couple may request a twin-share room with two queen beds in a luxury city hotel and take day tours to leading local attractions. To contrast with these examples, a Chinese tour group may want to do as many things as they possibly can each day and expect shopping and specific dining options to be included in the tour.



Where can I gain further information on each market?

Tourism Australia produces extensive market profiles on each market, these can be found on [Tourism Australia's website](#)

Your local STO may also be able to provide you with similar region-specific information. Be sure to contact them for more information or review their respective corporate websites.

What are the key cultural considerations?

For each international market you need to consider the following aspects or categories in relation to how they apply to your business and product offering, as well as the service delivery expectations.

Below are some examples for you to consider:

Consider	Impact	For example
RELIGION	Can affect food, dress and activities	Sensitivities around appropriate dress.
POLITICS	Can impact what and how you promote	Some governments ban the open promotion of casinos and gambling.
FOOD AND DINING	Can impact what you need to provide	Be aware if the market you are targeting have specific dietary requirements such as Vegetarian, Jain, Halal, Kosher etc.
PACE	Needs to be faster for some visitors	Eastern market visitors traditionally enjoy a faster pace of travel than western hemisphere markets.
PUNCTUALITY	Needs to be reinforced for some markets.	Culturally time is subject to interpretation, some markets are traditionally early. Whilst others consider time to be indicative.
TIMING	Need to consider if your target market traditionally starts early or late in the day or like to stay out late	Think of whether they eat earlier, later or around the same time as Australia, and how long they like to take to enjoy their meal. For example Mediterranean countries tend to eat their evening meal a lot later and take more time than other markets.
LANGUAGE	Can impact all components, but especially be conscious of safety messages.	Consider translation of all safety advices such as the use of life jackets, swimming, fire regulations etc.
SENSITIVITIES	Need to be aware of any cultural sensitivities, such as nudity and alcohol.	Mormons, Muslims and Jain will traditionally not drink alcohol.
SUPERSTITION	Need to be aware of any superstitions that impact the traveller.	Some Chinese have sensitivities around colour and numbers – the numbers 4 and 13 are considered to be unlucky.

Tailor your message

Once you have reviewed the cultural considerations for each of your target markets and determined best fit, you then need to ensure all necessary tweaks are made to the experience and that this translates into your marketing and most importantly, your day-to-day service delivery and operations. How the visitor engages with your product. Note we will explore product development and service quality later in the toolkit. Let’s look at how you will get your message across so that you can deliver on your brand promise and be sure not to offend.

At all times be open and honest about what the visitor will experience to avoid any offensive situations. For example, stating that alcohol will be served during tour lunch stop and offering a non-alcoholic option provides prior notice for guests who may not drink due to cultural or religious preference to still join in and enjoy the experience.

At all times, be sure to tailor your message in order to appeal to the different markets and respect individual cultures. The quality of your tailored communications is critical to being successful. For example, when handing your business card to an Asian client the exchange should always be done with two hands on the card as a sign of respect. Be mindful of the images you use in your marketing materials, to ensure they do not cause offence to other cultures.

Cultural Awareness Training

When international travellers interact with your organisation they are often doing so on many levels, both prior and during the experience. Hence it is critical for you and your team members to be culturally aware and sensitive to each market.

If a market is core to your business focus, do your research and ensure all team members are well educated, from the sales team to front of house.

The Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) offer a series of [‘Host’](#) market specialist training programs providing learners with detailed cultural insights on various global markets as well as business to business (B2B) workshops and events. Keep up to date with the latest ATEC events and workshop opportunities.



The travel distribution system

The travel distribution system is a complex, global network of independent businesses. This network includes a series of distributors or intermediaries, who play a specific role in the development, promotion and purchasing process of Australian tourism experiences. Regardless of your business type, size and available resources, it is impossible to reach your full potential of future customers if you go it alone purely via your own direct channels. Essentially this means if you are committed to growing your bottom line, then at some point you will need to review other available distribution options to reach future travellers - either before they depart their port of origin, or post arrival in Australia – be it locally in your region, or via another domestic location in Australia. This requires you to

consider working with a range of intermediaries to not only broaden your sales and distribution reach, but importantly to help you increase awareness and compete for attention in what is a very competitive marketplace.

As each business model is unique, there is no 'one size fits all' formula when it comes to distribution.

To add to this, distribution channels and consumer purchasing behaviour varies from market to market, so it is important you do your research to understand the structure of the distribution system specific to your target market(s) before you begin marketing internationally.



Image: Wine tasting at Penfolds Magill Estate, Adelaide, SA -Tourism Australia

04

GETTING DISTRIBUTION READY

Reaching your future travellers

As technology has evolved, traditional booking systems have changed to meet emerging consumer trends globally. This has impacted not only on the way consumers book travel – but also on how they dream, plan, book, consume and share their travel experiences.

It is important for business owners to consider what level of engagement is available and practical so you can begin to raise awareness, establish rapport and intentionally work to secure bookings and develop customer loyalty and retention. Think about the possible options now available for future travellers to engage with you as they go along the entire customer journey experience.

How will you engage along the customer journey?



Customers can:

- Gain inspiration, research, plan and book online
- Gain inspiration, research, plan and book through a physical travel agency store
- Gain inspiration, research and plan online, then book through a physical travel agency
- Gain inspiration, research and plan online, speak with a travel specialist/the business and book direct
- OR – it could be a combination of any of the above!

It is therefore more important than ever before that you cover all your bases and make sure you are visible and engaged across all stages of the customer journey experience.

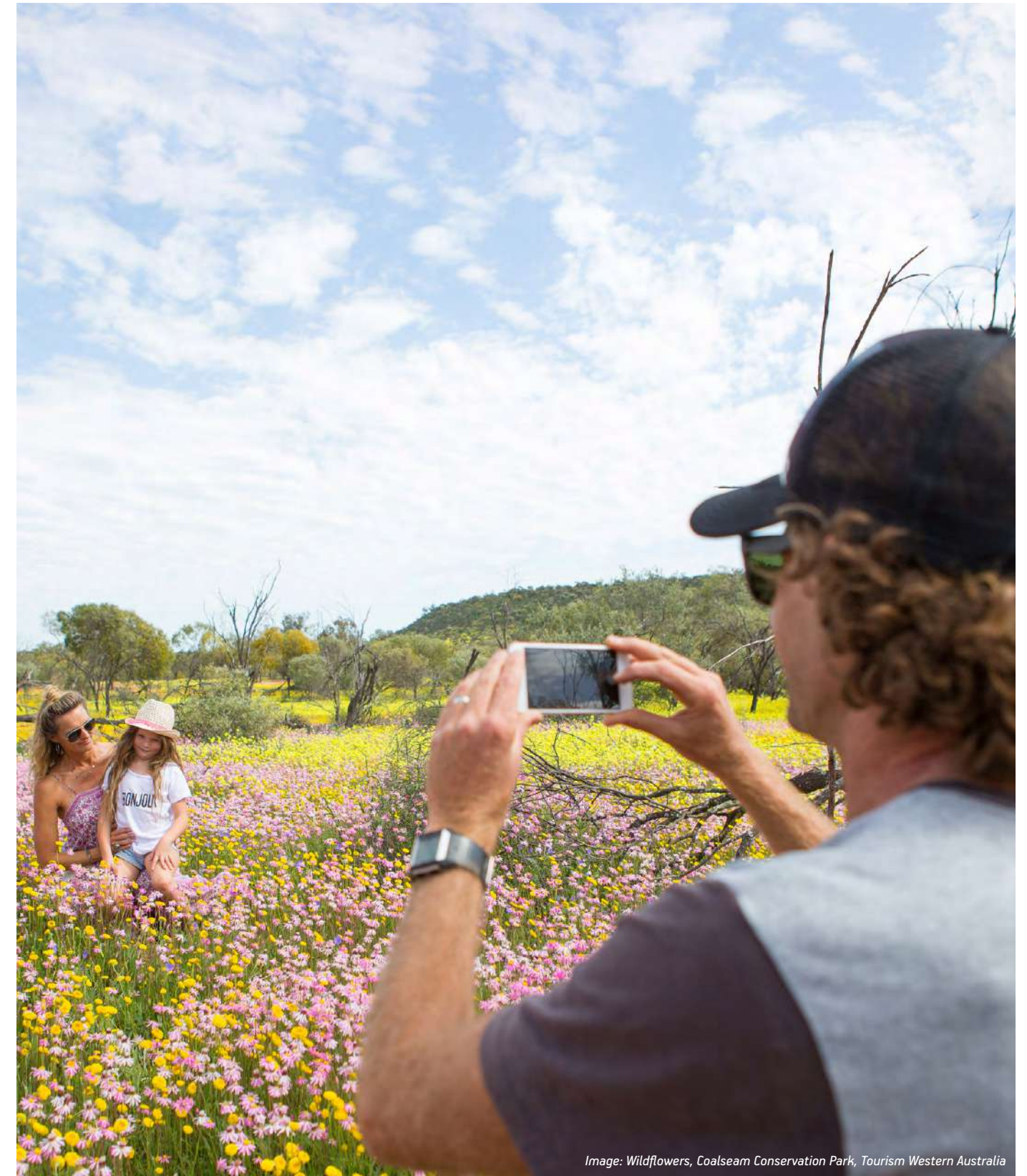


Image: Wildflowers, Coalseam Conservation Park, Tourism Western Australia

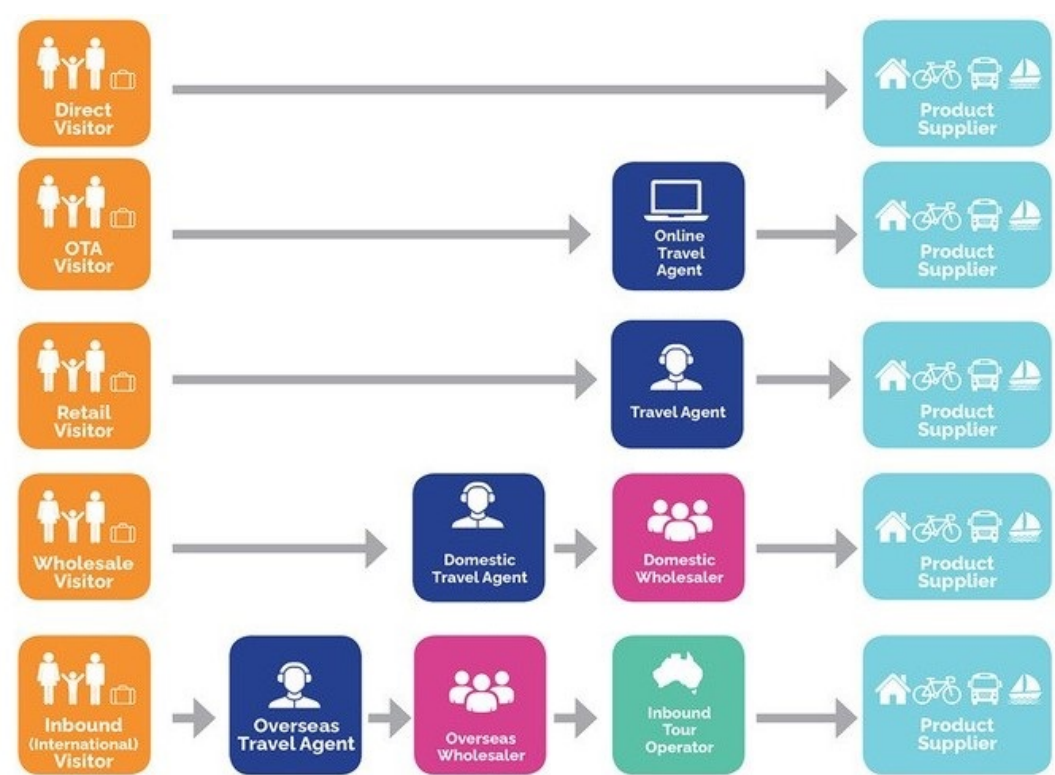
Why work with travel distributors?

Travel distributors allow you to broaden your customer base far beyond the reach of your own limited marketing budget. They are important within the inbound tourism industry as overseas consumers continue to rely on the advice of local travel experts when planning and booking their Australian holiday, particularly in long haul and emerging markets. Travel distributors can also provide market intelligence,

insights and advice on specific markets, and importantly are a key contact and pathway for consumers to effectively manage unforeseen situations.

Essentially, the travel distribution system covers all the channels through which an international traveller can buy your product. Other than approaching you directly, international travellers may book your product as follows:

The Distribution Landscape



Source: 'Top End Marketing', adapted from TECNZ Distribution System Toolkit'

How does the international distribution system work?

The traditional structure of the distribution system includes inbound tour operators (ITOs) based in Australia, wholesalers based overseas and international retail travel agents, the link to the international consumer. However, this varies considerably from market to market. For example, it is not uncommon for an ITO to be part of a larger company that may also operate a wholesale arm in an overseas market, or for a wholesaler to also operate the travel agencies that sell its packages. As the traditional distribution system continues to evolve, it is important to clearly understand the structure of the companies that you work with and their relationships with other organisations.

The integration of Online Travel Agents (OTA's) are now firmly embedded in the travel distribution system with business encouraged to consider a multi-channel approach. To remain competitive, traditional travel distributors such as wholesalers and retail travel

agents with physical shop fronts have integrated an online approach.

As we have mentioned, no two markets are the same, so it is important to understand how and where tourism products are sold to reach consumers in each of the markets you intend to operate. Both online (OTA's) and traditional inbound distribution partners (ITO's) have the ability to work with each other and also deal directly with tourism products and customers. This means that the sales process can be described as one which flows from business to business to consumer (B2B2C), or a booking transaction occurring directly from business to consumer (B2C) via your own direct sales / online digital channels. You can now begin to see why it is vital to understand each distribution partner's role and how your product can align and benefit from their part in the distribution network.



Credits: Tourism Australia, Riverfire Brisbane

Who's who of distribution

Inbound Tour Operator

An inbound tour operator (ITO), also known as a ground operator or destination management company (DMC), is an Australian-based business. ITO's provide itinerary planning and product selection, and coordinates the reservation, confirmation, and payment of travel arrangements on behalf of their overseas clients. They bring the components of accommodation, tours, transport, and meals together to create an itinerary, from fully inclusive to part planning, based on their client's needs and interests. ITOs are the link between Australian tourism products and the overseas travel distributors that buy them, including travel wholesalers, direct sellers, travel agents, meeting planners and event planners. If you are a new entrant to the inbound market and wondering how to go about introducing your business to an ITO for consideration, it is beneficial to speak to your local, regional and state tourism networks, and to consider becoming a member of ATEC. Using these networks will give you access to ITO contacts and deliver opportunities to participate in both formal and informal business networking, workshops and events.

Online Travel Agents

Online travel agents (OTAs) are specialists in online distribution and predominately have no intermediaries – they mainly deal directly with consumers and tourism product. Consumers can purchase a product or an entire holiday package online. Online distribution is less structured than the traditional travel distribution system. Commission levels vary, depending on how the site is operated. Generally speaking they have substantial marketing budgets, and they will outrank you on just about any search engine result page.

”
Having a strong relationship with ITO's is key as we play an important role in international trade distribution. Longstanding relationships with our overseas selling partners mean we can market and sell your individual services and products as part of an overall Australian itinerary on your behalf.

David Armour, Southern World Australia



'Honour Roll' at Australian War Memorial, Canberra, ACT.
Credits: Tourism Australia

”
OTA's are a growing part of the distribution ecosystem, each with their own set of strengths and partnerships opportunities. By all means ask us questions about key origin markets, marketing strategies and team locations, and what they plan to accomplish for you. OTA's can bolster your reach across international markets and increase your revenue by bridging language, currency and payment methods.

Henry Hooper, Klook ANZ

TOP TIPS FOR SELECTING ★ AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO ★ SERVICE GLOBAL RETAIL NETWORK

Speak with your STO and check out Tourism Australia's 'Aussie Specialist' program – a dedicated network of globally recognised travel agents who undertake frequent training, events, workshops and familiarisation visits to help sell destination Australia.

Wholesalers

Wholesalers are located in both domestic and overseas markets and have traditionally provided a link between travel agents and ITOs or tourism product. Wholesalers purchase programs developed by Australian based ITOs or develop their own packages and itineraries for travel agents and consumers. These packages will usually offer transport, accommodation, tours and attractions. In some markets, wholesalers are also 'direct sellers' who bypass travel agents to directly target consumers. Wholesalers may operate their own retail outlets or work with an established network of travel agents in their own country. Many wholesalers specialise in specific market segments.

Retail Travel Agents

Retail travel agents are based in the consumer's country of origin and deal directly with consumers. Retail travel agents offer wide distribution in prominent shop front locations and are a convenient place for travellers to make bookings and buy holidays. Traditionally, retail travel agents have provided a link between the wholesaler and consumers, selling travel packages in brochures promoted and distributed through the retail network. However, with the integration of distribution roles, the retailer may deal directly with ITOs or Australian-based products, particularly in Asian markets.

Many retail travel agents belong to a larger chain of travel agencies or consortiums that use their combined resources to market the agency brand. In some countries, retail agencies may be operated by travel wholesalers, or may concentrate on particular market segments such as special interest or family travel. Retail travel agents today also have an online presence.

Channel Managers

A channel manager is a tool that allows the supplier to map their inventory and rates which then distributes across all connected global distribution platforms. A channel manager connects the supplier's booking engine with all major distribution channels including Online Travel Agents (OTA's), creating seamless distribution of rates and availability in a real-time environment.



Business Events Organisers

Meeting and incentive planners organise and manage all aspects of meetings and events including conventions, conferences, incentives, seminars, workshops, symposiums, exhibitions, and special events. Incentive trips are awarded as a non-cash bonus to company employees for good performance and may include a corporate meeting or corporate team-building activity, and can even include a partner travel program for accompanying travel companions. All these events attract delegates and participants from Australia and overseas. This sector is called business events and is one of the highest yielding inbound tourism segments. Meeting and incentive planners use a wide variety of venues, tour operators, accommodation, team building companies and restaurants. They look for unique travel experiences and require different support and facilities to leisure tourism. Many will enlist the expertise of an ITO or Destination Management Company (DMC) in Australia to handle the ground operations and bookings.

Meeting and incentive planners are also known as: Professional Conference Organisers (PCO), Destination Management Companies (DMC), Conference Managers, Event Managers, Incentive Houses, Travel Fulfillment Companies, and Special Project Managers.

Tourism Australia and your STO offices have dedicated experts who work in the Business Events space. Check out the respective websites to explore all marketing opportunities and set up a time to introduce your product/yourself in person.

Key Distribution Partners

Key Distribution Partners is a term used commonly by Tourism Australia to acknowledge the group of targeted global travel companies, including airlines, wholesalers, retail and online travel agencies, with whom Tourism Australia have confirmed commercial business partnerships to align marketing efforts to increase total booking value of visitors to Australia.

Each KDP is selected based on the fit with Tourism Australia's market strategy, a shared target customer profile, shared funding of marketing activity, a commitment to training their frontline sales team through the Aussie Specialist Program and a commitment to selling quality Australian product and experiences. For further information visit Tourism Australia's [corporate website](#).



Image: Twelve Apostles Lodge Walk, Great Ocean Road, VIC – Tourism Australia

Working successfully via distribution channels

What are travel distributors seeking from Australian suppliers?

If you have committed to working with travel distribution partners, you need to ensure that your product offers the following minimum requirements, commonly termed as being 'Export Ready' or 'International Ready'.

- Quality products and experiences
- Reliability and efficiency (consistent operating hours and regular schedules)
- High levels of customer service and helpful reservations staff
- Understanding of the cultural needs of your target markets
- Consistent pricing policies that consider all levels of distribution and offer commissionable rates
- Efficient communication such as email, toll- free numbers
- Fast and efficient turnaround and response times for bookings and enquiries (within 24 hours).
- Access to inventory whether via allotment / freesale
- Availability across all seasons; surcharges for high peak instead of blackouts
- Willingness to work with other complementary products for packaging purposes
- Flexibility and ability to offer attractive value-added package options

How do I connect with inbound tour operators?

ITOs vary in size from sole operators to large businesses with product departments. Regardless of the size, ITO product managers identify and select the products and suppliers they want to sell. If an ITO thinks your product is suitable for their market and customers, they can support and offer advice on suitable markets for your product. Inbound tour operators are market specialists and can provide invaluable suggestions about product development and packaging.

The Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) can provide members with a list of ATEC member ITOs and the markets in which they operate.



TOP TIPS FOR WORKING WITH ITO's

- Research who the ITO works with in the distribution system, and which markets they target to ensure your product is the correct fit
- Become a member of Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC)
- Register for ATEC's [Tourism Trade Checklist](#) - an online directory for buyers (distribution partners) displaying the trade compliance of sellers (tourism operators) and state health orders.
- To encourage trust in your business operation, obtain and display your business's COVID readiness credentials, e.g. the globally recognised World Travel and Tourism Council's (WTTC) Safe Travel stamp, obtained through a Tourism Trade Checklist registration
- Provide a sales kit with your business card/contact, product fact sheets (digital), brochures and images
- Ensure information on your website is kept up-to-date
- Provide a short visual presentation, including video footage
- Provide rates that allow for ITO commissions and include concise terms and conditions
- Be prepared to provide rates up to 18 months in advance (validity): 01 April – 31 March)
- Provide information in languages (online fact sheets, brochures) if targeting markets where English is second language
- Participate in ITO networking events, workshops or familiarisations organised by Tourism Australia, ATEC, your STO or RTO.
- Provide ITOs with prompt (same day) turnarounds on enquiries, quotations, and bookings
- Don't ask for prepayments or deposits, except in exceptional circumstances, such as for large groups or if a significant upfront investment from your business is required
- Accept ITO vouchers and trading on credit terms subject to credit application approval process
- Action complaints promptly
- Provide updated product information, training and familiarisations for key ITO staff
- Check the ITO is a current, financial member of ATEC

How do I distribute my product with overseas Retail Travel Agents?

In markets where travel agents prefer to work with a wholesaler and/or ITO you will need to identify established wholesalers with a wide retail distribution network. Educate the wholesalers and ITO about your product and providing them with the tools to effectively train their retail partners is the most effective way to target these retail agents.

★ TOP TIPS FOR WORKING WITH OVERSEAS RETAIL TRAVEL AGENTS: ★

- Get involved in Tourism Australia's [Aussie Specialists Program](#) and offer special deals to encourage agents to experience your product first-hand
- Meet retail agents and wholesale reservation agents by attending trade shows that target these staff
- Establish and maintain regular communications with your retail travel agent's preferred wholesalers and ITO partners to build sound relationships
- Provide key agents with regular, relevant product updates and feedback on sales performance – be sure to acknowledge top achievers to keep them motivated to sell more in the future

The Aussie Specialist Program (ASP)

[The Aussie Specialist Program \(ASP\)](#) is Tourism Australia's global online training program. It is shared by all Australian states and territory tourism partners and designed to provide frontline travel sellers from around the globe with the knowledge and skills to best sell Australia.

The ASP is available in 11 languages. Globally there are more than 36,000 registered agents across 90 plus countries including the key markets of the United Kingdom, Europe, North America, and Asia. Tourism Australia maintains active relationships with qualified Aussie Specialists through trade events, the online training program, e-newsletters and familiarisation trips to Australia. The program is also available in Australia for domestic based agents.

Visit the [Tourism Australia](#) website for further information on how to participate.

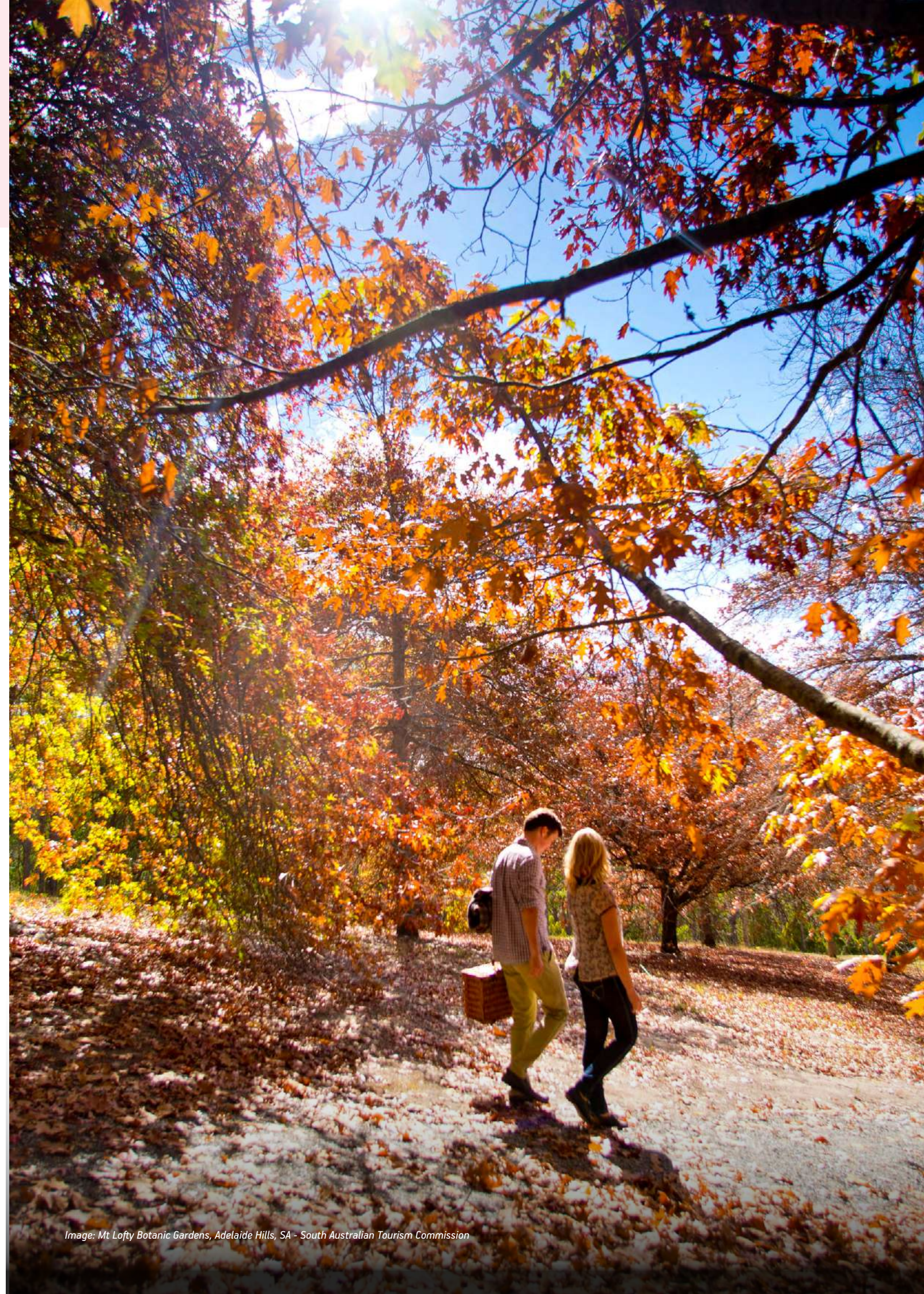


Image: Mt Lofty Botanic Gardens, Adelaide Hills, SA - South Australian Tourism Commission

How do I distribute my product with online travel agents?

As online travel agents (OTAs) deal directly with the consumers, you can research their website as if you were a consumer. See how it operates and how it will promote your product. Contact the OTA to see how information is loaded and updated.

Many sites provide you with access to maintain and update your details. While this does provide you with control over the information on your product it can also be very time consuming, especially if you are featured on several sites. Some online distributors also run a number of affiliate sites on-selling packages – just as an ITO would to a wholesaler. It is important that you are aware of any affiliate sites and where your rates may appear, understanding you can opt out as you wish.

★ TOP TIPS FOR WORKING WITH ONLINE TRAVEL AGENTS ★

- Clarify commission and inventory levels required and the level of promotion for your product
- Manage your rates and inventory daily across all platforms
- Find out how much new business the site may generate
- Check if there are any affiliate sites that may operate in addition to the main site - remember to optout if you wish
- How is your information on the site maintained – by you or the site host?
- How is the site promoted? Is it targeted at the trade or consumers?
- Are there any distribution agreements in place?
- Regularly review and monitor your performance across all platforms

How do I distribute my product with Business Events Planners?

Business Events Planners can provide your business with access to the corporate traveller attending a business-related event.

Some planners work directly with products, or they work through ITOs and other distribution networks. You can meet planners at speciality Business Event B2B workshops, or by connecting with their ITO, OTA and other distribution partners. Work with TA and your STO Business Events team and invite them to experience your offerings.

★ TOP TIPS FOR WORKING WITH BUSINESS EVENTS PLANNERS ★

- Offer a variety of itineraries that include unique and diverse signature experiences
- Ensure the ITOs and DMCs that handle business and incentive travel are familiar with your product
- Suggest interesting ways to package your product together with other experiences
- Participate in cooperative marketing activities organised by Tourism Australia and your local Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)



How do I distribute my product with overseas wholesalers?

To successfully engage distribution partners, you need to identify and service relevant partners along the chain to ensure there is awareness and interest in your product regardless of where the actual purchase transaction takes place.

Many international wholesalers located in overseas markets remain reliant upon Australian based ITOs to develop itineraries and packages for distribution via retail travel agents and consumers. As such, it is essential that you establish good relationships with ITO's who specialise in your target markets, and their preferred wholesalers.

These relationships can be achieved by conducting in-market sales calls or joining in-market roadshows to meet with product managers, or by participating in trade events such as the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) to meet with key wholesale travel decision makers. ATE is an annual travel trade event held in Australia by Tourism Australia for major international wholesalers who brochure and promote Australian tourism experiences to meet with Australian tourism products.

Don't be surprised if it takes several months or a few years of contact before a wholesaler begins to use your new product. This is due to a range of reasons, including their loyalty to existing product suppliers, existing contracts, forward planning and stringent consumer protection laws in some major markets. Wholesalers also need assurance that you are an established operator that will remain in business for many years.

Once you have secured a product distribution deal with a wholesaler, you will need to provide the wholesaler and key frontline sales staff with ongoing education and product updates to keep your product front of mind via newsletters, sales calls, trade shows and familiarisation visits.

★ TOP TIPS FOR WORKING WITH WHOLESALERS INCLUDE ★

- Research – find out which markets and market segments the wholesaler targets, the type of experience they sell and who are their distribution partners (e.g. ITOs)
- Work closely with those ITOs to support and educate the wholesalers on your product offering
- Keep wholesalers updated on any new developments or changes to your product
- Suggest ideas for packaging your product with complementary products in your region to make it easier to sell
- Highlight your unique selling points (USP), the features and benefits of your product and the factors that set you apart from the competition
- Ensure you allow for wholesaler commissions in your rates and include concise terms and conditions. Be prepared to provide rates up to 18 months in advance
- Keep in mind consumer protection laws that the wholesaler must adhere to. Europe and Japan have strict consumer laws that require companies to deliver the promised standard of holiday experience



The Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)

atdw.com.au

The ATDW is Australia's national tourism marketing platform representing over 50,000 small and medium-sized tourism businesses and destinations. Their main goal is to support Australian tourism businesses to make the most of their digital marketing efforts, expand their reach, promote their offerings, and attract more online traffic.

By creating a ATDW listing, tourism operators benefit from being listed on a multitude of websites, including their State or Territory Tourism Organisation's (STO) consumer website, Regional Tourism Organisation's (RTO) consumer website, local government websites and the Tourism Australia consumer website Australia.com. In addition ATDW has an extensive network of distributors which continues to grow. An ATDW listing is free in most states, check your STO website for more information.



Tourism Australia's Australia 365 On Demand

aus365.australia.com

Another important digital distribution opportunity is Australia 365 On Demand. Australia 365 is an "always on" platform providing Australian industry, global distribution partners and Aussie Specialists the opportunity to connect throughout the year as well as functioning as a companion-piece to TA's trade events. Australian tourism industry members are invited to participate, and each have their own company listing on the platform where they can upload key collateral and product information. Global distribution partners and Aussie Specialists will be able to search and review all Australian industry company listings including biography information, product updates, brand assets and social media links.

Tourism Trade Checklist

tourismtradechecklist.com.au

The Tourism Trade Checklist, powered by ATEC, is an industry-led initiative allowing for the online collection, storage and sharing of information relating to business trade compliance and highlighting state based health requirements.



05

SETTING RATES AND CONTRACTING

Pricing – it's all about the balance!

There are many different elements you need to consider when setting your pricing and lots of terminology to learn. First of all, your price is the cost to consumers at various points in the distribution chain. It includes the price that consumers pay when they buy direct from you, the commission and nett rate structures offered for intermediaries and the rates for children or students. It also includes your booking terms and conditions which you need to set out in a concise rate agreement contract for distributors to consider.



The process of identifying outstanding experiences and pricing them for the international market can prompt innovation and some of your best ideas, and you only pay commission on those experiences which sell.

Alva Hemming, Go Beyond Melbourne



What is the cost of distribution?

If you plan to sell your product through the distribution system, you will need to factor commission levels into your price structure. Commissions are not something to add to your price. They are a cost of doing business. Much like you would pay someone else who supports and works in your business, this is the amount paid to the Trade (distribution partners) to distribute and sell your product. This is their income, paying for their operation and the services they provide.

Distribution costs can be either:

- You, the operator, making a percentage commission repayment to the distributor, or
- The nett rate: gross rate less the appropriate commission level

NOTE: Each level of the distribution system receives a different rate of commission.

If the price of your product does not allow for these levels of payment, you will find it very difficult to market your product through an inbound tour operator, wholesaler, online or retail agent (Trade).

This statement is an important reminder that your product must be priced consistently, accurately and competitively to be successful in the marketplace. This requires a clear understanding of each individual cost component, including commissions and their impact on the total price of the product. Communicating your value proposition when dealing with different customers with different perceptions can be challenging. However, you need to be able to justify and clearly convey the unique points of difference in order to demand a certain price. Getting your pricing right is a key requirement for success.

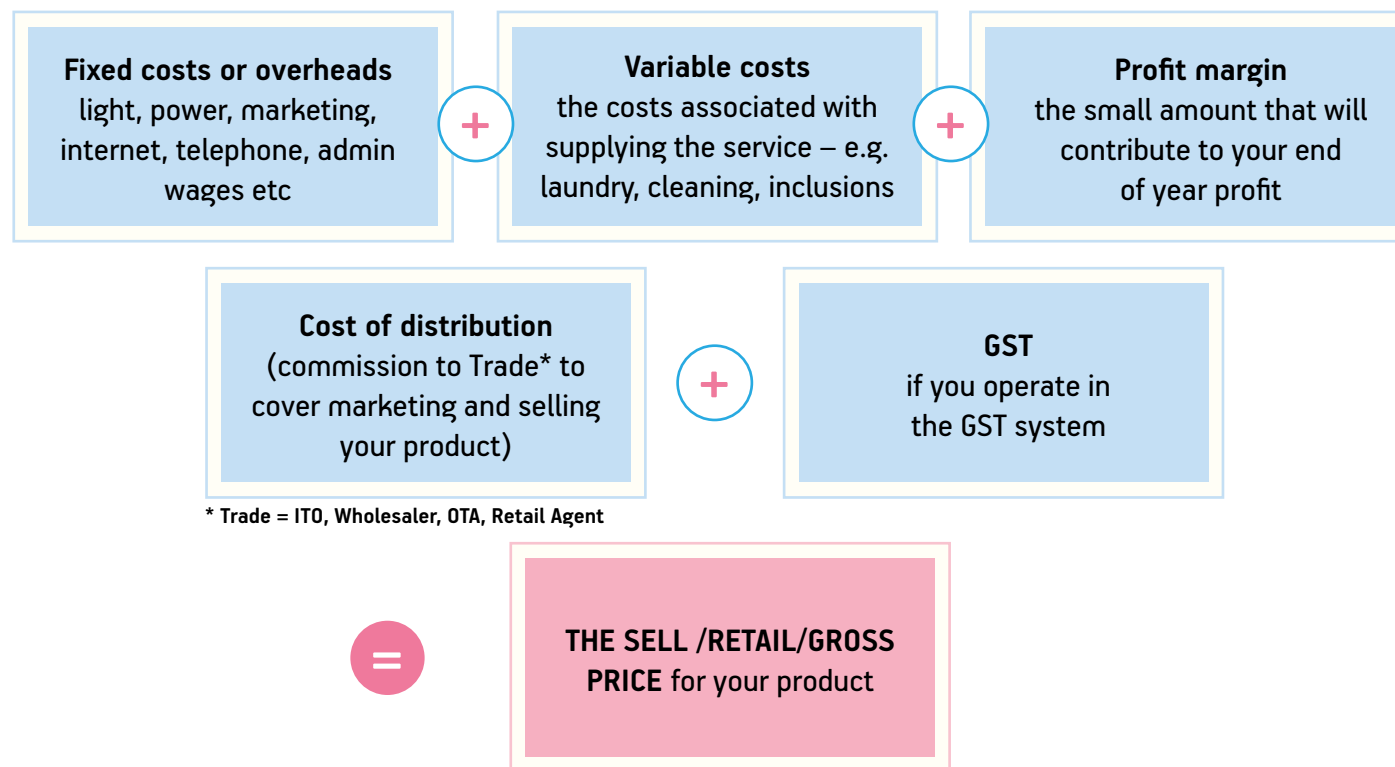
Why should I factor in the cost of distribution?

Factoring in the cost of distribution allows your business to develop and convert a solid business mix. By working with trade partners, you can obtain a much wider audience, leading to higher conversion year-round that you may not have been able to source yourself.

If you can get your pricing right, you should view it as an opportunity to market and distribute your business to a global audience.

How to establish your Sell Rate?

The price of your product is made up of the following cost components:



The total of all the above costs is your market/ retail price, also known as sell or gross price. From this gross price you can calculate the nett price by deducting the specific level of commission offered to the partner in the distribution chain. It is important not to just add the commission on top of your publicly displayed market price. The customer should pay the same price if they book direct, via an international

travel agent or via the internet. Consumers will not purchase the product from a travel agent in advance if they know they can purchase it directly from you at a reduced price. Agents will not promote and market your product if they know the consumer is not going to buy from them. It is recommended to always maintain rate parity across all platforms of distribution.

How do I price my products for distribution system partners?

When dealing with the travel distribution system, you must understand the different commissions required, and the difference between nett and gross (or retail) rates and 'protect your rates' by providing the correct rates to each level of the distribution system.

Rates should be clearly marked as either gross (retail, incl commission and tax) or nett (less commission but incl of tax).

Gross Rate = Nett Rate + Trade Partners' Commission.

The gross or retail rate of a product is the amount that the consumer pays and should be consistent across all distribution channels. Rate parity is vital in maintaining good business partnerships.

GROSS RATE – is your retail selling price

NETT RATE – is the money you receive from the trade after commission has been taken out.



The cost of distribution

- The fee paid to trade partners or 'distributors' to promote, distribute and sell your product to consumer.
- Should be viewed as a sales and marketing cost – opportunity to increase awareness and widen your reach to convert business that you may not otherwise reach.
- Varies according to each level of the distribution system and market.
- This is distributor's income for the service(s) they provide on your behalf.
- Commission is only paid once a sale has been completed.
- They provide promotion and visibility at their risk.

There are many players in the global distribution network!

It is important to establish a distribution strategy; identifying partners with the 'best fit' to your business and learning how to work effectively with each to maximise your return on investment.

- In the global marketplace there is a degree of cross-over which varies from market to market
- Understand the key functions and aspects of each type
- Research how they work in your target markets

This will allow you to decide which partners are best fit for you and your business.



Commission is only paid once - each distributor in the chain earns their part.

Honouring the distribution system

It is very important to understand who is who in the distribution landscape i.e., are they an inbound tour operator, wholesaler, or agent? It is also important to ensure that the nett rates you provide to buyers are relevant to their standing in the distribution channel. This is called honouring the distribution channel.



Commission guide by channel

Commission levels stated in the guide below are a range.

Sales Method	Commission Level	Explanation
Inbound tour operator (ITO)	25-30%	A nett rate of 25-30% margin is agreed with the ITO. The commission margin is shared up the distribution line from the ITO to the wholesaler and retailer.
Wholesaler	20-25%	A nett rate of 20-25% margin is agreed with the wholesaler.
Online travel agent (OTA)	15-25%	A nett rate of 15-25% margin is agreed with the OTA.
Retail travel agent (RTA)	10-15%	A nett rate of 10-15% margin is agreed with the RTA.
Direct booking	0%	Bookings made direct with your business will not incur any commission.

Note: this table is a guide only and levels vary from market to market.
Other factors will come in to play such as preferred partnerships, incentive schemes, volume of business etc. You should negotiate a mutually beneficial and sustainable agreement for both parties.

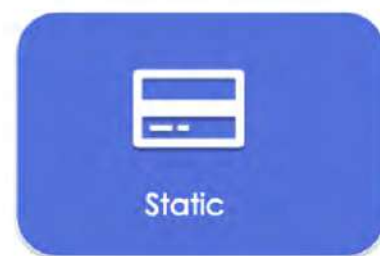
What is Rate Parity?

When distributing your product it is crucial to maintain rate parity. This means, your sell or gross rate which the consumer pays should not appear to be lower via any particular booking source or distribution channel. Rate parity exists when the same rate structure for a product exists across all its distribution channels. When a product effectively controls rate parity, rate integrity is assured, and the consumer becomes confident in booking the product and distribution partners will work with you. Rate parity ensures an even playing field and protects a product's relationship with all its distribution partners – from OTAs and ITOs to retail agents overseas. This will ensure that consumers receive consistent pricing and value no matter which of these channels they use to make their reservations.

If you guarantee rate parity, you will build trust and confidence with both your consumers and business partners alike. Reminder, if you want to promote a discount or special offer – be mindful this needs to be shared via all your distribution channels. If you don't, you risk the chance of losing partners and ultimately their business.

It should be your goal to mirror the same retail rates at all points of reservation for your travel distribution partners.

Rate types for leisure tourism market



Dynamic pricing is a pricing strategy that businesses use to set flexible prices for products or services based on current market demand. Also known as surge or demand pricing, dynamic pricing is common in accommodation providers.

Static Rates – is when a business (let's say a hotel for example) keeps the price at exactly the same sell rate at all times, regardless of the occupancy, market trends and marketplace demand. This is the opposite of dynamic pricing.

What about pricing for Groups?

When dealing with Groups (typically defined as 10 guests or more), distribution partners will often be seeking a competitive rate taking into account the volume of business which they will deliver with the size of booking. As an example, for hotels – the distribution partner may seek an all-inclusive group rate to cover bed, breakfast and tax (BBT) – or even dinner and other special additional services. Note, due to the volume of business there is an expectation the group rate will be more competitively priced than your static rate.

Group tour guests usually get a discount since there are multiple people coming at once. But not all group tour customers are the same. Tiered pricing refers

to different rates to different group tour customers subject to their needs, inclusions, and your revenue management strategy.

In today's market, consumers and thus distribution partners are demanding instant booking confirmation and seeking maximum flexibility, consistency and reliability.

Below is some key terminology which you should familiarise yourself with when entering rate negotiations with distribution partners.

01

Allotment - A dedicated room or rooms that is given to your trade partner and it is theirs to sell until they release it back to you. Can be applied to tours as well.

02


Free-sale - Free-sale is when you open up your inventory to be sold without any restrictions and until you advise trade partners to 'STOP SELL' from a particular date.

03

On Request - A trade partner emails through a request to which you respond with a rate. This is often less favoured as the trade partner has no guaranteed rate to communicate to the customer.



The Do's and Don'ts of Pricing

DO	DON'T
✓ Get the price right for the market and compare it with prices offered by your competitors	✗ Add the cost of commission for the different distributor channels on top of your retail pricing. This will immediately eliminate the inbound market from using your business as they will be priced out of the market
✓ Build a totally consistent rate schedule	✗ Distribute rates intended for wholesalers and inbound operators to retail agents. This will either increase your commission payments or those wholesalers and/or ITOs will not distribute your product.
✓ Guarantee your rates for 1 April to 31 March. Price may need to be provided up to 18 months in advance	✗ Consider commissions as a 'discount'. They are relevant and legitimate cost of doing business. Intermediaries such as wholesalers and ITOs have their own costs to promote, sell and package your product overseas. For example, a 30% commission paid to an ITO is generally divided 10% to the ITO, 10% to the Wholesaler and 10% to the Travel Agent.
✓ Ensure that your price will generate sufficient profitability and turnover	✗ Set different rates for local and overseas visitors unless there is a clearly defined variation in the product offering.
✓ Ensure that you identify any seasonality in your product, i.e., high season, low season, shoulder	
✓ Block out periods or surcharge periods, minimum stay periods and days of operation and clearly identify the corresponding rate alterations	
✓ Keep a database to confirm who you have distributed rates to so you can update them as relevant	

Contract Rates Agreement – what to include?

To make your product easy to sell for your distribution partners, when setting your rates, keep it as simple as possible. If your product is seasonal, or if you have chosen to use mid-week and weekend rates, keep the number of seasons or price categories to a minimum. Having too many rate periods is confusing for agents, makes your product more difficult to sell and may mean that your product is less likely to be featured in distributors' programs. This doesn't mean that 'specials' can't be offered throughout the year. Just be mindful when offering special rates or packages ensure they are structured to include all levels of distribution and that the validity and terms and conditions are clearly stated.

To protect your business, it is important to clearly state all the booking terms and conditions with your rates. It is preferable that the terms and conditions are on one page, attached to your rates.

Try to set your information out so that anyone from any cultural background could easily understand your terms. Use tables to keep your rates and inclusions clear and concise.

The more information that you provide on your rates agreement the easier it will be for your distribution partner to load your product efficiently into their system ready for sale.

Note, ATEC provide a variety of rate contract templates available in the Tourism Trade Ready program.

Below is a summary of key points for your consideration:

- Cover Page - Introduction including company logo, certifications with short welcome letter
- Rate validity dates: Rates for the international market need to be valid 01 April – 31 March and need to be guaranteed and final.
- Gross Sell (Retail) and Nett Rates: List both the gross (retail) and nett rates and the commission level percentage. Be clear – are your rates per person, per room, per day, per vehicle?
- GST: Clearly indicate if rates are GST inclusive or exclusive and any further additional charges that may apply
- Contact details: Include all your relevant contact details, address, phone, mobile, email and website. If you have them, include specific contact details for bookings, marketing and accounts.
- Cancellation conditions: Explain cancellation charges based on the time cancellation occurs

prior to travel. Ensure your cancellation conditions are in line with industry standards as well as meeting your operational needs.

→ Amendment charges: Explain amendment charges based on the time amendments occur prior to travel. Ensure your amendment charges are in line with industry standards as well as meeting your operational needs.

→ Child/Infant: Advise age ranges and then provide actual rates on your rate sheet. For example – Infant is under 2 years; child is 2 to 12 years inclusive. If you offer other discounts, such as a Seniors Discount, also list this and any identification required.

→ Group conditions: If you have specific conditions for groups these should be clearly shown. For example, how many days prior to the booking do you require a group rooming list? What is the minimum number required to access group rates?

- Free of charge (FOC) policy: If you have an FOC policy clearly indicate when it applies. For example, 1 FOC passenger for every 15 paying passengers or 1 FOC room for every 10 rooms booked.
- Inclusions and exclusions: These may be internal or external to your business. For example, a tour may have to pay National Park Entry Fees, or an accommodation may have meal or room inclusions i.e. breakfast, free Wi-Fi etc.
- Minimum night stays: Ensure these are listed if relevant and if they are only over peak periods list the specific peak period dates.
- Minimum and maximum guest capacity on tours: Advise if you have minimum or maximum numbers to make a booking or suit your product availability.
- Any block-out periods / seasonal rates / days not operating: These need to be advised at the time of contracting, not after the rate agreement has been issued.
- Bedding configuration: Include maximum capacity and bed configurations for rooms and any additional bedding charges (e.g. rollaway bed).
- Departure times, dates, and points: For tour operators, include any specific details to assist your customers in finding your tour departure. Consider including maps to highlight.

- Payment policy & banking details: Include when the payment is due for each booking and how payments should be made. If a trade distribution partner is going to be on an account basis (for example invoiced every 30 days) do they need to complete a credit application form? What is the process for obtaining and submitting the form, and the likely duration for the credit check and account confirmation?
- Any special conditions: Consider all such conditions relevant for your business for example, if photography is not allowed on tour or the tour may not operate in certain weather conditions, or if it is an all-weather activity.
- Any additional information of relevance: These could include check in/check out times, what passengers need to bring on tour, if passengers need to arrive at a set time prior to departure, what they need to wear (e.g. long pants for safety), what level of fitness they may require etc.
- Damages and responsibilities: This clearly needs to state who is responsible for any damages. You may also include that you recommend that all passengers have travel insurance.

The above is to be used as a guide only. You should seek professional legal advice for your own business, especially to ensure all your terms and conditions are covered to protect your business.



Image: Bondi Beach Aerial - Tourism Australia

TIPS TO ASSIST WITH RATE NEGOTIATIONS

- **Allotment** – you may be asked to provide an allotment which refers to a number of seats/rooms supplied for free-sell until an agreed release back period/date
- **Overrides** – refers to an increased commission payments in exchange for increased volume in actualised business
- **Preferred Product** – distributors may have preferred partnerships in place where operators channel their business into particular hotels/tours/attractions in return for higher commission and in return a target volume of business
- **Brochure Contributions** – you may be asked to pay an amount for inclusion of your tour/accommodation/attraction in partner programs/brochures. Negotiation points include ad size, estimated sales target, size of your business
- **Plan and do your research first!** – Develop a 'SMART' plan and consider, do you know what your competitors are doing? Is your product proposition attractive? Have you invited your STO/TA to experience and provide feedback? Have you identified compatible distribution partners?
- **If in doubt, ask for feedback** – as a new entrant to the inbound market, invite buyers to experience your offering, obtain feedback on your delivery, marketing and pricing
- **'KISS' Principle** – Don't over complicate things – include only the necessary information and tweak/improve along your journey
- **Share your passion** – buyers may not recall everything you say, but they will remember your UVP (if compelling) – and importantly, how you make them feel!



DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCES FOR FUTURE TRAVEL

In this learning module, we explore key stages for consideration as we build (or perhaps rebuild) our tourism offering for future travel, and most importantly review key considerations as we strive to consistently deliver quality tourism experiences which are sustainable, memorable, authentic and uniquely Australian. So let's start at the beginning and clarify some common terminology used in tourism marketing and product development.

What is a product?

Your product is the combination of 'goods and services' that make up the visitor experience, including the standard of your facilities and equipment, the level of service you provide and the quality of your interpretation.

It is important to note, an individual product will make up only part of the total travel experience for a consumer. The complete travel experience includes all the elements that a visitor consumes

from the time they leave home, during their visit to the destination up until they return. This includes transport, accommodation, meals, tours and attractions, as well as other activities. These may be experiences purchased independently by the consumer or bundled into a package for sale by an ITO or wholesaler, as well as free experiences.

The total travel experience is made up of both tangible products as well as intangible service experiences. To add to this, we can't forget we are welcoming guests from different countries and cultures with differing needs, and even guests from different generations who subsequently have varying perceptions and thus expectations. These are critical factors for tourism businesses to carefully consider if our intentions are: to meet, and ultimately aim to exceed guest expectations by consistently delivering service quality experiences.

Why should I review my product offering which is already selling?

Is your current experience / product offering suitable for target audience?

What changes if any do you need to make for future travel?

Undertake research and refer to TTR Toolkit for supplementary resources

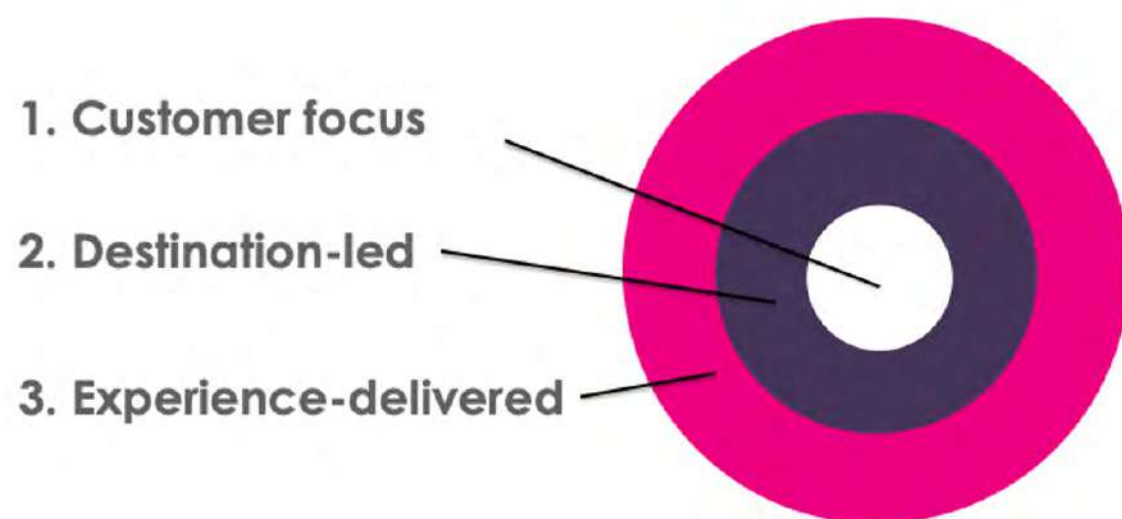
Review your service design as you engage along the entire customer journey



Benefits of a review process:

- Stopping to first review our experiences reminds us to check that our experiences are suitable and will resonate with our target audiences. Consider has your target audience needs changed? If so, consider what tweaks and adjustments might you need to make to the actual experience and or delivery to match expectations and maximise sales opportunities
- Highly fluid and dynamic market means we must continue to reassess our offering by looking closely at core marketing principles to ensure sustainability of business
- Remind us our product is often the sum of total parts/experience – critical need to consider all touchpoint opportunities for engagement with our customers along the dreaming, planning, booking, travelling, post-travel phases of the journey.
- Ultimately, the success of all tourism experiences comes down to the service quality delivered. We therefore need to understand what service quality (SQ) is? How is it measured and monitored so we can consistently strive to deliver tourism excellence – again – thinking not just DURING the actual travelling phase – but BEFORE and AFTER (care) as well.

REMEMBER: Customer is KING!



Source: Adapted from Tourism and Events Queensland Brand Book

Your product/ experience development should be guided by your customer's needs and expectations, and therefore need to remain the focus for your product /experience development and delivery.

Consider: Who is your target future traveller? Regardless of your target market or segment – one thing is certain, our customer's needs and expectations must remain at the heart of everything we do when it comes to creating and delivering quality tourism experiences to ensure our businesses remain viable in the long term.

Mindful of the fast paced, technological and ever-changing environment in which we live, our customers are now more demanding and discerning than ever and are seeking out personalisation.

To successfully meet customer priorities and needs, we need to understand motivations for travel and key drivers, and address these key characteristics throughout the experience development/ product customisation and the service delivery framework, as we aim to deliver exceptional customer service – creating memories that will last a lifetime.

Customer needs and priorities will differ from country to country, region to region and from generation to generation – we know we can't put them all in the one box.



Understanding customer preferences

Target Markets	Segment	Key Drivers & Differentiators
Domestic - Intrastate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Leisure Day Trips → 'Staycation' - Local community within 100km catchment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Reconnection with Family/Friends/Community → Value for money → Recharge and revitalise → Short breaks, holidays, events
Domestic – Interstate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Leisure Short-breaks → Drive Holidays → VFR → Business/ Events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Reconnection with Family/Friends/Community → Value for money → Recharge and revitalise → Short breaks, holidays, events
International – Short Haul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Short-breaks / mono-destination → Fly/Drive holidays → VFR → Business / Events → Other – Special Interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → High propensity to repeat travel → Confident, knowledgeable, flexible and independent travellers (FIT) → Eager to experience the buzz of gateways and explore beyond into the regions
International – Long Haul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Holiday makers → Working Holiday / Youth travel → Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Often perceived as 'trip of a lifetime' destination due to time/distance/cost → Repeat travel increasing → Propensity to stay longer, disperse around and thus high yield

Use the resources available to you as produced by TA and STO partners and do your research to identify target markets and customer segments. Learn as much as possible about key drivers including purchasing patterns, motivations to travel, desires, priorities and expectations to help inform your product/experience development.

Review your suitability to market

- Aligning global markets with destination first – consider who is already visiting your region, are there any niche segments suitable for your region/product?
- Does my product meet the customer's cultural needs and service expectations?
- What do I need to adapt or modify?
- Which markets / segments will help overcome any existing seasonality issues?
- What additional resources (if any) do I need to meet (exceed) customer expectations for these markets?



What should I consider when reviewing or developing new products?

Consider your service design as you engage along the customer journey



Review



Refine



Rebuild

All products should be reviewed to ensure market alignment prior to releasing rates and product information for the next season.

As a minimum it is worth considering the following:

- **Market suitability** – does your product suit the target market and segment? Look at the characteristics and product choices of the consumer from this market and determine if there is a match? As already mentioned, the development of your product should be guided by the type of experience your target market seeks
- **Product tailoring** – do you need to make any product enhancements to better suit your target audience? Consumer tastes vary per market and small changes to tailor your products can deliver significant results
- **Experience** – what is the actual desired experience, level of interaction and engagement, your target traveller is seeking and how can you make it more personalised?
- **Unique Selling Points** – do you have a point of difference from your competitors? Are you communicating these clearly in your marketing communications and have you mapped these into your service design to enhance the guest experience?
- **Product feedback** – what feedback have you received on your products? Do you review your customers' feedback including websites such as Trip Advisor regularly? What other avenues exist for you to capture feedback? Have any of your customers or trade partners provided suggestions for new products or enhancements? Have you asked your customers to provide direct feedback so you know what is important to them?
- **Product pricing** – is your product/experience competitively priced, and does it allow for all levels of commission? Is your product profitable?
- **Location** – are there other attractions and facilities nearby which enhance the appeal of your product? Are you promoting the destination first, followed by your products/experiences?
- **Accessibility** – is your product accessible and inclusive for all travellers in your target market? Can you cater for specific needs of varying cultures, religion and abilities? Consider travellers and visitors using wheelchairs/mobility frames and even families with children in prams, how can you improve the service quality experience?
- **Seasonality** – are you open to coincide with peak arrivals from your target market?
- **Hours of operation** – are they regular, clear and compatible with other experiences, transport times and meet the needs of your markets?
- **Timing** – how do you fit into an international itinerary? Consider providing suggested itineraries to demonstrate this. Is your experience open early/late to suit your target markets preferences and needs?
- **Information availability** – is it clear, factual and concise for both visitors and your distribution partners?
- **Reservations** – how easy is it for consumers to book your product?

Customization: Creating and delivering tourism excellence

Consider what your target market would need and expect for each of these key service areas.



Travellers have become more safety-conscious than ever before. As highlighted in Tourism Australia's [consumer demand research](#), it is a key factor in Australia's attractiveness as a destination, particularly for segments such as school group tours. Due to the uncertainty which has arisen from the global pandemic, people expect and feel safest when they have a lot of information, potentially to a degree that travellers would normally find annoying, if not insulting. It would be almost safe to say that there is no such thing as too much information in the current climate. Be sure to communicate your COVID safe procedures and display accreditation as appropriate across your marketing channels.

When thinking about what information to provide, do not assume prior knowledge, and particularly do not assume guests will ask for assistance. Provide the answers to common questions to avoid any confusion or any misinterpretation.

It is also essential to understand the importance of travellers protecting themselves from risk. Tourism operators and distribution partners must deliver on

what is promised to avoid any litigation. Consumer protection regulations in various international markets can also be very strict and businesses must comply. Non-compliance may cause severe public backlash. Be aware of all contractual terms and legal liabilities across your target markets.

Communicating transparently and highlighting tangible cues will be critical. You will need to speak convincingly to your consumers and stakeholders so you can rebuild confidence to show your business is safe and practicing industry best measures.

However, be very cautious about delivering on your promises and always honour all terms.

Consumers will become more aware of their environment, so all tourism businesses will need to consider heightened levels of cleanliness; be that tour coaches, restaurant tables and menus, retail items to be purchased, seating and facilities at venues.

Attention to cleanliness will extend to handling money/cash. Worldwide we are all now very much attuned to cashless payment systems, so the need to review all touchpoints becomes top priority to your business transactions.

Finally, the common denominator for all tourism operators undertaking product review, customisation and most importantly - seeking to meet (exceed) guest service expectations will be underpinned by your value proposition, service quality experience and the ability to offer personalisation.



Image: Eat street, Brisbane, QLD. - Tourism Australia

Developing and delivering exceptional experiences

People are commonly motivated to travel for a specific purpose, interest or simply to experience difference.

Travellers are looking for meaningful and memorable experiences which they can't experience at home, or anywhere else in the world. According to insights shared by Tourism Australia's Singapore Country Manager, in Singapore –a country of avid travellers residing on a small island nation, following the extended period of international border closures due to COVID-19 global pandemic, travellers are now planning to undertake their 'Greatest of All Trips' (GOAT). Travellers are seeking out unique, quality and often life changing experiences, often driven by a purpose or underlying interest/passion.

During planning stages, travellers are motivated by key drivers and purpose to travel so will seek out destinations which can provide a particular experience and address their specific needs.

For example:

- Honeymoon couples - are often searching for premium, indulgent and romantic experiences which offer privacy and seclusion
- Family travellers – seeking value accommodation in a safe, central location with child-friendly services, attractions and experiences nearby
- Youth travellers – searching for share accommodation, close to transport and adventure experiences which can be blasted across social media channels

Consider what 'hero experiences' are on offer in your region and look to align, leverage and develop

your product/service by transforming it into a compelling and transformational experience which will form an emotional connection with your guests. Communicate this clearly to your target audience via your marketing communications.

Remember, you are dealing with different people, from different backgrounds with different perceptions - not all honeymooners or youth travellers or families will necessarily have the exact same preferences. What is an exceptional experience for one may not be for another. Conduct specific market research to identify and understand preferences and what it takes to 'WOW' your customers and create memories that will last a life-time.

Why are EXPERIENCES so POWERFUL and increasingly important to travellers?

The reasons why people love to travel are varied, and often very personal. Take a look at these motivations below, and see which ones resonate for you:

- Challenging yourself
- Learning & enrichment
- Expanding your perspective
- Getting in touch with yourself
- Appreciating your life
- Building and strengthening relationships with family/friends
- Have an adventure
- Escaping
- Relaxing and rejuvenating
- Celebrating

Raising destination awareness

It is often difficult to attract international visitors to an area outside established well-known destinations as they may have limited time and knowledge of the area.

Australia's destination marketing heavy lifting is led by our NTO, Tourism Australia, in collaboration with our STO partners, so make sure you keep up to date on all the latest campaigns, marketing programs and events on offer to align, leverage and tap into all suitable marketing opportunities for you and your business.

By working cooperatively with your region to promote the destination as a whole, there is a much greater chance that visitors will take the time to visit.

Another opportunity is for you to work in cooperation with local operators to create a 'bundle' of experiences which appeal to your target market and will ultimately improve your chances of enticing more visitors to region.

What is product 'bundling' or 'packaging'?

Bundling or packaging refers to aligning and marketing complementary products together to form compelling and unique experiences for the consumer. It helps to improve visitation through regions and increase tourist revenue through multiple suppliers offering complementary products, or via single suppliers providing services that complement their core offering. It also assists by offering a stronger commissionable proposition to encourage distribution partners to promote and sell.

For example, if you were a bed and breakfast operator in a regional area with great food and wine, you could work with other local operators such as wineries, restaurants, attractions and tours to provide a combined product that could offer the ultimate food and wine experience.

Bundling can be done in many ways. It could be as simple as having links to other organisations' websites on your website. Or it could involve joining forces with other businesses in your region to create a brand, marketing collateral, and a dedicated website with booking capability. Most importantly, the key to effectively bundling your experience is to cross-promote complementary experiences that enhance the overall visitor experience in your region.



What factors should I consider before bundling products?

Target – who do you want to target? What markets, travel segments?

Inclusions – based on your customer profiles what package inclusions would appeal to them and at what price? For example, a 'Romantic Package' for an accommodation provider could include a special set-course dinner at restaurant, a gourmet picnic basket with recommendations of nearby scenic picnic locations, and a personalised guided tour or wellness spa treatment.

Time elements – be careful not to 'over package' and remember some travellers enjoy flexibility in their travel choices.

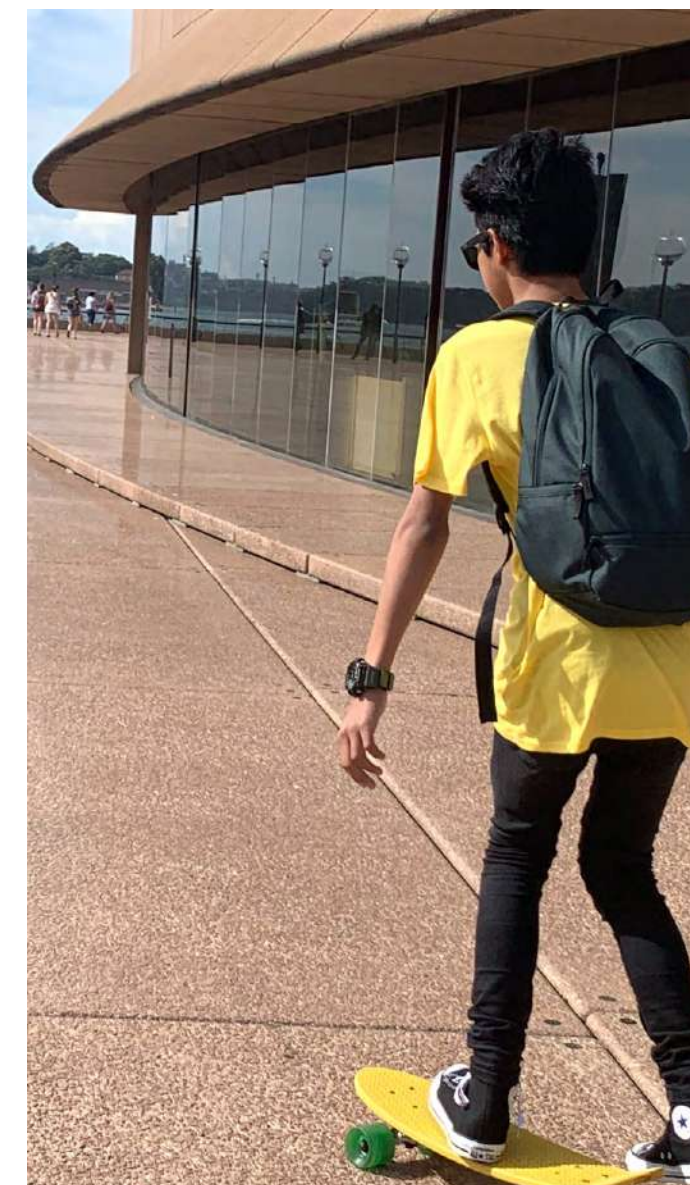
Partnerships – what specific product partners will you need? What agreements will you put in place? Ensure these are mutually agreed and confirmed in writing.

Agreed terms of operation – determine all marketing and operational logistics with your product partners and include these roles and responsibilities in the agreement. For example: What period will the product be available, how will you price and promote your product ensuring you allow distribution system commissions, how will the bookings be handled, and what booking lead times does each component need? Establish specific tour codes for such bundles/packages. Ensure all reservations and operations staff are cross trained on each product and ensure all legal and insurance compliances are met.

Branding – think creatively when naming your bundled product, the name must appeal to the target market.

Promotions – with your product partners, agree on all elements of marketing the bundled product

including what promotional mediums you will use, what promotional copy and PR activities. Develop a marketing communications strategy for both consumers and trade partners; decide on what sales activity will be undertaken, what the marketing budget will be and how you will jointly review the return on your investment. All these details should be included in your commercial partnership agreement which sets out the governance for the partnership and is reviewed and monitored regularly to ensure relevance and track performance.



Collaborative Marketing

Working together with other businesses in tourism will undoubtedly give you a greater reach and achieve a result that is bigger and better than any individual component. By working together with other business and tourism experiences on collaborative marketing, you are creating a more appealing experience for the visitor as well as encouraging longer stays. Although working together as a collaborative competitor is not a simple undertaking, creating these strategic alliances is well worth the effort.

To be successful with these partners, ensure there are clear goals established and open and regular communication, everyone must do their part and be involved and comfortable with the direction. An Australia wide example of collaborative marketing is Tourism Australia's [Signature Experiences of Australia](#) program, an industry-led program that packages and promotes Australia's outstanding tourism experiences within a variety of niche areas and special interest categories. This can be done in regions or across Australia, and even on a small scale has benefits.

Collaborative marketing initiatives can also be marketing activity specific, such as the commonly referred to term as "hunting in packs". This could be something as simple as wearing the same branded uniform at trade shows to jointly promote and raise awareness of a specific region.



What is service quality, how do we deliver this consistently and stand out from the crowd?

Service quality can be simply described as the perceived value of a service to customers. This is inherently subjective as it is driven by individual needs, expectations and perceptions of customers.

This reminds us if we are talking about perceived value of a specific product or experience, then one of the most important exercises we need to undertake during the business planning stage is to confirm our unique value proposition (UVP).

A UVP template is available through ATEC's Tourism Trade Ready training program. This is not always an easy task, so take time to work on developing your statement and be sure to reach out to your RTO, STO and trade marketing experts for feedback and further guidance.

Customers from different cultural backgrounds will naturally be accustomed to their individual standards of service quality; therefore, it is imperative to look at the service cultures in each target market to allow you to then determine guest service expectations. Investigating specific target markets and specific travel segments in further detail will assist you to apply key considerations throughout your product customisation and service design.

To remain competitive in a global marketplace, it is critical to develop services which satisfy a diverse customer base. Culture is one of the most effective yet complex elements which tourism operators need to understand in order to provide great services in accordance with customer needs. If you are interested to take a deep dive into a specific target market, consider registering to attend ATEC's 'Host' programs offering detailed insights on culture, product, trade and service for a range of key global markets.

To understand service quality a little further, we also need to consider the service encounter and what factors influence the overall service experience. Let's stop and first consider the nature of tourism product. Whilst goods are traditionally consumed away from the point of sale or production, services are produced and consumed at once. What this means is, as service suppliers you have the opportunity to maximise the value a customer receives and influence the way the service is consumed. The essence of service is often referred to as the 'moment of truth'. This is the point in time when consumers experience a service and directly interact with a service (Chon and Maier 2010). Research has shown the service encounter is a particularly important factor influencing customer satisfaction, but is also the most difficult aspect to manage.

As human beings, we act differently in different situations and subsequently relate to other human beings differently. We also must take into consideration, this statement applies to both our guests and staff members who present daily in different moods and will express differing emotional states subject to the events of daily life. If we maintain our focus on those areas within our circle of influence, we can ask ourselves: what can we do to ensure staff engages with customers in an appropriate manner? Most importantly, how will you ensure they do this consistently?

As digital technology continues to advance and capabilities evolve, customers have grown to expect new standards of excellence, performance and just about everything in between! This is true of most travellers. In the world of digital, exciting new technologies such as virtual reality (VR), live video connectivity, and intelligent chatbots are redefining the way businesses connect with their customers.

New innovations – products, services, experiences, business models and more are coming into the marketplace daily, changing consumer expectations around what should be possible.



07

MASTERING YOUR SALES PITCH & CLOSING THE DEAL

How will you build industry relationships and secure their interest?

It goes without saying in a service driven industry such as tourism and events, the quality of your service depends on the delivery. Your staff or 'people' are indeed your most valuable asset when it comes to marketing your product/experience.

Getting your recruitment and selection right is essential!

Finding the right person to act as your brand ambassador and sell your product/experience to share your story is critical. And then once you've found the right candidate, how are you going to ensure your sales team can perform consistently in such a competitive environment, solve problems for clients whilst at all times sounding authentic, informed and knowledgeable? Most definitely not a pre-recorded script reader!

The good news is sales skills can be learnt and improved over time with coaching and practice when matched with the right candidate who has a bright, positive 'can-do' attitude and a willingness to learn and succeed. We will dive deeper into specific traits required for successful selling a little later in the toolkit, but for now it is important to note, no matter how experienced or effective you are as a sales representative, you'll always benefit from discussing techniques and strategies with your peers. Most important is for sales people to remain receptive to feedback from others and a willingness to learn and advance both hard and soft skills. On-going practice and a commitment to continually grow, learn and improve will set you on your pathway to successful selling.

Building relationships with distribution trade partners is critical to your success in the international marketplace. This is a relationships industry, and nothing beats face-to-face contact either via formal meetings such as sales calls, staff training and trade shows, or via informal networking opportunities such as industry social nights and trade event social functions. Of course, not all prospective buyers are going to be ready to listen to your story or close the deal after your first encounter. This is why relationship-building is a crucial part of the sales process and maintaining long-term relationships is critical to encourage buyers to consider you when they are ready. Building relationships will also help generate further referrals.

Creating these relationships should be intentional and focused on the goal of developing your network. This is where your marketing and distribution strategy comes in to play. Identify which partners you are going for, those with a potential fit and once you've made a connection, remember to keep in touch with people in your sales network as part of your strategy. Buyers are busy people, so communications should always be with purpose, and provide relevant timely updates, news and information to encourage engagement. Overall, remember you are there to help solve your prospective buyer's problems so offer new insights, find solutions, and generally aim to help customers achieve their goals. To deepen your relationship with a potential prospect buyer, start learning more about their business, culture, interests and life in general to build real connections. Focusing the conversation on an interest or experience you have in common will go a long way toward developing a stronger relationship overall.

Having the right person for the right job to nail the pitch

Sales activities are a critical component of any tourism marketing. But you need to have the right person and message, as often you're marketing an experience; something intangible which the prospective buyer can't always try before they buy! The person who represents your business is, in the first instance actually part of your product experience. In some instances, this person is the closest a prospective customer or business partner will ever get to your product. Not everyone is a great salesperson, some people in your business may be fantastic guides and brilliant at delivering the product experience operationally onsite, but not necessarily the best at representing your product in a more formal sales environment and communicating effectively at specific sales events, workshops, trade shows or even on a virtual webinar meeting.

Ensure you have a salesperson who knows how to connect, build relationships, actively listen and build rapport. They need to have the ability to build empathy, be naturally inquisitive, be able to put themselves in the buyer's situation and possess emotional intelligence to 'read between the lines', be strategic, patient and a problem solver. Most importantly, they need to be able to communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds, delivering the right pitch to match their conversation with the flow and pace of their client.



Sharing your Story

Some internationally located buyers may never actually experience your tourism product or experience, so the salesperson will need to be an effective storyteller. Great stories move us – they have the power to tap into our emotions and inspire a sense of wanderlust! An authentic narrative from your sales representative needs to foster an emotional response, putting the client actually in the travel experience.

When storytelling, make sure to focus on the following:

- 1. Keep your story simple
- 2. Answer the question: "why does this product exist?"
- 3. Have a clear beginning, middle, and end to each story. For instance, what was another customer's life like before your product, what led them to decide to buy your product, and what was the result?

Developing an effective sales pitch

At all times, be prepared to deliver your sales pitch – secure their interest in your product so you can follow up later in more detail. Be prepared to highlight who you are and what your company and products are about. You should be able to do this quickly, in just a few seconds, so that your listener should walk away with key information and a desire to want to learn more.

Whether you are at a trade show, networking event or scheduled sales call, the key to a successful sales pitch is to focus on your compelling and unique selling points – those attributes which make you stand out from the crowd and which would be defined in your strategic marketing plan.



Review your approach to Pitching:

1. PITCH PREPARATION	2. DELIVERING YOUR PITCH
→ Do your research about the company, type of business, determine current partners	→ Your introduction is crucial, first impressions are lasting impressions – smile!
→ Be sure you are pitching to the right person, not the 'gate-keeper'!	→ Listen actively, use previous examples to demonstrate how you have/can solve problems, provide solutions
→ Give your pitch structure, and be sure to time it to keep it short yet impactful	→ Wrap up and confirm your next steps, follow up promptly
→ PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!	→ Keep telling the story



★ SALES PITCH - QUICK TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED: ★

- Exchange business cards as part of your greeting as deemed culturally appropriate.
- Your pitch should take no longer than 30-60 seconds and be no more than a couple of sentences.
- Use simple universal language that is easy to understand, don't use fancy words or jargon
- Tell a story; make your pitch entertaining.
- Tailor your pitch to suit your specific audience. If you have a few diverse target markets, you might want to develop a unique pitch for each.
- Have a clear goal in mind of what you want to achieve – have a structured approach - your introduction, your claim (highlight here what sets you apart), state the aptitudes to back your claim, demonstrate you understand what your client's needs are and round this back to why you are in business and here today.
- Use your prior research to introduce a relevant hook at the beginning – identify something that will attract your listener's attention and makes them want to learn more.
- Briefly describe your product - but do not go into excruciating detail.
- Identify the key features and link to the benefit your product gives to people – why they would love your experience.
- Be passionate. This is your business, be proud to promote it.
- At the end of your pitch, offer a small gift (as deemed appropriate) and confirm your next steps. Request their business card if not already exchanged, request a meeting to explore potential opportunities and provide more in-depth information on how you can help solve their problem.

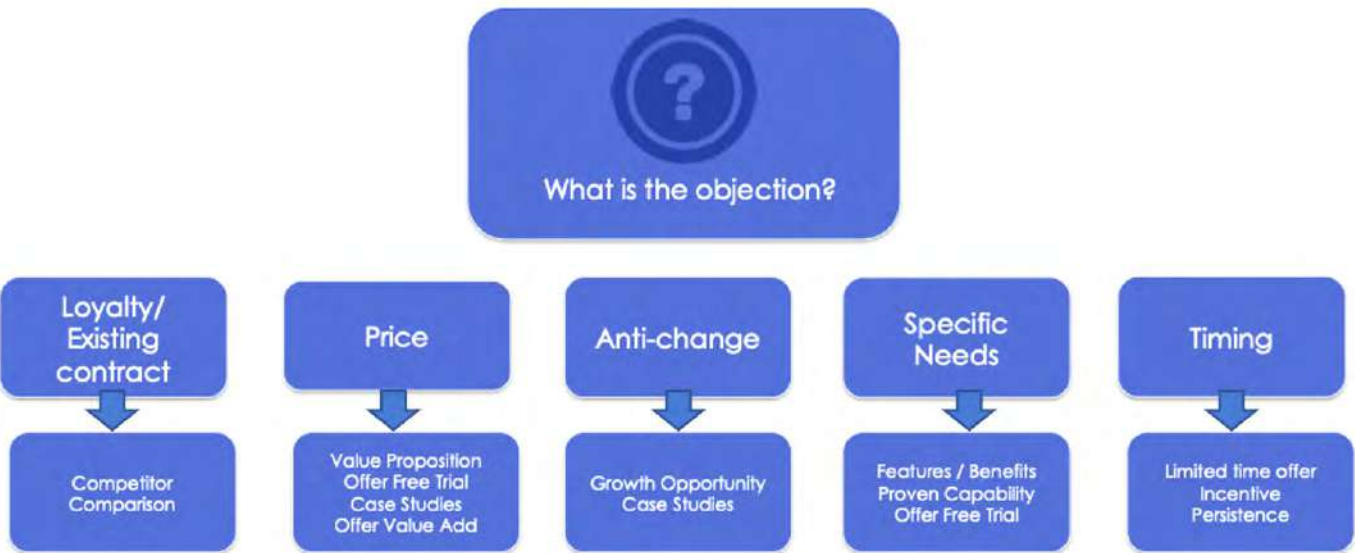
Anticipate objections

Be prepared to receive some objections during your pitch and for your proposed solutions to be challenged. Do your homework and be ready to respond swiftly to common objections. Never be defensive, and always use culturally acceptable communications and body language during your sales negotiations. In the end, if there is a clear opposition and rationalisation, always graciously and politely accept the situation and be prepared to move on.



Image: Regent Theatre, Melbourne, VIC - Visit Victoria

Overcoming objections



Demonstrate active listening

Have you ever heard of active listening? Active listening is when you show that you hear what another person is saying without the intent to make your own point. You are being attentive, empathetic, and fully engaged to your audience.

Avoid interruptions, even excited or empathetic reactions, always allow the other person to finish. For phone calls or video calls, you can show that you're listening by making use of body language such as nodding, and softening statements. Softening statements are statements made after the prospect says something or asks you a question. They show the prospect that you're listening and help build rapport. Examples are: "good question" or "I'm glad you asked that" or confirmation statements like "exactly" or "absolutely."

By actively using these techniques, you'll avoid missing crucial cues or bits of information. They'll also help you build rapport and a relationship and show you care about your clients' needs.

What is feature – benefit selling?

By using a technique known as feature benefit selling, you can take your audience through key features of your product/experience and circle back to a specific need they mentioned.

Furthermore, by linking each feature with a perceived benefit you can demonstrate how you can be the solution to their problem and illustrate your uniqueness. Use real life examples to demonstrate your experience and highlight authenticity. ATEC provide a template through ATEC's Tourism Trade Ready training program to help develop your unique value proposition (UVP) and refine your sales pitch by linking features with benefits.



Image: Darwin Street Art, Darwin, NT - Tourism Australia

Why are product updates, sales calls and staff training essential?

Maintaining regular contact with key stakeholders and your distribution partners to provide updated product information helps foster strong relationships and improve sales opportunities. Face-to-face sales calls are an excellent way of building rapport. Keep up to date on all the latest online avenues available for you to provide distribution partners with your latest product updates.

Some distribution partners manage all aspects of the business. Others may have a dedicated Product Manager, Sales and Reservations staff. The role of the Product Manager is to source and manage product for the itineraries they are planning for clients. Reservations staff are responsible for managing the booking process. Initial sales calls should be secured with the Product Manager, and subsequent sales training undertaken with the reservation team once you are successfully contracted.

Remember, distribution partners are like an extension of your sales and marketing team, therefore you need to ensure they are always kept up to date and know how to best sell your product. Once you have established a relationship with the distribution partner and they have agreed to sell your product, you should train and educate all staff to ensure they are able to effectively promote and sell your product.

It is a good idea to ensure staff training is up to date when your product is being featured in any special campaigns or promotions.



When and how often?

As part of your marketing activity plan, set out your annual sales call schedule in advance and book appointments well in advance (at least a month out). Pay particular attention to avoid peak booking periods and align your efforts with trade events to maximise your sales efforts and avoid disappointment.

When requesting appointments for meetings or training via the Product Manager, do note some companies are more flexible with training than others. Remember, distribution partners are busy people; only request appointments for training when you have meaningful and relevant product updates to provide. Of course, don't forget the importance of inviting distribution partners to visit and experience your product firsthand to undertake a familiarisation visit.

For international sales calls, the timing of your visit is important, and this will vary from market to market. When planning individual sales calls in-market for the first time, contact your STO for expert guidance. Many have in-market teams who can assist with planning and introductions to key distribution partners including airlines, wholesalers and travel agents on your first sales visits.

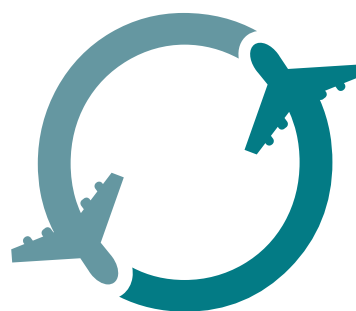
Always keep in mind that distribution partners, whether in Australia or overseas, have peak working months or periods where they are on reduced team resources (e.g., around traditional holiday periods). Due to work demands they may have dates that they don't take sales calls or only have certain days of the weeks or time slots.

As mentioned, there are also opportunities for you to meet with distribution partners at trade shows, workshops and sales missions that you attend. These are a great opportunity to maximise engagement with multiple trade partners. Some trade shows offer familiarisation opportunities, so do consider working with the trade show organisers or to support trade and media familiarisation visits as they will be more likely to support and sell your product if they have experienced it.



What should I consider when planning a sales call and staff training?

- Consider your purpose and whom you need to meet with
- Prepare a short professional presentation deck – images or short video to introduce your key information and unique sales points
- Always meet with the key product buyer/s to discuss rate contracts and provide product updates before training the reservations teams
- If your product is being sold as part of an itinerary, consider conducting training with other complementary products to sell the destination and full experience
- How many staff will you be training?
- How much time do you have? Practice your presentation and stick to the allocated time limit
- Allow enough time between meetings for travel (and hiccups) and also for potentially longer meetings than initially planned



Other points to consider for your sales calls and training:

- Make sure you have something new and interesting to discuss or share guest feedback
- Make an appointment and turn up on time – be organised
- Reconfirm your appointment a few days prior
- Research the distributor before you call. What markets and segments do they work with?
- Do they sell a competitor's product or product that is complementary to your own?
- Make sure you have a basic understanding of cultural differences and local customs even if they are based in Australia, i.e., if you are visiting a Japanese distributor, it is customary to take a small gift. Research cultural differences and respect them.
- Be flexible – if possible, assist your distribution partner by offering to accommodate adjustments in product or booking procedures
- Offer to host key decision makers (and once contracted reservations agents) on familiarisations to experience your product first hand
- Where possible, provide your distributor with performance feedback; let them know how much business they have been producing for you
- Keep your presentation visual, simple, factual, and interesting. Include a simple overview of the products you provide using great images, focusing on your unique selling points (what makes your product different from your competitors) and the functional aspects of booking your product

- Take brochures and any additional relevant sales collateral
- Consider bringing in a small memento, morning or afternoon tea
- Follow up and honour everything committed

Things to AVOID when conducting sales calls & training:

- AVOID visiting during busy periods when major trade shows are being conducted or during product planning and peak selling period
- NEVER arrive unannounced – cold calling is unprofessional and likely to prove counter-productive
- Don't commit to rates or services without keeping a written record

Who else should I contact for sales calls and staff training?

Apart from your distribution partners, it is important to keep your National, State and Regional Tourism Organisations updated. These organisations are also promoting your products and packages, providing opportunities for e-newsletter inclusions and joint marketing opportunities, and can provide updated information and contacts.

What are the alternatives to 'in-office training'?

Whilst face-to-face is traditionally the preferred form of communications and training, globally businesses are adapting to alternative training such as webinars. Via webinars you can deliver your presentations via

live video streaming format which allows for audience interaction. There are a number of platforms available, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams which allow you to present, share your screen, have Q&A sessions and interact. These should be considered as part of our training mix particularly for global markets that you may not be able to visit frequently.

Networking – what opportunities should I look out for?

There is often a range of social events held within the tourism industry that provide networking opportunities to further support your relationship building and product awareness. Networking can be undertaken at formal events, such as welcome and farewell functions at trade shows or informal events such as 'Happy Hours' and during lunch breaks.

However, don't wait for a trade show to network, as there are plenty of other opportunities throughout the year. As a start, contact Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) and your STO for upcoming industry events.

Consider offering your venue or product as a networking location – not only will you get to meet industry professionals, but you will get to showcase and provide a familiarisation on your product at the same time. People who are in the tourism industry tend to be very social and welcome the opportunity to meet each other.



Image: Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, Sydney, NSW
Credit: Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras

Understand the purpose of networking and set your goals

To make the most out of networking opportunities you need to understand your goals, such as getting to know people, asking questions to learn and gain market insights, sharing information about your product, building new relationships, and further developing existing relationships.

Quality is more important than quantity – don't focus on grabbing as many business cards as you can, rather, focus on building the quality relationships with aligned partners. Keep in mind that it's important for you to return the goodwill by giving referrals as well. Supporting and encouraging other businesses may facilitate referrals back to you and provide opportunities for future collaboration.

Having a pre-prepared list of the questions you want to ask will alleviate any awkward silences and ensure that you gain the information and outcomes related to your goals. Don't be too scripted, be natural, however be mentally prepared with some ideas for discussion. Focus on open-ended questions to ensure the continued flow of conversation.



As a business with over 20 years in the international tourism sector, I never underestimate the value of networking and developing face to face relationships with buyers.

In fact, they are the reason behind our recent rebranding. I look forward, as borders open, to renew acquaintances, develop new friendships and write new business.

Craig "Hassie" Haslam, Untamed Escapes



Negotiating to close the deal

So you've delivered your pitch and you've offered your rates agreement which clearly states your terms and conditions. Further to this, you've ticked all the boxes by inviting key decision makers to experience your product and now you are keen to ascertain next steps.

A reminder don't get disheartened if it takes some time before your business is contracted for sale with a travel distributor. Be mindful distributors have long-standing business relationships with many Australian tourism sellers, relationships which have taken many years to develop. Your opportunity will come, with commitment and perseverance.



Closing a deal refers to:

1. Getting expectations aligned - this includes asking questions about your buyers' budget (desired nett rate), and timelines to ensure they can commit to selling and promoting your product in the future
2. Pitching a solution - rather than focusing on your product, focus on your prospective buyer's problem/s or needs and how you can solve them
3. Respond well to a potential client's concern - listen to what your buyer has to say, don't argue over objections, and be sure to respond calmly and reasonably
4. Convey reasonable urgency - whether involving time or money, a sense of urgency helps push a deal along
5. Final steps - includes finishing paperwork and offering your new client any additional resources to help them maximise the promotional opportunities for your product.
6. Stay connected – follow up regularly and remain connected

Negotiating to close the deal

Visit your STO website for further learning resources and regularly visit Tourism Australia's [corporate website](#) for the latest market updates and consumer insights.



Queen Victoria Building. Source: Tourism Australia

08

MAXIMISING TOURISM TRADE SALES EFFORTS

Navigating the travel trade and selling via the domestic and inbound trade channels can be confusing at first, with various options it can be difficult to know where to start. In this section of the toolkit we will look at a range of options and explore the benefits for your participation. Importantly, we will share key tips and learnings to help you successfully establish a plan to maximise your tourism trade sales efforts. Finally, we will highlight sales fundamentals to set you along your pathway to successful selling via the domestic and inbound tourism trade.

What are the benefits of undertaking B2B sales activities?

→ Provide avenue for regular contact – consider both face-to-face and virtual options, remain visible at all times, but always attend with purpose and clear message to share

- Use a variety of sales methods to help fulfil specific business requirements - timings and choice of sales type are critical. E.g. rate negotiation, new product updates for campaign/ new season program launch
- Broaden your reach, extend sales network by aligning with experts in the field – learn and develop mutually valued partnerships, ambassadors for your experience
- Provide localised expertise and market specific support - help address your knowledge gaps with cultural / language requirements critical for success

What are the different trade promotional options available to build your business?



Sales calls



Familiarisations



Tradeshows/ Virtual events



Networking



Regular contact

Tradeshows/events

Tradeshows and events are a forum to meet key industry partners and develop or enhance business relationships. They are an excellent opportunity to meet with a large number of targeted clients in the one place at the one time. Preparation, planning and follow up are key when attending trade shows. Tradeshows are held throughout the year, each targeting different audiences and designed to meet different business objectives. They may target specific members of the trade distribution system (including wholesalers, ITOs, and frontline retail staff), from specific market segments (e.g., adventure, youth travel) and for specific types of tourism (e.g., business events, study/education or leisure). In many instances, Trade events may be more time and cost effective than conducting individual sales calls, however often your appointment time will be limited. At most trade shows you will need to pre-arrange appointments with trade buyers in order to give a short presentation on your product. If attending a scheduled trade event, especially those held overseas, consider if appropriate to incorporate additional sales calls, pre or post the event to

maximise your investment. Trade shows require an organised and targeted approach, with established goals and experienced staff should be recruited to represent you to develop long term business relationships and deliver on your business objectives. Whichever trade events you decide to attend, be prepared and commit to participation in the same event for a minimum of three years to show your dedication and reap maximum return on investment. The awareness of your product will significantly increase each year, as will your own expertise and knowledge of how to work the show. If you are a new entrant to the market, it will take time to build successful business partnerships, so be ready to commit for the long-haul.

For a listing of key events:

[Tourism Australia – Industry Events](#)
[The Australian Tourism Export Council \(ATEC\) – What's On](#)
Or contact your State Tourism Organisation.



How do I prepare for a tradeshow?

- Get with the program – know the event program inside out to ensure you don't miss out on any opportunities. Understand all the terms and conditions and maximise the process for making pre-scheduled appointments.
- Deadlines – don't miss any!
- Booth / appointment space – obtain accurate information on the dimensions of your booth/ appointment space and its exact location to enable you to plan your display accordingly.
- Order and deliver your marketing materials – often trade shows have freight partners
- Prepare to stand out from the crowd! – consider your presentation to make best possible first impressions; business attire or a company uniform to reinforce your branding. Check if there is an event dress code.
- Book your travel arrangements well in advance – often discounted accommodation offers will be available and there may be an early bird special. Look for accommodation within easy walking distance from the venue.
- Ensure booking systems and website are up to date – consider where the trade show buyers may look for information about your business and products prior to your meeting. Is your website up to date and effective?

Establish 'SMART' business goals for your attendance at the tradeshow

Be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely with your goals. Measures could include areas such as:

- Meeting a specific number of new contacts/prospective clients.
- Meeting a set number of existing clients.
- Gaining competitive information.
- Discovering latest trends in the marketplace.
- Supporting existing trade partners.

Develop a strategy to achieve these goals, ensuring you are well prepared to conduct successful meetings and have tools in place to enable prompt follow up after the trade show.



Invest the time in pre tradeshow research

- If you are an experienced operator, prepare and review performance to share results - identify sales by distribution partner and compare with previous year. Clearly identify your key distribution partners where you can see growth and future potential, and partners whose sales have declined. This will form the basis of your discussions with existing clients and assist with your appointment preferences for the tradeshow
- Know where you are contracted or brochured and/or featured online for sale - are you meeting with a client who already has you contracted for sale, or do you need to investigate potential opportunities? What other promotional opportunities exist?
- Review the delegate list - identify new prospect partners to target during networking if you were unsuccessful securing a formal appointment
- Determine how your product may fit within the partner's existing portfolio - be ready to show the partner how your product can support and/or enhance their existing portfolio. Be the solution to their problems!
- Know as much background information as possible about the partners and the current market conditions
- Know where the partner sits in the distribution chain - are they part of a wider consortium?
- Talk to your reservations and sales teams to gain specific partner feedback - be prepared with both positive and negative feedback and be ready to overcome objections during your meetings.
- Overall, be informed, friendly and be knowledgeable to demonstrate your enthusiasm



ATEC NSW Branch Event

Preparation will demonstrate your professionalism

- Make contact with distribution partners prior to the trade show via email - this is particularly relevant if they don't know you. If you make contact before they select their trade show meeting preferences, you can improve your chances of meeting with them.
- Ensure distribution partners are well versed with your products and for existing partners be sure to have your contract rates agreement on hand - this way you can maximise the meeting time with your existing partners.
- Maximise the pre-appointment scheduling opportunities by accurately reviewing the list of distribution partners and ranking your meeting preferences based on your prior research. If available, use online messaging to fill gaps in your appointment schedule.
- Prepare your presentation - remember to keep your presentation short, sharp, and memorable. Try using simple bullet points and key words work best for retention, and allow you to tailor your presentation to suit partner needs. Practice, practice and practice again.
- Use visuals to showcase your product and focus on delivering a professional presentation - ensure your images are high quality and accurately represent your product, proof-read your presentation, and practice the delivery, keeping in mind the need to tailor for different distribution partners.
- Know your destination - sell your region first and then your own product. Remember, you are an ambassador for your region - be sure you know as much as possible about your own backyard.
- Be aware of the peak planning periods - each market has different schedules for planning, selling and promoting travel programs and campaigns. There are also key holiday periods which differ across the globe, so be sure to do your homework and refer to Tourism Australia's market profiles to stay updated.
- Make a great first impression - be prepared for each individual meeting and having pre-prepared notes specific to each partner.
- Capture key contacts and information - use a simple lead / appointment template to assist you with your follow-up and contact database management. The template can also be a great guide to prompt your discussions.
- Review the products which you are offering and consider tactical offers or product bundling to boost interest in your experience.
- Consider giving partners a promotional item/gift as a memento - the gift should be relevant to your business and also culturally acceptable; not too large so it's easy for your partner to carry in their luggage.



Crucial to productive client meetings is a clear understanding of trade distribution channels and knowing who you are talking with. Identifying whether ITO, wholesaler, retailer or group operator allows you to tailor the conversation to their needs

Peter Graham, Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia



TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE TRADE SALES APPOINTMENTS

What should I take to tradeshows?

- Your digital presentation either on an iPad, laptop or similar, and don't forget your charger. Your delegate name badge which you will typically receive at registration to provide access to the tradeshow floor and scheduled networking events
- Your appointment schedule – don't miss an opportunity to slot in a key appointment
- Lead sheet/follow up template – hard copy paper or electronic format which will require charger – but don't rely on your memory at trade shows, you will meet with many delegates over the event and need to follow up effectively and promptly
- Business cards – be sure to have sufficient quantity for meetings and networking events
- Stationery (pens, paper, stapler, staples, scissors as deemed necessary)
- A reference hard copy of your marketing material as back-up e.g. brochure
- Plenty of water
- Energy boost type snacks for you and your delegates
- Passion and enthusiasm will make sure you and your meeting is memorable



Image: Wirin by Jylylyungoo in Yagan Square, Perth, WA. - Tourism Australia

- Arrive early and be organised make sure you have everything set up well before your first appointment
- Know who your client is before they sit down – do your research prior and have a clear outline of the information or questions you would like to ask your trade partner. Make sure you are fully aware of the different markets and respect cultural etiquette.
- You will have a set time limit for your appointments (typically 10 - 15 minutes depending on the trade show) so use the time wisely – remember to practice your 'active listening' skills - listen for 80% and circle back addressing needs for 20%. Make sure there are opportunities for the trade partner to ask questions during the meeting
- Pinpoint one truly unique point of difference about your product/experience or region and share this upfront. Focus on your compelling sales points and highlight what makes you stand out from competitors
- Tailor your pitch to each client so that it resonates -don't deliver a rehearsed spiel. Use dot points with your visual slides presentation so you can highlight relevance to market. This will help build credibility and show your interest to build business relationships
- If the trade partner is already sending you business, show your gratitude and thank them. Review sales performance and ask for any customer feedback. Be sure to update on changes or new product enhancements. Don't be afraid to ask why their sales have increased or decreased.
- Make your first impression a lasting one - even if the prospective client walks away with just one piece of new found knowledge, as long as it remains with them, you have succeeded. Remember, you will be providing the prospect with detailed information in your follow up
- Don't forget to ask questions - this is your product/ market development opportunity to ensure you are meeting the prospective client's needs. Ask what are their clients looking for? Are they aware of your product or even the destination?
- Avoid the use of slang or colloquialisms and be mindful English may be your prospect client's second language. Consider having foreign language information for your key target markets
- Use the correct commission levels in your discussions. Make sure you understand where they sit in the distribution chain
- Take notes! Demonstrate your active listening skills - use your pre-prepared follow up template as a guide; ask questions to identify needs; use feature-benefit selling to demonstrate your relevance and highlight your uniqueness
- Invite trade prospects to experience your product by attending a trade familiarisation – there is no better way to sell a product/destination than experiencing it first-hand
- Don't give out brochures or heavy information packs – use your follow up to further showcase your product or consider providing USBs with your information
- Set out with intention - it is important for you to establish clear goals for each meeting. Are you aiming to secure new prospective leads, increase destination/ product awareness, or develop relationships in order to successfully promote your product? Conclude each appointment by summarising your next steps and agreed path forward
- Seek opportunities for further discussion – as appropriate, invite the client for a drink or coffee during any free appointments / breaks and or networking opportunities

- Ensure your booth is attended at all times – you don't want to miss that great 'passing by' opportunity!
- Review your progress and make any necessary adjustments to your approach – this can be done either during breaks or at the end of each day as part of your daily debrief
- No meeting is a waste - sometimes you will have a meeting and find your product does not fit that particular buyer's needs. Use the opportunity to "sell" your region for the future, or make a recommendation if you know of another business which offers potential. Be helpful, offer solutions, be friendly and courteous so they will want to work with you in the future should the opportunity arise.
- Don't under-estimate the value of networking opportunities
- There are often multiple opportunities available during trade shows which allow you to build or consolidate business relationships outside of the scheduled business appointments. The organised social functions are prime occasions, as well as breakfast or quick catch-up meetings in hotel/event centre lobby areas before the show, or even when you are walking around the tradeshow floor.



FOLLOW-UP CHECKLIST

- Following up is the most critical component of any trade show - if you don't have the time to follow up, then don't bother attending the trade show
- Timing is imperative - follow up should be done either during or immediately after the trade show. This shows the value you place upon their business. Remember to send all the material and information as promised
- Personalise and thank – each client should receive an individualised follow up specifically referring to the content of your appointment and always thank them for their interest or business and ongoing support. Use your meeting template to prompt you and personalise your follow up – make reference to your discussions during the trade show
- Categorise your trade show appointments/leads in order of priority and complete your follow up in this order
- Post trade show planning should include a multiple contact plan until you meet the buyer again. Keep the buyer updated and focus on strengthening the relationship. Consider using your social media channels, as relevant to the market to stay connected
- Ensure your follow up includes all partners in the distribution chain – if the prospective client partners with a local ITO, ensure you also follow up with the ITO directly as well as the overseas buyer
- Prepare and distribute training material to buyers – this extends the reach of your appointment to the front-line reservations teams



- Remember to also follow up with complementary sellers and industry associations – continue to work together and seek out joint promotional opportunities
- Be in regular contact with your STO and/or RTO to jointly promote the region and the products offered and to seek out opportunities
- Be patient – understand that it takes time to establish a relationship and to be selected for inclusion in a travel program/campaign.
- Add new contacts to your database management system and track if business is confirmed -keep your clients updated on their sales performance
- Update your teams on the outcomes of the tradeshow and any required actions specific to each buyer
- Measure your tradeshow/event success against your pre-set 'SMART' business goals - consider such questions as what worked, what you could improve on next time, did you meet the right people, what did you learn from others, what did you learn about the competition?

Note, ATEC provides a 'Tradeshow Follow-up Template' in the Tourism Trade Ready training program.



Source: ATEC Meeting Place B2B event

What are sales missions and why consider attending?

Tourism Australia and STOs regularly conduct sales (or trade) missions into key overseas markets. These missions are useful for first time entrants into the international market, as well as operators already established in the market looking to further develop their business. Visiting the market shows your commitment and allows you to present your product to a wider audience. Travelling as part of an organised sales mission also allows you to present your product and destination alongside other complementary products to a targeted group of distributors.

Sure, committing to going into market overseas is an expensive venture, but if you do it after thorough research and you can ensure you maximise every opportunity, you will surely reap the benefit of giving your personal time to the market

Garry Burns, Gaibo Agency

TOP TIPS FOR SALES MISSIONS

The golden rule for international sales missions is to 'do your homework first'. The more preparation you do, the greater the return on your investment.

During a sales mission, the audience will vary from retail travel staff to wholesale product managers so make sure you are aware of who you are meeting and tailor your presentation to suit their needs.

The guiding principle in a successful sales mission is not the amount of ground covered or even the number of meetings held, rather it is about the quality of your appointments. Be sure to meet with buyers where there is a synergy and match for your business. If you are a new entrant to market, make sure you are meeting with the key decision makers and/or training the front-line sales force once you are contracted.

Develop a sales kit for sales calls, sales missions and staff training to include brochures, product fact sheets, your sales presentation, a collection of images on USB, online tools such as podcasts and videos, display banners and posters. When developing your trade sales kit, remain consistent with your branding and ensure information is accurate and up to date.

Always check with the event organiser to confirm the format of each event during the sales mission and what marketing material is required and permitted. For example, at some events banner space may not be available, or you may be required to deliver a group presentation rather than having one-to-one appointments, so be prepared.

Certain countries have specific customs not common in Australia; observing cultural difference and business etiquette will be highly appreciated by your hosts and significantly improve your chances of success. For cultural awareness training, ATEC offer a series of ['Host' market specialist programs](#) to consider.

Remember, if you are travelling with a group you need to be timely, as per the assigned schedule. Consider your luggage, keep it minimal and be well organised.

As with all types of sales activity, follow up is vital. Don't forget to send a follow up thanking clients for their time and include any information that may have been requested.

What financial assistance is available to support your export marketing efforts?

Explore if your business is eligible to receive Austrade's [Export Market Development Grants \(EMDG\)](#).

The EMDG program helps Australian businesses grow their exports in international markets.

These grants encourage small to medium enterprises to market and promote their goods and services globally.



Australian Government
Austrade



Benefits of General Sales Agent (GSA) or Product Representation Company (PRC)

A general sales agent (GSA) can represent and market your product in key international markets and provide a local booking service for retail agents. It is essential that you consider all channels of distribution and the needs of your business before signing a GSA agreement.

Many businesses choose to appoint an international sales representative or product representation company (PRC) to actively promote their product in their key international markets. However, unlike a GSA, a PRC doesn't provide a booking service.

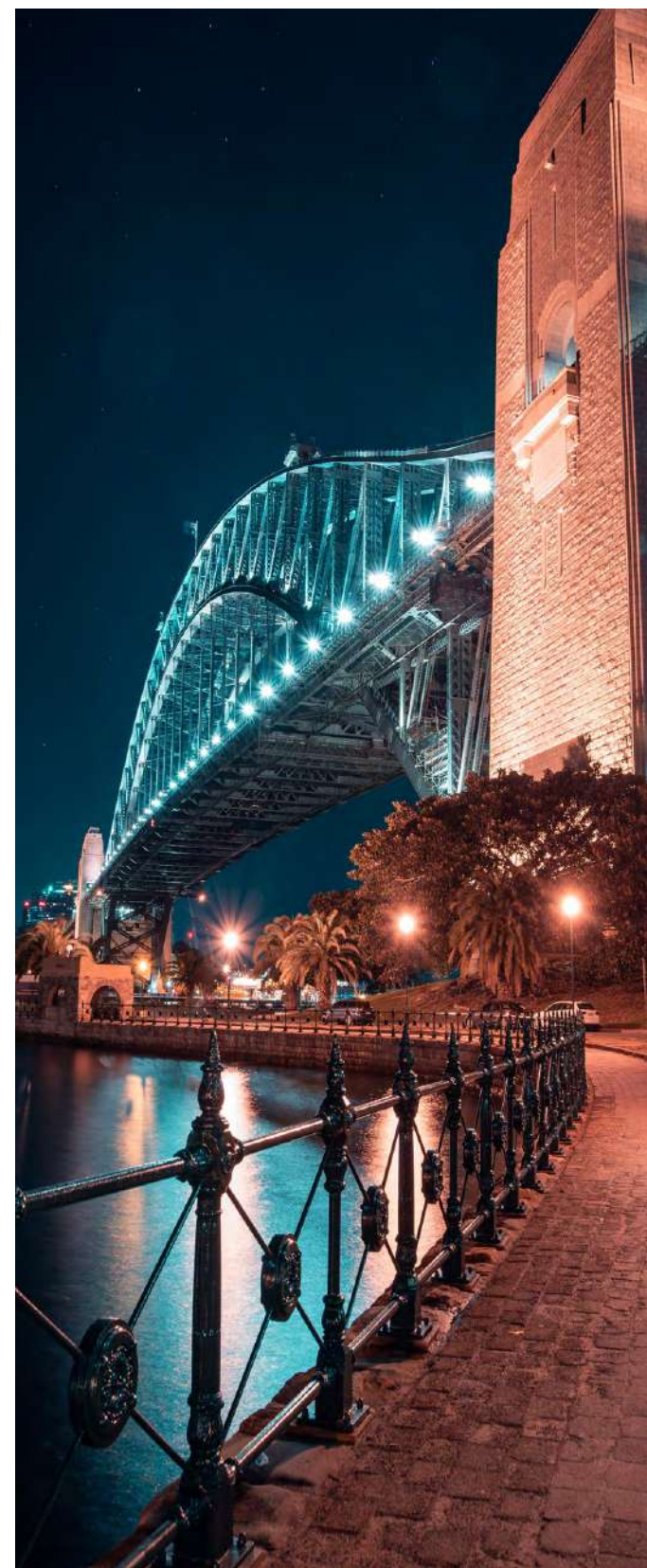
A GSA or PRC can be helpful for smaller businesses that do not have the resources of time or finances to maximise their promotional opportunities internationally. Here are a few further points for consideration:

GSA's and PRCs can:

- Make regular sales calls to wholesalers and retail agents
- Train wholesale and retail front line agency staff to help improve sales
- Provide expert representation at trade and consumer shows in the market
- Give feedback and advice on market trends and identify potential market opportunities

Key factors to consider when appointing a representative

- Do they have experience in destination and product-type representation?
- Do they represent other clients with Australian product?
- Have they represented similar products to yours in the past?
- Do they hold other contracts and are they complementary or competitive?
- Can they provide trade contact records and reports?
- How will you measure their effectiveness and how will they report on their activities to you?
- Do they have established relationships with the clients that you want to reach?
- What is their reputation in the market? Are they respected by the industry?
- Does the GSA retail products and how will this impact on their ability to sell your product?
- Consider the costs versus the projected business from the market and balance these against the cost and benefit of managing the sales and marketing yourself



Media and trade familiarisations

What are media and trade familiarisation visits (famils) and what value do they offer?

Familiarisation tours (famils) target two key audiences:

- **Trade** - includes your distribution partners, for example wholesalers, inbound tour operators and retail agents etc.
- **Media** - includes journalists, writers for print, broadcast, and online media outlets, as well as social media influencers (also known as key opinion leaders (KOL) in some markets)

In the tourism industry, trade and media are key third-party proponents of your product and story. Familiarisations offer trade and media a taste of what's on offer by experiencing your product first-hand. They're your chance to educate and win over the people who influence consumers in making their travel decisions.

If trade partners and travel writers know your product and are as passionate about it as you are, they can provide significant push to help promote it via their respective channels. Building trade and media relationships is an essential part of doing tourism business. After all, your product competes not only at a regional level, but also amongst a stage of other tourism destinations and products from across the globe.

Furthermore, familiarisations can be a cost-effective way to promote your product/experience to a large network of trade and media partners.

Tourism Australia, your STO and RTO partners are all proactive in organising familiarisation visits. ATEC also runs a series of familiarisations in association with B2B workshops and events. You can also develop your own familiarisation program and invite delegates directly to your business.



Image: The Gallery, Adelaide, SA - South Australian Tourism Commission



The most important thing I've learnt over the years hosting famils is to ask for feedback. If you don't follow up on the business or exposure the famil will provide your business, you're missing out

Craig Wickham, Exceptional Kangaroo Island



Here are some tips on hosting a successful familiarisation:

Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ If you are approached to participate in a famil, find out as much information as you can about the participants before committing to host the group. Determine if they are part of your target market and what the benefits of hosting the visit are for your business. Don't be afraid to say no to a request if you don't think that your product is suited to the group.→ Generally, support for famils is requested free of charge (FOC) in return for the benefits for your business via the exposure. If you are unable to offer complimentary services you may consider extending a reduced rate. Discuss options with the famil organiser to try and create a 'win-win' situation.→ Generally, support for famils is requested free of charge (FOC) in return for the benefits for your business via the exposure. If you are unable to offer complimentary services you may consider extending a reduced rate. Discuss options with the famil organiser to try and create a win-win situation.→ Know their itinerary and obtain contact details — when do they arrive and depart, where the group has been and where they are going have they experienced a competitor's product?→ Be culturally sensitive: be aware of cultural sensitivities such as religious dietary requirements, appropriate conduct and greetings. If you aren't sure, ask the Familiarisation Coordinator.→ Consider the available time and present your product as the customer would experience it.→ Brief staff, making sure all staff are aware of the group.→ Prepare information for each participant tailored to their needs.
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Professionalism: be on time, well-presented and groomed, offer refreshments if required.→ Make sure that participants are welcomed - introduce yourself and exchange business cards.→ Ensure the product is at its best — this is your one opportunity to shine!→ Outline the program while at your property or on your tour.→ Escort the group during the famil and be a gracious host.→ Give time and attention to questions and make a note to follow up any requests.→ Present an information kit and offer to email information to participants.→ Ask the group for feedback on your product.→ Extend the reach of your famil by setting up a WeChat or WhatsApp group so the attendees can share stories and images, and you can also keep the group updated on operational information throughout the famil.
After	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Add the participants to your contact database.→ Send a thank you email and follow up any requests for additional information.→ Follow any sales lead opportunities presented by the famil.→ Keep participants informed of any relevant changes or updates on your product.

The power of publicity – how can I maximise my media exposure?

Generating positive publicity is a vital component in establishing and maintaining your reputation. Publicity can create a powerful media endorsement which acts effectively as word-of-mouth recommendation. Positive media coverage can assist you in raising awareness of your products and experiences and can lead to direct enquiries and bookings.

Journalists and/or influencers are approached constantly by businesses seeking to attract their attention. So how can you make them take notice of you? How do you secure publicity?

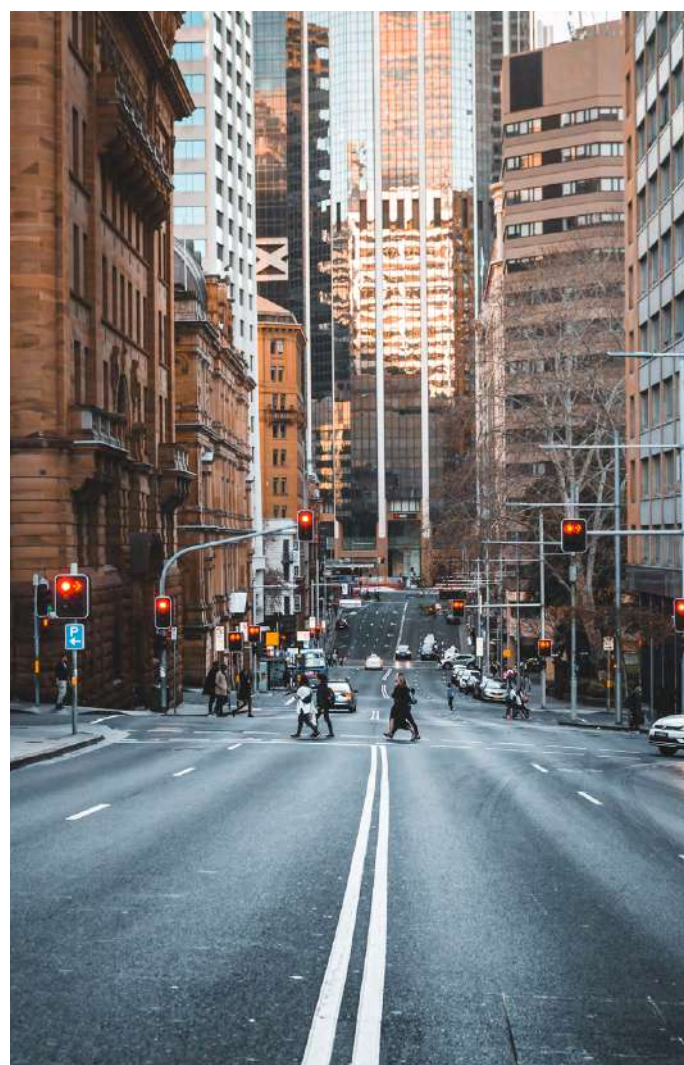
Tourism Australia has developed a guide [Making a Splash Generating Publicity for Australia: A Practical Guide for Working with the Media](#) which has been created to help you respond to these questions and to better understand how to generate publicity, how the media works, and how you can better promote your product or experience through a variety of media channels. It also provides an insight into Tourism Australia's publicity programs and how you can be involved.

Tourism Australia's global public relations team works with all levels of the Australian tourism industry to generate inspirational publicity about Australia in the world's print, broadcast, and online media. They are also responsible for generating influential word-of-mouth commentary through a range of cutting-edge advocacy programs.

Tourism Australia's [Trade Resources Hub](#) is where trade, media and key distribution partners can access and download Tourism Australia brand resources for domestic and international marketing through partner-owned and third-party channels. Assets include brand guidelines, images, videos, logos,

campaign toolkits, media kits, articles and monthly product Hot Lists. New resources are added monthly so make sure you are keeping Tourism Australia updated with all your latest news and developments to maximise your exposure across content shared on The Hub.

Media representatives often attend tradeshow looking for new story ideas, so you need to be well prepared to respond to both delegate and media enquiries. On some occasions, official media events are held prior to the trade show and are definitely worth participating in, so ensure you always have a media kit prepared.



What is a media kit and what should I include?

A media kit is a pre-packaged set of promotional materials distributed to media for promotional use. It should give media representatives a thorough background on your products/experiences and provide information in various formats.

A media kit in either hard copy or electronic format could include:

- Current media releases highlighting your latest developments
- Fact sheets about your business and products
- A background on your company's history
- Recent awards and accolades
- Product biography
- Executive biography
- Latest brochures
- High-resolution images (downloadable) including hero experiences, company logo, key executives etc.
- Media contact information

What is a media release and what should it include?

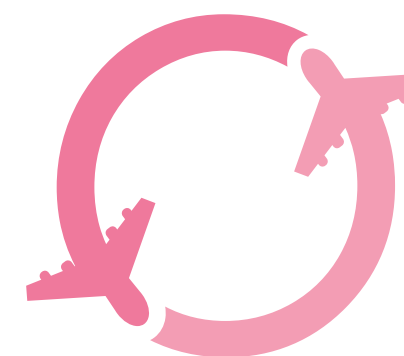
A media release is a written statement that provides information in a ready-to-publish format which you distribute to a journalist or editor to make an announcement or inform them of new developments you would like reported. The media release is one of the most fundamental public relations (PR) tools, but is not always correctly formatted. A well composed

media release should explain the 'story', answer practical questions and provide specific information to highlight why the story is news-worthy. This is often the determining factor between whether an item is published or not.

Despite the time invested in creating your media release, editors will judge the newsworthiness and timeliness of your media release for their publication or program within a matter of moments, so it is essential to get the media release right.

Before you start to write

- Make a list of publications and programs that you would like to appear in, that suit your product and service and reach your target audience. This could be the local paper or travel trade publication
- Get the names of relevant journalists/influencers and their contacts details, check how they best like to receive media information and keep this list up to date
- Identify the target media and what type of story will appeal to their audience
- Find out their lead times and deadlines – timeliness is important when sending out a media release



Media release format

Once you have determined that you have a newsworthy story, identified a journalist who may be interested, established the deadlines and the tone and style to suit the targeted media outlet, the next step is to start writing the release.



Image: Wave Rock, WA Source Tourism Australia

Some tips are shared below to help you get started:

- Identify key messages and ensure you deliver them early on in the release
- Use lead paragraphs to sell your idea – make sure you include “who, what, where, why and how” in the lead paragraph
- Always use clear, simple language and avoid jargon and acronyms
- Pay attention to grammar, punctuation, capitalisation, spelling out of numbers etc.
- Provide quotes from a credible spokesperson that can be contacted at any time
- Make sure that you have included all the relevant information that the journalist will need to know, such as prices, inclusions, validity for any special offers and your full contact details
- Make it easy for the journalist to understand your story and get in touch with you
- Copy should be written in the third person, i.e., the “he=she” format as in: “he said”
- Have high-res (at least 300 dpi) pictures readily available
- The most important tip is to make it as easy for the journalist to understand your story or be able to easily get in touch with you for more information. It is a good idea to have both a hard copy to present in a folder for F2F media events as well as an electronic version which can be emailed promptly to the journalist

Distributing a Media Release

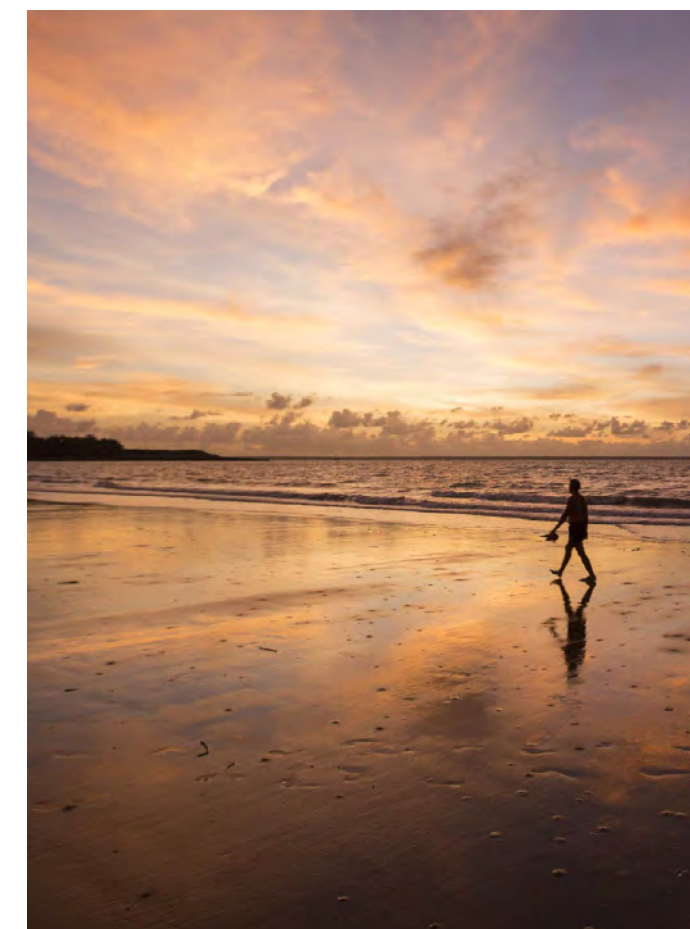
Media releases should be distributed with the deadline of the media outlet in mind. A national magazine is often working three months ahead of its publication date whilst large metropolitan papers working within a day or a few hours of going to publication. A weekend travel section will be finalised mid-week, but some features are planned weeks in advance. Understand your preferred media’s timelines.

The following tips should be kept in mind when distributing a media release:

- Make sure the release is addressed to the right person and media outlet otherwise they may not receive it. If you are not sure mark it for the attention of the person’s title, e.g., the Travel Editor
- Email distribution of media releases is now widely accepted. Where possible, paste your release into the body of an email rather than adding it as an attachment
- Do not attach hi-resolution images unless you know these are wanted – it is better to say that images are available on request or provide a link to the images at the end of your release
- Be sure to include Tourism Australia, your STO / RTO partners in the distribution as they too may assist in publicity as deemed appropriate
- When sending releases by email, use the ‘blind copy’ (bcc) function to avoid a long list of journalists appearing on each recipient’s email and to protect their privacy

For a fee, there are PR/media agencies who will assist with the creation of media releases and distribute your information to a wide variety of media outlets. This method ensures efficacy, saves time and will widen distribution of your release. Expert travel media companies, such as TravMedia offer global distribution and network opportunities for a fee. You may also be interested in attending a specific media event, in Australia and/or abroad where you can meet and pitch your stories directly to leading travel and lifestyle journalists/editors.

If you don’t have an in-house PR/Media expert, seek out further guidance and advice from experts in the field and consult with TA, ATEC, your STO and RTO partners to determine the best pathway forward for you and your business to develop a ‘SMART’ PR/Media action plan.



Review your visual images and video – do they make your product shine?

Images and videos can be one of the most powerful and cost effective methods of communicating the true nature of your tourism experience. An awe-inspiring image can be the determining factor as to whether your story is published, or even whether a distribution trade partner is interested in working with you.

→ Make sure you have a selection of interesting, high quality images. Ensure they are motivational, and the talent featured in the images are relevant to your target audience and bring the experience to life. Investing in a professional photographer can pay off both in terms of publicity via the media and securing partnerships with trade buyers. Remember, your images tell the story of your product

→ Avoid using out of date imagery, in particular with landscapes and people. This is mostly noticeable through style of clothing, hairstyles, vehicles and built environment or infrastructure

→ Most publications will require high resolution images, a minimum of 300 dpi and around 1MB in size. Often it is best to present these high-resolution images to media representatives on a portable drive, such as USB or have them in a downloadable format on your website for easy access

→ Make sure all images are captioned to explain the content of the photography (including the location); names of people and any copyright issues or photo credits should be clearly indicated. It is important to ensure that you have permission to use any images which are not your own, and that all approvals have been obtained prior to printing (for example, be sure you have signed talent release forms)



Image: Melbourne VIC Source Tourism Australia

Traditional marketing tools to support your trade sales efforts

Do I need to produce a hard copy brochure?

Thanks to technology, today consumers commonly research travel and tour options online but will often collect brochures from the local visitor centre or their accommodation upon arrival at the destination to assist with touring, dining and sight-seeing decisions. Hard copy brochures can also be a useful reference tool to use during meetings with trade partners, particularly at trade events. Be mindful, trade partners may also wish to refer to your online soft copy brochure to help promote your product. Once you have determined a clear purpose for your brochure, carefully consider the design and layout to make sure it is useful, relevant and visually powerful. Your brochure should not only include key information, but be aesthetically pleasing, reflect your brand promise and reinforce the quality experience on offer – the what and how you will deliver to your customers.

Do respect there are variances between specific markets when it comes to brochure preferences. For example, some markets may still be interested to review a hard copy brochure, however others may prefer all marketing material to be shared electronically.

Consider taking a more sustainable approach towards your brochure production and create an online digital brochure which can be easily downloaded and/or printed on demand as required.

Think about how and where your brochure is going to be distributed?

Before you start to produce your brochure, you need to determine whether it will be distributed to consumers, the trade or media – understand your target audience so you can tailor the brochure message accordingly. Often hard copy distribution decisions can impact your brochure design. Consider where it will be distributed (brochure racks, trade shows, travel agencies) as this will affect the size and layout. Unusual shapes, sizes or layouts are appealing but may limit your display and distribution options. For example, some brochure stands in local visitor centres may be A4 and others may be DL.

There are a number of different options available when distributing your brochure to consumers and the trade:

- Many brochure distribution companies will distribute your brochure for a fee within Australia and overseas
- Contact visitor information centres in your region and in gateway cities to discuss their display options.

Again, consider moving towards a more sustainable approach and produce e-brochures where practical.

What should you consider when designing a brochure?

- Research - Undertake research about your customers, your competitors, and your budget
- This knowledge will help you design and write an effective brochure. For example:
 - Who are your target markets and what type of brochure will appeal to them?
 - Look at competitor and tourism industry brochures and objectively review
 - What is your budget to produce and print the brochure?
 - Can you afford to get your brochure professionally designed, or will you be doing it in-house?

What is the most common brochure size for your region? Do you want to produce something a bit different, or conform to the norm? Remember, your brochure needs to be practical and fit for purpose.

- **Brochure heading and front cover** – remember if you are planning to display your brochure in a rack, it is likely that only the top third of your brochure will be visible. Consider if your product will be selected based on your company name, or based on an eye-catching description of your tour? This will depend on the strength of your current brand and how well your business name describes your product. For example, it may be better to have “Experience Sydney Harbour from the Air” rather than your company name, as this may be more eye catching. Your front cover is the most important part of your brochure as it should inspire customers to select your product over others.

- **Written content** - provide a concise, factual description of your product and your key selling points. Use key points, short sentences and language which is easily understood and focuses on the experience. Remember, English might be a second language for some of your customers. Consider having your collateral professionally translated for a specific market should you feel it is worth the return on investment
- **Contact Details** - ensure there is a clear call to action, include contact details such as physical address, email address, website address and phone number including international dialling codes
- **Images** - use quality images that show talent enjoying the experience you offer. Images are a pictorial language that virtually ‘speak’ to your target market and conjure up all kinds of thoughts and emotions. Ensure your images are of a high standard and accurately represent your audience and experience. Consider using a large photo (like a ‘hero image’) rather than lots of smaller images. Many tourism organisations (e.g., Tourism Australia and STOs) provide access to their image library. Ensure you consider cultural sensitivities with image selection.
- **Design elements** - choose a simple, common, and neat font such as Verdana or Tahoma. Use this font throughout the whole brochure – don’t overdo it and mix fonts as this can make your brochure look messy and crowded. Based on your previous distribution decisions select your brochure size. Consider the weight, colour, and texture of your brochure, ensuring it will stand up to being displayed in racks.

- **Brand image** - your brochure should align to your brand and reflect how you want to look and feel in the marketplace. It is what you stand for and your product personality. Branding helps to build recognition, so your customers know and trust what you stand for and deliver
- **Your location** - use a map to illustrate the location of your product/experience ensuring it is simple and clear
- **Consider if you will include prices** – these details may restrict the shelf life of your brochure. Make sure you clearly state validity dates and any terms and conditions. Consider using inserts for rates or directing consumers to your website for bookings and further details
- **Accreditations, awards, and endorsements** - Include these; ensure, however, that the awards are recent and relevant
- **Proof-read and market test** – make sure that you carefully proof-read a draft of the brochure before it goes to print. Consider doing some market testing of the brochure as your customers may pick up something which you have omitted or that may be confusing or non-appealing.

Participation in trade distribution partner brochures

Distribution trade partners, such as overseas wholesalers, may offer your business the chance to feature in their brochure, normally for a set fee. The advantage of participating in distribution partner brochures is additional exposure and extended distribution.

The participation cost traditionally covers the production and distribution costs, and is a cost of doing marketing, hence should be considered as part of your marketing plan, activities, and budget.

Before committing, ensure you have reviewed the quality of the production (including the overall content), how your product will be promoted and positioned (ensuring you get to review a proof before printing) and the exact distribution locations and quantities. Consider, does format and information provided align with your target markets and brand positioning?

Understand what estimates can be made on your return on investment, i.e. review the current level of bookings provided by the partner and jointly assess what additional bookings may result from your participation in their brochure.

What other low-cost marketing tools can I use?

Always review and consider low-cost options in addition to brochure production which may indeed reduce the number of brochures that you need to produce. For example, often trade events have an option to load a soft copy of your brochure onto the event portal, or you could send direct links to your brochure as part of your follow up for your clients to download. Another option is using USBs; these work best when they are uniquely designed USBs with your branding for easy recognition, rather than just being used as a technology tool.

The importance of starting with a plan

By investing the time to set out a 'SMART' plan – one that is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely - you will be able to determine where to focus your efforts, and importantly where to invest available resources to achieve desired goals. A detailed trade marketing strategy should be developed to provide a blueprint for your business and articulate the specific marketing activities which will endeavour to undertake to deliver the best return on your investment.

By undertaking the process of business planning, you will be able to evaluate your organisational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges which lie ahead.

Note, ATEC provide a 'S.W.O.T Template' in the Tourism Trade Ready training program.

In doing so, your plan should cover:

- Your purpose/mission (WHY?)
- The products/experiences you will sell (WHAT?)
- Your target markets/regions (WHO?)
- Distribution strategy (WHERE?)
- Timeframes (WHEN?)
- Marketing strategy including activity plan & budget (HOW?)

Your plan and all the related activities should be reviewed on a regular (annual) basis to ensure your business remains sustainable and relevant.

What should your plan include?

- **Overall business objectives** – what is it that your organisation wants to accomplish? WHY?
- **Assessment of the market environment** – what are the factors, internally and externally, that will affect your business and servicing of identified markets?
- **Market identification** – what are the specific markets and segments that are most likely to use your product?
- **Marketing objectives** – are the objectives for each target market SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time specific?
- **Marketing strategies** – what is the best approach when reviewing the five marketing 'P' Principles (Product, Price, Place (Distribution), Promotion and PEOPLE) for each of your target markets?
- **Strategic action plan** – what are the specific actions you will undertake, who will do each activity, and when will it be completed? Align to your budget with costs and the actions with expected outcomes to establish key performance indicators (KPI's)
- **The marketing budget** – how much do you have to spend and how will you allocate the resources?
- **Sustainability** – does your business have a balanced approach which considers people, planet and profit? What actions are you undertaking and how will you communicate it?
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – how will you review and monitor performance and measure success?

You can use these headings as a guide for the development of your plan, and it doesn't have to be a lengthy document. It should be easy to read and regularly reviewed.

Points to consider include:

- Understand the growth of inbound tourism markets and current domestic and outbound trends
- Develop a business plan including a SWOT - analysing your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
- Competitor Analysis
- Understand the various distribution channels available to reach your target audience
- Understand the benefits of working with distributors
- Undertake necessary preparation to enable you to work with distributors
- Establish your pricing to allow for distributor commissions
- Learn how to leverage your product by packaging with other products

Identifying Your Target Markets

Identifying and understanding your target markets should be the foundation of your plan. In order to succeed in the domestic or international market, it is important to tailor your business and your product/experience to your customer's requirements. By understanding how your region and product might appeal to the international market, you can tailor your product, marketing, and promotional activities to attract new business.

An important step in this process is to ensure that you analyse your business against those market needs and ensure your business is suited and ready to engage. For example, if you are keen to attract Japanese visitors, have you considered becoming a 'Japan Host' and gaining specific cultural knowledge and skills to better meet Japanese guest expectations? Explore ATEC's ['Host' market specialist training programs](#) available.

For further guidance on creating your business and marketing plan, check out the tools available here: business.gov.au



09

DIGITAL MARKETING AND YOUR ONLINE SHOPFRONT

What is Digital Marketing?

Digital marketing (also known as eMarketing, online marketing or internet marketing) is a type of marketing that focuses on the electronic environment and incorporates the following:

- Online advertising
- Search Engine Marketing and Search Engine Optimisation
- Social networking and user generated content
- Videos, podcasting and vidcasting
- The use of mobile phones to search the Internet
- Geo search maps
- Website promotions
- Email and viral campaigns

Some of the benefits of promoting your product online include:

- Access to a global audience of potential new customers
- Low cost of entry
- Cost effectiveness compared to traditional forms of marketing
- The ability to measure and analyse results from marketing activities
- Automated processing of enquiries and bookings.

Cooperative Marketing Opportunities

One of the most effective ways to become involved with digital marketing is to work cooperatively with your local organisations as relevant; LTO, RTO and/or STO. Most run a variety of activities targeting their chosen international markets. Tourism Australia also offers a range of cooperative opportunities that allow the Australian tourism industry to get involved in digital marketing programs.

Get Your Product Listed on Australia.com

Australia.com is the primary call to action for all Tourism Australia marketing activities. To have your product featured on the site you need to first list your product with the [Australian Tourism Data Warehouse \(ATDW\)](#). There is more information on listing with ATDW under Module 4.

How to market effectively via your website

As worldwide usage and access to the internet grows, it is important to maintain an online presence for your product or service. Your website should be your home base of your marketing activities, so ensure that it's up-to-date in content and branding.

Your website should reflect the personality of your business and clearly communicate its experience, articulate your unique selling proposition (USP) to market your product effectively and allow for consumers to purchase from your business directly.

Product Development and Optimisation

With the acceleration of online bookings - particularly via mobile devices - it is important to position your product offering to be found, considered, and booked directly on your website by your target audience. Since the majority of travellers begin their booking journey with an online search, Google provides the best opportunity to reach them, rewarding those who have a quality, well performing website that is optimised for search engines.

Another major factor in having success in driving direct bookings is understanding your target audience and developing content that speaks to their needs. Consider researching your product ideas and check your competitors' offering to review to see if you are priced competitively and your differentiation points are clear on your site.

Ensure the content on your site is up to date and answers many of the frequently asked questions you receive and meets the specific needs of your target audience. With that in mind, we have compiled a set of components that will result in a great website and product offering.



The keys to optimising your product and website to drive direct bookings:

- **Speed:** A critical component of your site ranking well with Google is that it loads quickly. You can run a simple test to see how your site performs here: PageSpeed Insights (web.dev)
- **Mobile Friendly:** Google measures your site performance against your mobile site only, so pay close attention to ensure that the components of your website appear properly on a mobile device. You may need a variation of the desktop layout for mobile. It is also important for consumers who are spending more time on mobile, especially research and booking travel.
- **Clear Navigation:** Properly organising your site so that visitors can move quickly and confidently through it, getting the information they need as they move toward booking, is critical to successfully driving direct bookings. So, it is important to start by thinking through that journey and making sure you provide a clear path to booking. Your most important products and destinations should be easy to find and take few clicks to get to. Considering that many bookings will come from a mobile phone, eliminating unnecessary questions and steps to complete the booking on your mobile site is particularly important too capture those bookings.
- **Images and Video:** High quality images that tell the story of your offering are most effective at engaging and converting visitors. Images of happy customers experiencing your product are helpful as well. The size of your images impacts the speed of your website, so ensure that they are optimised for your website. Video is a great way to highlight your brand and your products but be careful not to overload your site due to page speed concerns.

- **Brand:** What makes your offering unique and valuable to potential customers? It is important to determine 2-3 things that make your offering stand out - consider them your brand proof points - and then include your key brand proof points clearly on the site so that consumers understand what makes you different from your competitors, what they can expect when they visit, and why they should choose you.
- **Quality content which answers traveller questions:** We all know that great content is something travellers seek out when making purchase decisions. But it is also important to note that Google rewards high quality content that clearly answers users' questions with higher search rankings. With that in mind, it is important that you not only develop great content, but that you do it with the key search terms and questions that your customers are asking on Google in mind. There are several tools you can use to determine the right keywords and questions to focus on (SEM Rush is a good example) [semrush.com](https://www.semrush.com). Once you have created a list of key terms, you can use them on the pages and within the blog or articles posted on your website. It is important that you do not just add the keywords to your page, as many sites used to do. As we mentioned above, Google also rewards QUALITY content. So, while it is important to Google that the keywords are represented throughout your site, it is also important that you use thoughtful page introductions and descriptions that are understandable to your customer. Your blog posts and articles should include the content that aligns with the search terms and link to your products or services that align with the topic. Links within the article to other pages on your site are helpful and indicate to Google that your site is comprehensive and well structured.

→ **Unique, scannable product content:** Another

thing that Google rewards is unique content. Knowing this, it is important to write a unique version of your product or service description for your website. Not the same thing that you share on your 3rd party partner sites. This allows Google to recognize that you are not copying content from another website and improves your opportunity to rank more highly in Google's organic search results. Your description should include answers to all the questions that a customer might have in order to decide to book. Just as we recommend for other content, think about the most common questions travellers' have and ensure that you are providing clear, detailed answers to those questions. Categorise the information for easy, scannable reading, calling out important points with icons, bold text, or bulleted lists. Your cancellation policy is particularly important information to share. Use enough imagery on this page to give a customer a complete view of the product, including people in the shots and not just landscapes or objects.

- **Online Booking:** Most reservation systems offer widgets that make it easy for you to integrate a secure booking process, including instant confirmation and secure transaction processing into your site. We highly recommend using these tools rather than trying to build a custom booking process. If you are using a reservation system, set your cut-off time as close to the time of service as possible, in order to capture last minute bookings. Finally, if your product is a more considered purchase (one that it takes a few days or even weeks for someone to decide to book), include your phone number so that consumers can speak with someone prior to booking.
- **Frequently Asked Questions:** Not only is a solid FAQ section a valuable place to provide more keyword-focused content that clearly answers users' questions, but a properly structured FAQ

section can also earn you valuable real estate in Google search results. When developing your FAQs, think about the various stages of discovery, booking and post purchase and ensure that your questions cover each of these phases as it is not uncommon for customers to return to your website after booking to gather more information as they get closer to the time of their reservation.

- **Capture Emails:** It is extremely rare that a traveller will book on their first visit to your site. So, it is important to find ways to engage them and keep your offering top-of-mind throughout their decision-making process. One great way is to include a form for customers to provide their email address to sign up for email marketing. This is an excellent way to stay in touch with customers and eventually capture their bookings. To maximise sign-ups, be sure to state clearly what potential subscribers would receive in exchange for giving you their email address e.g. product updates, exclusive specials, and new offerings.
- **Social Media:** More and more often, travellers' are using social media to decide what to do while on vacation. Knowing this, it is valuable to include links to your social media channels on your site. Customers can use them as proof points and/or inspiration while deciding whether to book, and they may even 'follow' you - giving you an opportunity to stay in touch with them throughout the process. To make the most of this opportunity, ensure that these channels are kept up-to-date and reflect your brand properly.



Google My Business setup and optimisation

We know that online bookings are an ever-increasing part of every travel business and the majority of potential bookers start their search on Google. We will take a deep dive into how you can set yourself up for success - what we like to call getting 'Digitally Fit' - with these two factors in mind, focusing specifically on the opportunities to capture and convert organic, unpaid traffic from Google. Have you ever done a Google search and seen a long rectangular box come up on the right-hand side of the page that provides complete information on a business that is relevant to your search? That is a Google My Business listing and it is one of the most important pieces of real estate available on Google, the best part is it's free. A listing is a huge advantage for you over the competition, as well as over the third-party channels who compete for paid positions on Google. Even better, it is only available to you, as it is tied to your actual place of business.

Below are steps to help you secure your Google My Business listing and make the most of it by ensuring your information is always accurate, comprehensive, and up to date.

- **Enter your Name and Category:** It is important that you write your business name exactly as it appears on your storefront and website. Google can penalize you if these are not the same. It is also important to keep your information up-to-date and accurate. Categories (like bike rental, tour operator) change from time to time, so it is a good thing to keep an eye on in case one appears that is a closer match to your services. You can select more than one, but do not select too many. They need to be honest and accurate, or Google will penalise you in search results.

- **Write a compelling business description:** This is where you get 750 characters to tell potential customers what is unique about your offering and entice them to learn more. Think about what makes your brand unique. What are the things that 'wow' people about your product offering? These are the things to focus on in your business description. It is also important to include your location, which Google uses to determine your relevance to searches.
- **Add amazing images:** A picture is worth a thousand words, and Google gives you plenty of room to tell your brand story with great imagery. Ideally you will be able to include three images each of the exterior of your business, the interior of your business, and your team providing your service. Do not forget to have happy people in your photos and encourage your guests to post pictures too.
- **Collect and manage reviews:** While many people work hard to get their TripAdvisor reviews, those do not help you when your potential customers' search starts on Google and that is the case often. This is not to say that TripAdvisor reviews are not important. They are certainly valuable. But you need a strategy to get Google reviews as well - as those are the reviews that will show up in your Google My Business listing. And just like you do on TripAdvisor, do not forget to respond to reviews. It is critical to show you are engaged, and travellers do read them before selecting you.
- **Create Google Posts regularly:** You certainly know all about Facebook posts, but did you know that Google has 'posts' as well? These attention-grabbing content blocks are front and centre in your listing, essentially acting like free ads. We recommend posting weekly to keep things timely. It does not always have to be a special, you can even feature a product or something that makes you special.

→ **Showcase your product catalogue:** In addition to images and posts, you can actually add your entire product catalogue to your Google My Business listing. Even better, the link can go straight to the booking page on your site. If you choose to do this (and why would you not) make sure you add a compelling image, product description and pricing.

→ **Answer (and add) questions in Google Q+As:** People ask Google every question that comes to mind these days. So, it should not be surprising that you will find a Q&A feature in your business listing. Google expects you to engage with users by answering their questions here, and you do not want to leave it up to other consumers to answer the questions since they could be incorrect. You can also add questions - but do not get carried away with too many and do not try to stuff a bunch of keywords in your answers. It will not help; just think about the questions you get most often and answer them in the same way you would in person.

→ **Keep tabs with reporting:** Just as it does with its paid ad features, Google offers some quality reporting for your Google My Business listing. We always see this as a great opportunity to figure out where you can optimise your listing and increase conversion. And if you ever need a little extra motivation to keep your Google My Business listing fresh and up to date - just check out the reports that demonstrate how many of your customers are interacting with your listing every day.

Simplifying Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Somewhere between a dark art and a simple science, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) can seem overwhelming and confusing upon first glance. But really, the core tenets are simple: Google rewards high quality content that answers users' questions (which is the art of it) and to receive that reward, your site needs to serve that content up in a structured, well-organised way that Google can easily recognised (the science part).

If you do all of that well, you have an opportunity to capture a greater share of organic (also known as unpaid) traffic and fuel profitable growth with efficient, direct bookings. Here are some simple steps you can take to make sure you maximize that opportunity.

Competitive analysis and Keyword research:

Before you can improve your organic search results, you first need to understand the landscape in which you are operating. That means knowing what potential customers are searching for, as well as how your competitors are using SEO to win their business through search. This is where competitive analysis kicks in, and the first step is identifying your competitors and researching the links, keywords, and content they use to rank on Google in order to reverse-engineer what is working for them. There are several tools you can use to do this, including SEMrush and Moz, which has this free tool available: <https://moz.com/domain-analysis>

As you get started, think about commonly asked questions that you are able to authoritatively answer. What are the key terms that people will use in those searches? These are the terms that you will want to target - ideally starting with the highest volume terms.

But before you do that, it is valuable to combine these two layers - competitive analysis and keyword research - to create a holistic picture of your market. You may discover that you have competitors who have successfully built-up strong authority with your more highly trafficked keywords, and thus it will be harder to unseat them at the top of the rankings. In these cases, you could consider starting with lower volume search terms that you can build authority and ranking around, while working in the background to improve your authority and ranking around those larger keyword terms. This will give you a quicker benefit while building toward a bigger and brighter future.

→ **Page Titles:** Once you have determined the search terms and keywords you want to rank for, it is time to start applying that strategy to your site. This is what you might have heard people call 'on page SEO.' All that means is that we are now talking about elements that Google reads AND your potential customers. The first step in getting on-page SEO right is your Title Tag - an HTML element that specifies the title of a web page. Title tags are displayed on search engine results pages (SERPs) as the clickable headline for a given result, and are important for usability, SEO, and social sharing.

Your goal in making a great Title Tag is to ensure that it provides a concise, accurate description of what someone will find on that page. By concise, we recommend making your Title Tags no longer than 60 characters.

In terms of accuracy, it is important to give each page on your site a unique title that helps search engines (and humans) quickly understand what is unique and valuable about the content on that page. Another thing this does is set proper expectations with your site visitors, making it

more likely that you will attract truly interested individuals who will engage more deeply with your site - another signal to Google that your site is worth promoting in organic search results.

→ **Meta Descriptions:** Right under the Page Title on Google search results you will find a piece of copy - usually about 160 characters in length - that gives you more detail about what you will find if you click on that link. This is the Meta Description - another simple HTML element that is important to include in your site. By making sure you have a clear, compelling, and concise Meta Description on each page the piece that shows up below the page title in results, you can increase your click through rate - which is yet another signal to Google that your page is worth promoting higher in their rankings. So, take your time and write something unique here. Show your true value and entice that click!

→ **H1 Tags:** Now we are on to how you tag the content that appears on your actual site - your H1 Tags. Think of these as the headlines for each page of your site. If you had to sum up everything that a user can expect to learn on a page, or why it is uniquely valuable, you would do that in a nice short headline, and then make that headline the H1 Tag for the page. This is an important step, because just like people, Google's bots will use this headline (if properly tagged) to quickly figure out what the page is about so that they can properly categorize it and connect it to search terms.

For this reason, you should only have one H1 Tag per page. It should be prominently displayed to site visitors, clearly descriptive of what the page is about, and ideally include one of those strategic keywords that you selected at the beginning of this process.

→ **Page Content:** - Beyond the H1 Tag, the content on your page definitely impacts your ability to be found and ranked by Google. Quality content also increases your site visitors' likelihood to engage with your content and dive deeper on your site - which we have mentioned before signals to Google that your site is valuable and should be ranked higher in search results. It truly is a virtuous loop.

So, what is 'Quality Content' in the world of SEO? As we have noted above, it is really about providing clear answers to the questions people are asking on Google. The best content is hyper-relevant to a specific topic (probably something associated with one of the keywords you have chosen to target) and is unique.

→ **Blogs and articles:** - Shifting to what goes on the page (or in the HTML of each page) to page types, Blogs and articles can be extremely valuable in helping you demonstrate your expertise (aka Authority) on a specific topic while also providing you a great opportunity to create more pages that can rank on Google.

This is about reach - expanding the possible shelf space you can take up in the storefront called Google. You have expertise. Own it. Share it. Let Google know so that they can connect the right people with your knowledge. The more high-quality, useful articles or blog posts you create, the more opportunities you have to appear in search results... This also sets you up well for 'off page SEO' - aka link building. That is where you work to have other authoritative sites connect to your content - a strong signal to Google that that page houses valuable information.

→ **Frequency and Uniqueness:** We all like new, interesting things. It is human nature. And Google is no different. Now, Google does not necessarily favour "fresh" content as a default or over truly useful content that has been around for a while. So, this is not a gimmick you can use to trick the search engine.

But adding new, unique content to your site (properly built per the guidelines we shared throughout this discussion) can impact SEO through some indirect factors - most specifically how often Google crawls your site to look for new, valuable content. The more you update and add fresh content, the more often Google will come around to see what is new. This increases your chance to move up the rankings, or to rank for new content that you have added to help you capture searches for some of your strategic keywords.



Are you active on Social Media?

Social media is an umbrella term used to describe online technologies that facilitate interaction and exchange of information online. Social media is an entire online environment built on people's contributions and interactions, connecting groups of people together.

Businesses are using social media as a tool to reach customers and to build or maintain their reputation. As social media continues to grow, the ability to reach more consumers globally has also increased.

One of the greatest benefits of social media is its immediacy - updates provide real time information to anyone interested in your product. For example, facts that aren't major enough for a media or trade release could be used for updating your social media networks. In all instances, social media posts should inspire and contribute to the community, not spam them with unwanted advertisements.

It is also important to be wary of the real possibility social media users may use this platform to complain or discredit your product; a commitment must be made to invest the time required to stay on top of content, as well as customer feedback. Users will read the business's reaction to feedback as intently as the criticism.

With nearly all social media platforms, there are two types of content - organic and paid.

For Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, organic content are the posts that show up in the feed / grid to all some of the followers. Paid content is sponsored posts - the platform uses artificial intelligence (AI) to target users outside of your own followers in order to reach new audiences.

Be mindful, each global market has its own preference when it comes to social media, so be sure to do your research and consider the options carefully to maximise your engagement. Here are some of the more popular social media networking sites available to you, and ways you can incorporate them into your tourism business:

Facebook

Facebook is one of the most popular social networking sites. With over 2.5 billion active users worldwide, Facebook's fastest growing demographic is the 45 to 54 years age bracket. A free platform, it can be used to provide updates on your product as well as interact with clients and obtain feedback. If you are a business owner you can set up a dedicated Facebook Page that represents your business - this is a place to house all the pertinent information about your company, as well as the more fun, daily updates. You can update information regularly and easily, and the fresher your content, the more you will engage people.

Facebook continues to add to its functionality for businesses and becoming a pay-to-play platform for the greatest reach.

Twitter

Twitter is a popular social networking and interactive micro-blogging service. It enables people to send short 140-character messages to Twitter using a web or phone interface. If people are interested in a user's messages (called tweets) they may decide to follow this user and therefore be informed every time they send a new tweet. As a tourism business you can use Twitter to keep up with industry news, build industry contacts, monitor your online reputation and easily share quirky facts and updates about your business in real time.

YouTube

Youtube is a video-sharing site with over 2 billion active monthly users and is the second largest search engine in the world after Google. You can create quality short videos about your product or tour that showcase the kind of experience that your guests can have. Videos that work best are those that are not overly commercial and show the highlights or quirky parts of your product offering in a captivating and visual way. Use keywords in your video title to help people find your videos through search

Vimeo

Vimeo is an optimised online video streaming site that allows users to upload and promote the videos with a high degree of customisation. Over 170 million monthly views are watching videos on Vimeo. Vimeo offer a variety of paid usage subscription plans, and often the videos can be higher resolution and with less ads.

Instagram

Instagram is an app-based photo and video sharing social networking site. It's a fun and quirky way to communicate your business offering through a series of pictures and 15 second videos. There are a range of filters that can be used to enhance photos and it allows you to share snapshots of your product and region in real-time. Using reels, IGTV, and stories for "behind the scenes" updates, promoting giveaways and sales, taking polls, and showing off the business personality can increase brand awareness and grow your database.

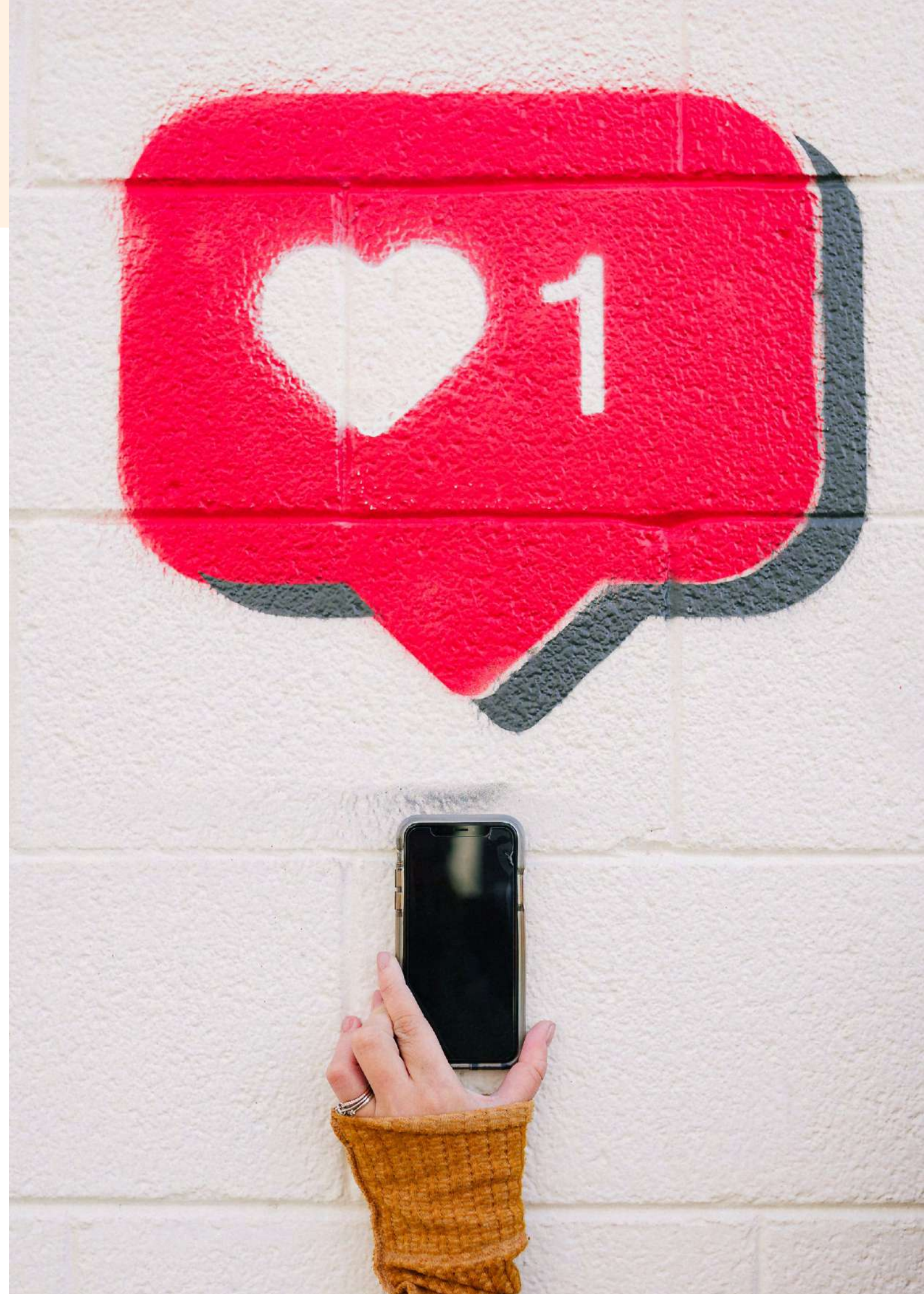
LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a Business-to-Business social networking site with over 700 million users. Users create an account, which allows them to create their own profile with their full work history and connect with other profiles. LinkedIn is great for networking with colleagues and leaders in the Tourism Industry and for staff recruitment. It is a good idea to create a Business Page that covers basic information about your business. If your customers spend time on LinkedIn, then you are able to spend time building relationships and connecting with people

TikTok

TikTok is a platform used for short form, primarily mobile content. It is highly relevant amongst younger demographics, and highly agile with trending topics and themes. Utilising TikTok is an important tool for businesses to showcase their brand's identity through creative, bite-sized videos that are easy to consume. Videos range between 5 and 120 seconds in length. TikTok allows businesses to build upon their personality and explore different techniques (e.g. trends, hashtags) to reach a wider audience. Specifically, the platform is targeted toward Gen Z-er's but a large number of people use the platform outside that demographic.

Because of TikTok's easy to use interface, creators on the platform don't have to have professional equipment to create the content. A simple good quality iPhone camera and some natural light, are all you need to start creating. With over 1 billion active users per month, it's potential to reach large quantities of people makes it an accessible platform to grow your brand creatively and strategically.





TOURISM TALK: ACRONYMS & GLOSSARY

You may have noticed that tourism language is very acronym-heavy! Here are some of the more common tourism acronyms and terms to help you

AACB	Australian Association of Convention Bureaux
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ABTA	Association of British Travel Agents
ADS	Approved Destination Status (relates to the China travel market)
AFTA	Australia Federation of Travel Agents
ASP	Aussie Specialist Program
ATDW	Australian Tourism Data Warehouse
ATE	Australian Tourism Exchange
ATEC	Australian Tourism Export Council
BEC	Business Enterprise Centre
BIT	Borsa Internazionale del Turismo held in Italy each year (Trade Event)
BT	Business Tourism (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions)
COAST	Coalition of Australian States and Territories (North America)
CRS	Computerised reservations system
CVB	Convention and visitors bureau
DAMA	Destination Australia Marketing Alliance
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DMC	Destination Management Company
DNSW	Destination New South Wales
EA	Ecotourism Australia
EMDG	Export Market Development Grant
FIT	Fully independent traveller
FOC	Free of charge
GALTA	Gay and Lesbian Travel Association
GIT	Group inclusive traveller
GSA	General sales agent
IATA	International Air Transport Association
ICCA	International Congress and Convention Association
IMR	International Media Relations

ITAA	Irish Travel Agents Association
ITB	International Travel Bourse held in March in Berlin and London in November each year
ITO	Inbound tour operator
IVS	International Visitor Survey
KDP	Key Distribution Partner
LTO	Local Tourism Organisation
MIAA	Meetings Industry Association of Australia
NTO	National Tourism Office
OTA	Online Travel Agent
PATA	Pacific Asia Travel Association
PAX	Passengers
PR	Public Relations
RTA/RTO	Regional tourism association/ organisation
SATC	South Australian Tourism Commission
STO	State or Territory tourism office
TA	Tourism Australia
TEQ	Tourism and Events Queensland
TFC	Tourism Forecasting Committee
TNT	Tourism Northern Territory
TRA	Tourism Research Australia
TT	Tourism Tasmania
TTF	Tourism and Transport Forum
TWA	Tourism Western Australia
USP	Unique Selling Proposition
VC	Visit Canberra
VFR	Visiting friends and relatives
VJP	Visiting Journalist Program
WV	Visit Victoria
WTM	World Travel Market
WTO	World Tourism Organisation

Tourism Terms

Agent	A person or company that sells your product on your behalf, including ITOs, wholesalers and retail agents.
Allotment	A pre-negotiated number of seats/rooms/vehicles held by a wholesaler or inbound tour operator for sale.
Business Tourism	Incorporates visitors travelling for conventions, conferences, seminars, workshops, symposiums, incentives, exhibitions and special events.
Commission	The fee paid to agents for them to market, distribute and sell your product.
Co-operative Advertising	Advertising funded by two or more partners.
Distressed Inventory	Product whose potential to be sold at a normal cost will soon pass.
Distribution	The channels or places through which a consumer may purchase your product.
Eastern Markets	All Asian countries, including Japan.
Ecotourism	Ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation.
Export Tourism	International tourist traffic coming into a country, with foreign dollars contributing to the export economy.
Familiarisation Visits	Provide agents with the opportunity to experience your product first hand and improve their product knowledge.
Free Sell	A room, seat or vehicle provided by an operator to a wholesaler or inbound tour operator in unrestricted quantities until otherwise indicated, so a booking may be confirmed immediately to a client.
Frontline Staff	The agents that deal directly with consumers including retail agents and reservations staff.
Fully Independent Travellers (FIT)	Travellers who plan their own travel arrangements. There are a number of types of FIT including visiting friends and relatives, backpacking and partially packaged travel.
Gateway	A major air, land or sea entry point to a region or country.
General Sales Agent	Offer representation and marketing of your product in international markets. They may also provide a booking service.
Gross Rate	The price that consumers pay for your product. Also retail rate, rack rate or door rate.
Group Inclusive Travellers (GIT)	Travellers who purchase the bulk of their holiday arrangements before leaving home, also referred to as package travellers.
Inbound Tour Operator (ITO)	An Australian based agent that specialises in developing programs and itineraries for distributors. Also known as ground operators and destination management companies (DMC).

Inbound Tourism	International tourist traffic coming into a country. Also referred to as export tourism.
Incentive Travel	Incentive travel is a trip offered as a prize or reward, for top performing employees or sales agents.
Industry	All businesses that are involved in tourism including distribution agents and product suppliers.
Long Haul Travel	International travel to a destination, generally more than 5 hours from the point of origin, i.e. Australia is a long haul destination for travellers from Europe and America.
Meeting and Incentive Planners	Organise and manage all aspects of meetings, incentives and events.
Nett Rate	The gross rate less the commission amount. The amount that you receive from the agent.
Online Distribution	Using the internet and web portals to distribute or promote your product to consumers
Online Travel Agent	Allows consumers to check live availability and pricing then book travel products in real time through the OTA website.
Operator	The owner and/or manager of the tourism product.
Outbound Tourism	Residents travelling out of their country to an international destination.
Product Manager/ Department	Responsible for identifying and selecting the products and suppliers that an ITO or wholesaler will sell.
Retail Travel Agent	The link to the consumer, retail agents allow travellers to book travel products either through a wholesaler, an ITO or direct with the supplier.
Sales Calls	Face to face meetings with agents. Purposes may include; to update and educate them on your product, negotiate inclusion in their programs, negotiate rates etc.
Short Haul Travel	International travel to a destination, generally less than 5 hours from the point of origin, i.e. Australia is a short haul destination for travellers from New Zealand.
Trade Shows	Events held both in Australia and overseas which act as a forum for product suppliers to meet with agents.
Travel Distribution System	A global network of independent businesses which allow international consumers to research and book travel.
Travel Trade	A collective term for the agents that make up the distribution system, including ITOs, wholesalers, retail and online agents.
Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)	Visitors whose main purpose is to visit with friends and relatives.
Western Markets	All non-Asian countries, including New Zealand, the Americas, UK and Europe, the Middle East and Africa.
Wholesaler	Located in overseas markets wholesalers are the link between international travel agents and ITOs or suppliers.

Developed by industry for industry

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THE AUSTRALIAN TOURISM TOOLKIT



YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO BECOMING TOURISM TRADE READY

