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Introduction
Writing Your Marketing Plan

Takeaways
- Understanding of the tourism network in Australia
- Why you need a marketing plan and how to prepare one
- Why accessing the right research is invaluable to your business
Introduction

As a Queensland tourism operator, you’re part of one of the state’s largest and most diverse industries. Our industry is vibrant and dynamic and its strength lies in the success of operators like you.

How you develop and market your business is important, not only to you personally, but to the government and industry bodies that represent your interests. As your state tourism office, Tourism and Events Queensland provides industry support, information and resources to help you make the most of tourism business opportunities.

We do this in many ways and one example is the development of this Big Marketing Guide. This guide contains essential marketing information and resources to assist you in establishing your business to successfully compete in the marketplace.

In addition, the guide also offers practical marketing advice, information, handy tips and web links to help you plan for a long and prosperous future in the tourism industry.

Tourism Business Accreditation

Why should tourism businesses become accredited?

Tourism consumer expectations have changed. Travellers are now expecting that well-run and professional tourism operators should also adhere to responsible business practices and maintain a level of quality. As a participant in a recognised accreditation or quality-rating scheme, and successfully promoting this status in your business marketing, you are providing customers with the confidence to make a booking safe in the knowledge that your service or experience is of a guaranteed quality.

Being accredited also allows your customers and industry partners to see that your business is committed to delivering a professional tourism experience, backed up by high-quality business practices, systems and standards. Quality and consistency in service and product provision are essential to ensuring that customer expectations are met and they do not go away disappointed.

Accreditation schemes cover many aspects of business practice, ranging from assessment of overall experiences through to sector-specific schemes and programs which focus on particular topics such as sustainability and environmental performance.

The benefits of being accredited can include:

Establishing a competitive advantage

- Increased visitor recognition as a quality operator, helping you stand out
- Developing a competitive advantage against businesses who are not accredited
- Providing confidence to potential visitors that your business offers a professional and reliable experience
- For businesses seeking eco-certification, being accredited removes consumer doubt about greenwashing by verifying that all environmental and social claims made are genuine.

Improved business processes and operation

- Assisting with the improvement of business strategies and management systems that could lead to improved profitability
- A tool to improve your visitor experience leading to improved visitor satisfaction, repeat visits and positive referrals
- Support for continuous business improvement against recognised industry benchmarks
- Helping your business deliver improved bottom-line results
- Aiding you to identify business risks and the actions to resolve them
- Providing a context for reviewing operational, administrative and training procedures
Improved industry recognition

- Enabling access to accredited-only opportunities, such as eligibility for the Queensland Tourism Awards
- A means of improving industry recognition of your commitment to a high-quality standard of operation
- Providing a pathway to grow your credibility as a business with travel trade and investment partners
- Building assurance among industry colleagues and staff on your business commitment to quality and standards

A wide range of accreditation schemes covering quality assurance and service delivery are available to tourism businesses. Further information can be found via the QTIC Grants Gateway website. Please note, these accreditation programs are distinct to the licenses and accreditations that are legally required to operate your business.

Answering the question – does certification actually improve performance?

Griffith University’s Institute for Tourism (GIFT) recently reviewed the historical benchmarking data and average operational improvement rates of over 1,000 hotel properties across the globe. Each property was reviewed over a seven-year period, with data provided by one of the world’s leading sustainability certification programs, EarthCheck.

Observations revealed through the review indicated that:

1. Resource costs (electricity, water and waste) for accommodation businesses are substantial, adding up to annual costs in the order of $500,000 to a million, or more for some businesses.

2. Financial savings made by businesses participating in the certification program were in the order of several tens of thousands of dollars per annum.

3. Overall, businesses included in the review managed to reduce resources use annually by as much as 4% (water), 6% (electricity) and 7% (waste).

Overall, the study found that there were measurable cost savings for the majority of certification participants each year – enough to more than cover the cost of the program itself.
Understanding the tourism network
Another important facet to your planning is having a good understanding of the external environment and how the tourism industry works. It’s not just about understanding it, but becoming actively involved.

As a tourism operator, you are an integral part of a tourism network which exists to develop tourism at a national, state and local level. Each level has its specific roles and responsibilities, and collectively, they are a powerful force in driving consumer demand for our tourism product.

Knowing how the system operates and tapping into the various agencies and industry bodies as need or opportunity arises can substantially enhance the effectiveness of your business marketing.

The knowledge, networks and relationships gained through these and other professional affiliations can also lead to exciting and unexpected benefits as well as lifelong friendships. Below is the overview of the tourism network, the key players and their various roles and responsibilities.

Tourism Australia (TA)
Tourism Australia is the Australian Government agency responsible for attracting international visitors to Australia, both for leisure and business events. Activities include advertising, public relations and media programs, trade shows and industry programs, consumer promotions, online communications and consumer research.
For more information visit: tourism.australia.com

Australian Trade Commission (Austrade)
Austrade is the Federal agency responsible for helping Australian business, education institutions and tourism operators gain entry into international markets through programs such as the Export Market Development Grants scheme. It also has responsibility for tourism policies, programs and research, and works with governments and industry in implementing the national tourism strategy, Tourism 2020.
For more information visit: austrade.gov.au

Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC)
ATEC is the industry development body that represents the interests of more than 800 tourism export businesses throughout Australia. ATEC is a membership-based organisation that currently represents inbound tourism operators (ITOs), online operators, Australian tourism product suppliers and service providers around Australia.
For more information visit: atec.net.au
INTRODUCTION | WRITING YOUR MARKETING PLAN

Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ)

Tourism and Events Queensland is a statutory body of the Queensland Government and the state’s lead marketing, destination and experience development, and major events agency. Tourism and Events Queensland, in partnership with government, regional tourism organisations, industry and commercial stakeholders, aims to build Queensland’s tourism and events industry to foster innovation, drive industry growth and boost visitor expenditure.

For more information visit: teq.queensland.com

Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and Commonwealth Games (DTESB)

DTESB provides leadership in ensuring Queensland is an attractive destination for tourists, investment and events, supported by strong, capable and responsive small businesses.

For more information visit: dtesb.qld.gov.au

Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC)

QTIC is the peak industry body for tourism in Queensland and works in partnership with government agencies and industry bodies at a local, state and national level. It is responsible for lobbying government, industry leadership, industry education and training, professional advice, raising industry standards and industry promotion.

For more information visit: qtic.com.au

Visitor information centres (VICs)

Drive into many Queensland towns and you’re sure to see the big yellow ‘i’ representing an accredited visitor information centre (VIC). There are 115 accredited VICs in Queensland. VICs make a significant economic contribution to tourism by providing information to visitors, encouraging them to them to stay longer, spend more, experience more attractions and revisit.

For more information visit: teq.queensland.com/VIC-Portal

Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs)

There are 13 Regional Tourism Organisations in Queensland responsible for tourism marketing, leadership, development and the coordination of industry, local government and community destination marketing to promote their regions as a travel destination. Tourism and Events Queensland has a formal partnership with each RTO and often opportunities to participate in destination campaigns and other activities will come through your RTO to you. We encourage all tourism businesses to make themselves known to their RTO.

For more information visit: teq.queensland/RTOcontacts

Local tourist organisations (LTOs)

Local tourist (or tourism) organisations (LTOs) enhance the visitor experience through the provision of information and advice, undertaking marketing activity, and liaising with the community, local government and regional tourism organisations.
### Specialised tourism industry associations

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Website</th>
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<td>Australian Timeshare &amp; Holiday Ownership Council (ATHOC)</td>
<td>athoc.com.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Marine Park Tourism Operators (AMPTO)</td>
<td>ampto.com.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Resident Accommodation Managers’ Association (ARAMA)</td>
<td>arama.com.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation Association of Australia (AAA Tourism)</td>
<td>hmaa.com.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure Queensland</td>
<td>adventurequeensland.com.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Regional Tourism Network (ARTN)</td>
<td>regionaltourism.com.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB)</td>
<td>aacb.org.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA)</td>
<td>afta.com.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Hotels Association (AHA)</td>
<td>aha.org.au</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bed and Breakfast Farmstay Queensland (BBFQ)</td>
<td>bbfq.com.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Events Australia</td>
<td>businessevents.australia.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Events Council of Australia</td>
<td>businesseventscouncil.org.au</td>
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<td>Caravan and Trade Industries Association of QLD</td>
<td>caravanqld.com.au</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caravan Parks Association of Queensland Inc</td>
<td>caravanqld.com.au</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecotourism Australia</td>
<td>ecotourism.org.au</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exhibition and Event Association of Australia</td>
<td>eeea.com.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guides of Australia</td>
<td>guidesaustralia.com.au</td>
</tr>
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<td>Gay and Lesbian Tourism Australia (GALTA)</td>
<td>galta.com.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Tourism</td>
<td>tourism.australia.com/aboriginal</td>
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<td>Marine Queensland</td>
<td>marineqld.com.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings &amp; Events Australia</td>
<td>meetingsevents.com.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Tourism Alliance</td>
<td>tourismalliance.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)</td>
<td>pata.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland Bus Industry Council (QBIC)</td>
<td>qbic.com.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland Information Centres Association (QICA)</td>
<td>qica.com.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant &amp; Catering Australia (R&amp;CA)</td>
<td>restaurantcater.asn.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC)</td>
<td>crctourism.com.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF)</td>
<td>ttf.org.au</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Research Australia (TRA)</td>
<td>tra.gov.au</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wine Australia</td>
<td>wineaustralia.com</td>
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Why have a marketing plan?
At this point you might be tempted to say 'thank you, I don’t need a marketing plan' because you haven’t had one before and you’re doing ok, or you don’t have the time to sit down and navel gaze – you have a business to run and you have a life.

Well, let’s take a look at that. You make plans in order to achieve what you want. Planning is simply desiring something and putting into place the things that will help make it happen.

It stands to reason if you plan to stay in business, you need to plan for business growth. And marketing is the primary method used to achieve that growth. Essentially, it directs the flow of goods and services from you to your consumers.

You may have heard of the marketing term the ‘4Ps’. It describes the marketing mix – a common set of business areas where marketing has a direct influence. For the purposes of this guide, we’re going to add a fifth P to cover packaging.

A marketing plan can help you:
- identify your target markets
- understand how to reach those target markets
- present product to consistently meet consumer expectations
- extend and/or develop or review products
- create and realise new opportunities
- attract new and repeat customers
- increase sales and
- maximise the returns on your investment
The Marketing Plan

In the introduction we talked about the marketing mix. We also talked about the value of having a marketing plan but here’s the catch: no plan is worthwhile unless it has true relevance to your business and you use and review it on a regular basis.

In this section we outline the steps involved in developing a marketing plan. As you work through the process, you’ll need to consider and include strategies that best fit your business and your budget.

Given the tourism industry is dynamic and susceptible to rapid change, it’s best to think of your plan as dynamic too and adjust your activities to suit market conditions when changes occur.

Brainstorm ideas with people who work in your business, look at what other operators are doing and adopt or adapt their good ideas to suit your business and budget. Finally, call on the expertise of your RTO contacts. They are there to support and advise you. All these things can help steer your planning in the right direction.

The plan outline

Planning is a creative process and when you’re passionate about your business, it’s easy to throw all your energy behind the things that excite you most. However, a staged approach gives a logical flow and context to your ideas. It can stop you from running too far off track, or getting caught up in a couple of ideas, at the expense of a broad view and continuity in your thinking and planning by following a set format.

Learn from your tourism colleagues and don’t be afraid to look at non-tourism examples of great marketing.
## The marketing plan at a glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Direction</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Business Profile</strong></td>
<td>✤ Describe your business – what you do and how your product or service is different to others</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✤ Who are the current business owners</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ What product/service you deliver</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ Business vision – should briefly outline your future plans based on the goals and aspirations of the business</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ Business goals – include short and long-term goals and what activities you will undertake to meet them</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ Business mission statement – how will you achieve your vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situation Analysis</strong></td>
<td>✤ Describe key external environmental factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✤ Describe key internal environmental conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✤ Develop a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) matrix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
<td>✤ Identify your competitors and how they market their products</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ Research the marketplace and identify consumer and travel trends</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ Review your business and identify how your business meets consumer expectations through customer feedback</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ Understand who your existing customers are and their preferences, motivations and habits</td>
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<td>✤ Research the destination brand, hero experiences and destination tourism plan (DTP) for your region so you can align and leverage the work of others</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Market Identification</strong></td>
<td>✤ Select your target market/s</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ Research how your target markets behave and how to identify their needs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing Mix</strong></td>
<td>✤ Product and services – how your product/services meet the needs and expectations of your target markets</td>
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<td>✤ Packaging – how you package your product to meet the expectations of your consumers</td>
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<td>✤ Price – how you price your product to be both competitive and profitable</td>
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<td>✤ Place – how you distribute your product and services</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ Promotion – how you convey your messages to your customers</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Action Plan</strong></td>
<td>✤ Describe your key strategies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ List the actions you need to undertake to fulfil the strategies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ Decide how you will measure your results and level of success</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ Set realistic timeframes for achieving your outcomes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ Set a budget for each action so you can keep control of expenditure</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monitoring and Review</strong></td>
<td>✤ Evaluate activities, measures and results</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✤ Review and revise plans</td>
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Below are some simple tips that will help you keep your plan real and relevant:

1. **BE REALISTIC**
   Consider what you can achieve in a one to two-year period and what resources you need and can commit to bring your plans to life. Resources include finances, time, energy and staff.

2. **KEEP IT SIMPLE**
   Be concise. Your plan should be short, easy to follow, and to the point.

3. **PRIORITISE**
   Do the most important things first.

4. **COVER YOUR BASES**
   Set goals so you cover improvements to all key areas of the business. One goal for each part of the marketing mix might be a good way to start.

5. **INCLUDE QUICK WINS**
   Set your goals so you achieve some quick wins as well as mid and longer-term results.

The plan in detail

So far we’ve covered the concepts of a marketing plan from a high-level perspective. Now we’ll go through each stage and explain in more detail the terms and their meanings, and how to apply your knowledge to create a plan that’s relevant to your everyday operations.
Business Profile

This section is the preamble to your planning. It sets the parameters for your action plan.

**Describe your business** – what you do, the services, products and experiences you offer, and how your product or service is different.

Keep it brief and to the point. A few sentences should do it. This will be followed by your mission or vision Statement and a list of goals and competitive advantages.

**A vision statement** is a brief affirmation of not usually more than 10 words which briefly outlines your future plans based on the goals and aspirations of your business, e.g. ‘Scene Xtreme Tours is the number one tour experience in Queensland’.

**A mission statement** explains how you are going to achieve your vision statement, e.g. Scene Xtreme Tours will deliver the highest level of customer service and provide new experiences and product packages for our customers.

You can use this statement to guide what activities you take on by asking ‘will this activity help SceneXtreme Tours to become the number one tour experience in Queensland?’ If the answer is no, you know not to do it and to spend your resources on other activities that will help you to achieve your vision.

Once you have a clear mission statement of where you’re taking the business, you can develop some goals to help you get there.

**Goals** should focus on improving your marketing advantage across all key aspects of the business. A helpful way to start might be to look at the 5Ps and develop one goal for each P. The goals underpin the action plan. Later in the plan you will develop strategies, activities, measures and allocate a budget to achieve each goal.

The following are example goals for SceneXtreme Tours:

- **Product/Service Goal**
  Improve customer satisfaction through ongoing staff service training.

- **Packaging Goal**
  Develop a new package by 30 June, to include complementary products such as accommodation and transfers.

- **Price Goal**
  Offer a special package deal during the Christmas school holidays that is both attractive to our target market and profitable to the business.

- **Place Goal (distribution)**
  By the 30th of June, increase direct online bookings by 10%.

- **Promotion Goal**
  Promote the new package via a social media marketing campaign.
Competitive advantage is another useful factor in defining your business. It describes your point of difference; what makes you unique or gives you the market edge over your competitors.

In order to know your competitive advantage, you must first look at how your competitors operate and identify points of distinction. After all, that is what your potential customers do.

Customers look at competitive advantage when they compare products to buy. Therefore, it’s vital to emphasise these qualities of difference in every aspect of your marketing strategy. Examples of competitive advantage include, but are not limited to, offering:

• superior or unique product, facilities and/or services
• price or package advantages
• convenience or accessibility
• superior safety or manufacturing standards

Your competitive advantage is usually listed under ‘Strengths’ in your SWOT Analysis or alternatively, what you see as good ideas for development under Opportunities. We deal with the SWOT Analysis next.

Situation Analysis (SWOT)

This section provides the context for your marketing decision making and covers the process of identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT).

As a business, you connect to the world in a number of ways. You are both a buyer and seller. You help to create the social and economic fabric within your community, and are often at the forefront of change.

Understanding the internal and external environment and doing a SWOT analysis of your business can strongly assist your marketing strategy. The most common way to undertake a situation analysis is to brainstorm ideas with a group of people directly involved with the business to identify the following:

External conditions – are those factors over which you have no control, but they impact on your operations. These include the economy, pandemic outbreaks, legal and political issues, market trends and changes, competition, manufacturing, and transport limitations.

Internal conditions – summarise your business environment and resources. They are factors that can be controlled through effective management. Depending on your business, you may have specific areas to consider. However, in broad terms, you might look at the financial status of the business and its resources, staff resources, training and development, premises, equipment, maintenance, suppliers, and legal and other binding agreements.

These quick and highline environmental scans can give you an idea of how well positioned you are to meet commercial and environmental challenges and take up new opportunities that offer growth.

The SWOT gives you a snapshot of the business. It’s like a performance report card on what works, what needs improvement, how the business can expand, and what issues it is likely to confront.

Each factor is captured under at least one of the four categories. Sometimes a factor may be applicable to more than one category and that is fine, as long as you account for it in your planning.

The trick is to focus on the major influences that have the most potential to affect the business, not to get caught up in the small stuff. Once again, jot down ideas as they come to you. The SWOT can easily be edited once you start planning.
The following example is indicative of how a business like Scene Xtreme Tours would develop its SWOT Analysis and use the matrix for future development.

**SWOT Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths (are to be built upon)</th>
<th>Weaknesses (are to be overcome)</th>
<th>Opportunities (are to be taken advantage of)</th>
<th>Threats (need to be minimised)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small tight-knit and hardworking team of professional staff who treat the business like it's their own</td>
<td>Limited opportunity for staff training and development</td>
<td>Meet regularly with staff to discuss opportunities. Implement a reward and recognition program.</td>
<td>Staff turnover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only business of its type in the region</td>
<td>Being the only tour of its type, the business is very busy and has little time for business planning and reflection on where to improve</td>
<td>Lock in a regular time each year to discuss business planning. Organise a customer survey to obtain feedback from customers.</td>
<td>Possibility of a similar product starting up in the region.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research**

Reliable research is an invaluable decision-making tool. When used properly, market research can strongly guide you in making better choices and informed decisions on how to develop or refine your product, packaging, price, place and/or promotion. This will save time, money and effort.

Below are the key research areas you will need to cover off in your marketing plan. By having this information, you will be in a much stronger position to make sound decisions on how to effectively reach your target markets and gain the most from each marketing activity.

1. **Competitors**
   - products of a similar type to yours, both within and outside your region
   - other product and services that complement your business
   - gaps and niche market opportunities

2. **Markets**
   - consumer and travel trends
   - quarterly and annual results on visitor numbers, length of stay and expenditure
   - market fluctuations and growth
   - emerging markets
   - technological developments

3. **Internal**
   - what benefits your business offers customers
   - what skills you need and what skills you look for in staff
   - whether your business is in the right location
   - if your business can be serviced locally
   - who the best suppliers are to offer value for money

4. **Consumers**
   - who your customers are
   - why they visit your region
   - what experiences they look for
   - what expectations they have
   - how much they will pay for products and services
Because the market is a fluid environment, it’s important to regularly ask and seek the answers to these and other related questions. This way you can read the shifts and respond accordingly.

A word of caution: research is not a perfect science. There can be differences in findings, depending on the methods used to gather and interpret the data.

**Competitor research**

As a commercial enterprise, your business will always have competitors. Knowing the competition and how they operate is just as important as knowing your customers.

Research your competitors by:

- studying where and how they advertise and promote their businesses
- visiting their product and using their services
- regularly checking their websites and subscribing to their mailing lists
- monitoring their policies, practices and developments
- checking competitors’ satisfaction rating on TripAdvisor

This information can help you develop the competitive edge in your product quality and service delivery over other players in the marketplace.

**Market research**

Even though your business may be far from a capital city, the tourism industry operates in the global economy and is susceptible to rapid change.

Consumers are more information savvy and more discerning in their choices than ever before. Market research enables you to follow and respond to fluctuations and changes in consumer trends and market conditions. Keep in touch with consumer and market trends through:

- subscribing to trade journals and industry newsletters
- membership of your RTO and industry bodies
- attending industry seminars, conferences and market briefings
- subscribing to e-Newsletters from Tourism and Events Queensland and Tourism Australia
- searching the internet and reading newspapers and magazines for relevant information.

Tourism research is undertaken by a number of organisations that offer excellent advice and resources including:

- [Tourism and Events Queensland](teq.queensland.com/research-and-Insights)
- [Australian Bureau of Statistics](abs.gov.au)
- [Tourism Australia](tourism.australia.com/statistics.aspx)
- [Tourism Research Australia](tra.gov.au)

DestinationQ is a partnership between the Queensland Government and the tourism industry to invest, excel and grow Queensland’s visitor economy. The Destination Success 20-year plan outlines the strategic direction of the Queensland tourism industry. Download the plan at destq.com.au
Regional research
It is important to work closely with your RTOs and look for opportunities to align your business with the destination brand. RTOs are often involved in a number of activities throughout the year, many of which are open to industry members. Operators are encouraged to participate in domestic marketing and sales promotion activities.

Look at opportunities to leverage your region’s hero experiences. In conjunction with industry stakeholders, destination ‘hero experiences’ have been identified across Queensland. Hero experiences are those world-class or iconic experiences that provide a destination with a real competitive edge over other destinations and focus on what is truly memorable about a destination.

For more information refer to the Experience Development section of this guide.

Internal research
It’s critical to remain objective about how your business stacks up against the competition, market conditions and consumer expectations. The fact is, no matter how good you are, you can always be better.

These days everyone talks about sustainability. A sustainable business does its planning based on economic, social and environmental accountabilities and outcomes. If that sounds complex, it is.

A business demands close attention. Don’t be afraid to take a long hard look at how you are going. Ask the tough questions and make the tough decisions. By constantly assessing your business positioning you can quickly introduce sustainable measures. Some ways to measure your business performance are through:

- strong and ongoing planning and implementation
- adoption of industry standards and high standards in your own policies and practices
- membership to industry accreditation programs and benchmarking
- training and development

All feedback is positive because it creates an opportunity to learn and develop. No one will be more honest with you about your business than your customers.
Customer research
Most operators do customer research. Customer feedback is the most direct way to learn how your product and services are meeting the needs and expectations of your customers. It also helps you to better understand and define who your customers are, how you can best target them, and how you can improve your business and overall satisfaction rating.

There are several ways to collect information about your customer or guest and gain insights into their preferences. Quick-response surveys such as room cards, guest books, courtesy calls, follow-up emails and online feedback forms are perhaps the most convenient. The important thing about collecting customer feedback is to correctly interpret the data and use it to its full advantage.

Whatever research you do, see it as an opportunity to build the relationship between you and your customers. Your attitude towards customer feedback is a good test of how you value your customers, your business and your potential for growth.

Respecting their advice and following up with action is the best way to enhance your operations on a daily basis and build strong connections with your consumer markets. When receiving feedback make sure you:

- thank your customers for their feedback
- respond professionally to all comments, whether positive or negative
- promote the positives that come out of the research
- tackle negative feedback as it arises, including feedback on social media
- include it as an item in your business plan if you can’t immediately deal with an issue
- ask your customers if they would like to join your mailing list, Facebook, etc
- tell your customers about improvements through your newsletters, websites and other promotional materials
- attract their participation with promotional incentives that your customers will value

Market Identification
Once you have researched your markets, you can use the information to target markets that offer you the best opportunity for business.

Generally, there are two types of research used to identify and define market segments. A segment is a group of customers with similar attitudes, behaviours and desires. The research types are demographic research and psychographic research.

Demographics look at age, gender, occupation, income, family size and structure, education, place of residence, socio-economic groupings and lifestyles.

Psychographics look at needs and wants, feelings and motivations – what consumers seek, what their holiday choices say about them, how they want to be seen, how they want to feel, what they can do and what is most important to them.

Knowing how to directly engage with your consumers based on a clear understanding of their needs, wants and expectations will benefit every aspect of your business.
Marketing Mix

We’ve talked briefly about the 5Ps. Now it’s time to explore them further.

Product

Product is the physical part of your business, including your services. When looking at developing your product and product improvement you will need to consider:

- **Your product** – always think about your customers’ points of view and what the benefits are from their perspective
- **Your brand** – what your product stands for and how you present your business to create an emotional connection with your customers through words and images
- **Operational effectiveness** – access, convenience, risk management, back-up suppliers and systems
- **Quality** – value for money, meeting customer and industry standards, and product distinctiveness
- **Safety** – staff, customer and environmental safety policies and procedures
- **Packaging** – how you present your product, and who you partner and market with as well as distribute through
- **Support** – customer service
- **Warranty** – living up to your promises
- **Accessories and services** – value adding to your product and services with added extras

This list is indicative only and many of the topics related to product are covered in greater detail in other sections of the guide.

Product/business life cycle

You may need to use different marketing techniques depending on the stage your business has reached. The four stages referred to as the ‘Marketing Bell Curve’ include:

1. **INTRODUCTION** sales are slow and profits are absorbed into marketing and development
2. **GROWTH** the product gains marketplace acceptance, profitability increases
3. **Maturity** sales and profitability stabilise, marketing is required to attract new or repeat business
4. **DECLINE** sales decline and profits drop, marketing is needed to refresh the product

The good thing about the Marketing Bell Curve is that it reminds you not to get stuck doing the same old things year in and year out just because they worked at one stage. Mix things up, explore new ideas and methods of marketing. Markets and consumer trends are changing all the time and you need to be ahead of the game or at least in the game to maximise your business opportunities and profits.
Packaging

Packaging is a great way to extend your product and enhance the overall visitor experience. This can lead to a boost in sales, as you create more attractive packages that include special deals and offers.

For example, an accommodation operator might include daily breakfast in a package deal. It’s about adding value to your product offering and in simple ways, creating value for consumers without a major cost to your business. Packages are a useful marketing device to use during shoulder periods and for special occasions, such as Valentine’s Day.

Alternatively, you can work with other tourism and hospitality operators to bundle products and services into attractive packages that appeal to your mutual market interests. A business like SceneXtreme might package its breakfast hot air balloon tour with a lunch and afternoon tour offered at a local winery.

Packaging is a simple way to add value to your product, tailor your marketing to meet the needs of your target markets, leverage off other businesses that carry strong market presence, and create profit and marketability.

The kinds of considerations you need to give to packaging are:
- whether to package alone or team up with suitable packaging partners
- what products and services would complement your business
- what types of packages would appeal to your target markets, i.e. price discounts, extended stay, added extras

Pricing

Pricing your product can be complex. No matter which markets you target, they all want value for money. In simple terms, pricing is all about putting a value on your product and packages while keeping them competitive with your opposition and correctly positioning you in the marketplace.

Striking the balance between delivering good-quality and value-for-money product and services and achieving profitability is a delicate balancing act. Your marketing plan needs to include a price strategy so you don’t inadvertently undermine your profit potential, or create problems such as sparking a price war with your competition. This is referred to as maintaining price parity.

The strategy should be aimed towards building your profit through:
- having the right product mix – some products and services offer better returns than others
- meeting consumer/market expectations – customers are comfortable with the price and are happy to pay it
- matching, in relative terms, competitor price structures – compete on a value-for-money basis
- managing the pricing mix – accounting for volume discounts, wholesale pricing, commissions, cash and early payment deals, seasonal pricing and bundling or package pricing
- identifying where your business can tolerate price flexibility
**Place**

Place is the where and how you distribute your product so it reaches your customer. Distribution plays a huge part in the tourism industry. Getting your product and services to your customers is the primary goal of any business and there are critical decisions to be made about how you will take your product to market.

You need to think about how your target customers will find out about your business whether it is through direct means such as walk-ins or phone sales, or via the internet, a tour desk, brochure or travel agent. Your target markets may have particular preferences for how they book and/or buy travel and tourism products, and you need to know what these are as well.

In almost all cases, your distribution partners and agents will take a commission of the sales. Pricing your product includes factoring in the cost of the distribution so everyone in the distribution chain makes a profit, including you.

Here are some ideas to consider and questions to ask in relation to how you manage your distribution network:

- What distribution channels are available to you?
- Do they reach your target markets?
- How do you achieve market coverage and include a mix of inclusive, selective, or exclusive distribution opportunities?
- How do you best manage your distribution inventory and variations in your product and service offerings?

**Promotion**

The big decisions about promoting your product are what, when, where, how and how much? There are many different ways to communicate with your target consumers.

The challenge is to maximise your advertising and promotional spend by investing in the mediums your consumers are most likely to tap into.

Your research should include questions about how your current customers heard about you and also the media habits of your target markets. This information will be helpful when considering where to commit budget to gain consumer reach and attraction.

Your marketing and communication campaign decisions can be broken down to include:

**Advertising**
- brochures, flyers
- television, radio, outdoor, magazine and transit
- digital
- websites
- social media networking sites such as – Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, travel/TripAdvisor sites and online blogs
- search optimisation and online advertising

**Public Relations and Publicity**
- advertising through trade partners
- co-operative marketing
- familiarisations
- media releases
- PR kits

**Personal Selling**
- trade shows
- consumer shows
- sales calls, missions and promotions
- staff training

**Sales Promotions**
- sales incentives
- competitions

**Direct Marketing**
- telephone sales and marketing
- SMS marketing
- mail outs
- email and eNewsletters

Be aware that you will need to plan your promotional activity well in advance. When considering timing, you’ll need to think about when your customers are likely to be most receptive to your advertising messages and motivated to book. Marketing materials, print advertising and radio and television commercials can take quite a bit of time to develop and produce. You need to factor that time into your action plan to meet your desired production deadlines.

Packaging, price, place and promotion are explained in greater detail in the **Domestic Marketing** section of this guide.
**Action Plan**

An action plan should state your strategy, actions, timeframes, measures, person responsible, budget and status for each goal. The example below shows how you might go about developing your action plan.

**Goal:** Implement new IT systems and staff training to improve service delivery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Timeframes</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Enhance web-based booking operations | Identify and install suitable web-based booking and e-ticketing software | 01/09/xx   | • Reduction in time spent taking phone bookings  
• Increased efficiency and staff productivity  
• 24hr booking capability  
• Increased customer satisfaction  
• Immediate online booking confirmation  
• e-ticketing | Owner-Bob | $20,000 | Stage 1 currently underway. Stage two to be completed in xxx |
| Ongoing staff training           | Roster staff for training purposes                        | 20/08/xx   | All staff trained in bookings and e-ticketing procedures                 | HR Manager - Janet | $0     | 15 staff have completed training  
x staff to complete the program in xx |
Monitoring & Review

It’s common sense to monitor how you are performing in the rollout of your plan. You need to know if your strategies and actions are working, if you are gaining the expected results, and if not, make the necessary marketing changes.

As mentioned earlier, customer feedback can alert you to areas where you can improve or develop your product. Some of these things can be done quickly, others will take time.

Nevertheless, the number one way to know if your plan is working for you is to have strong measures in place. Measuring your results will streamline your decision-making, and save you time and money.

Tracking the impact of your marketing spend is very important. It will assist with deciding which activities or campaigns to continue with in the future. Consider the following:

- Asking your customers how they found out about your product when they contact you to make an enquiry or booking, and keep a record
- Establishing a special page on your website for special deals to allow you to track the response from advertising
- Setting up Google Analytics to track and monitor visits to your website
- Offering a special tour code or package deal which is only promoted through your advertising
- Requesting regular reports from your online booking system and your distribution partners
- Tracking your effectiveness on social media, your email newsletters, and your banner or pay-per-click (PPC) advertising campaigns through reporting
- Knowing that access to and participation in some tourism, business and grant programs is reliant on having solid measuring practices in place
Experience Development
Delivering world-class experiences

Takeaways

- Who is the Experience Seeker?

- What are destination ‘Hero Experiences’?

- How to support and strengthen destination hero experiences through the development of your own business’ ‘Signature Experiences’

- How to go beyond mere customer service and deliver genuine G.U.E.S.T.™ hospitality
Introduction

All businesses have a role to play in delivering the visitor ‘experience’ whether they are tour operators, accommodation and hospitality establishments, retail businesses, tourism or discovery centres, tour attractions, local councils, state or federal government agencies, visitor information centres, environmental groups or protected area managers.

What persuades a particular visitor to holiday in a specific destination is their ability to engage in unforgettable and inspiring experiences that touch them in an emotional way and connect them with special places, people and cultures.

Experiential travel is about widening horizons for both the tourism operator and the tourist. It involves taking a basic product or service and transforming it into a compelling and engaging experience.

In an era where global travel is readily available, destinations can no longer compete on a simple product-versus-price basis. Experience development is a creative opportunity that speaks to both first-time guests and repeat visitors but does not necessarily need to be elaborate or costly. It’s about delivering memorable moments.
What is an ‘experience?’

An ‘experience’ is the emotional feeling or personal achievement your visitor gains from a combination of activities, locations and personal interactions in which they participate when they visit your destination. Think unique, unexpected and exotic things that your guests cannot do anywhere else in the world, or that you can do better than anyone else. It’s about delivering the kinds of surprises they will post on Facebook or tweet about immediately and still be talking about at parties and social gatherings for months or even years later.

Who is the Experience Seeker?

The Experience Seeker is an experiential traveller who wants to venture beyond the beaten tourist path and dive deeper into authentic local experiences, connecting with people from other cultures in ways that enrich their lives and create lasting memories. They are travellers looking for ‘experiences’ that connect them with the essence of a place and its people. For them, simply seeing the sights is no longer enough.

Key aspirations of the ‘Experience Seeker’

Research has shown that the ‘Experience Seeker’ has a number of key aspirations to satisfy their travel experience, these include:

- Authentic personal experiences
- Social interactions, including meeting and engaging with the locals
- Experiencing something different from their normal day-to-day life
- Understanding and learning about different lifestyles and cultures
- Participating in the local lifestyle and experiencing it, rather than observing it
- Challenging themselves – physically, emotionally and/or mentally
- Visiting authentic destinations that are not necessarily part of the usual tourist route
- Exposure to unique and compelling experiences, in particular, nature-oriented experiences (which account for nearly half of the Experience Seeker market segment)

“It’s about making your own memories, getting off the touristy track”

TEQ Consumer Focus Groups – Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane (July 2014)
How do you move from product to experiences?

To be market leaders, tourism operators need to move from just selling a tourism product (e.g. reef tours) to delivering a genuine tourism experience (e.g. marine life encounter). This can only be achieved through having a great commodity (e.g. the Great Barrier Reef) combined with exceptional products and service.

A truly world-class experience combines these essential foundation steps and adds that unique touch that will deliver on the promise our target markets are seeking (e.g. to deliver life-changing moments through the world’s best reef experience).

The tourism product is what the customer buys, the tourism experience is what they remember.

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How can this impact your bottom line?

Ten years of economic research reveals that true experiential tourism is not only a real point-of-difference in a crowded market place, it is also a product for which an Experience Seeker is prepared to pay a premium.

Experiences can be low-cost because they do not necessarily involve large capital investment or infrastructure upgrades.

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THE EXPERIENCES SPECTRUM

This diagram illustrates the process of moving from offering individual commodities, products and services to delivering compelling and engaging experiences.

Experiences = Greater Economic Value

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Source: Nancy Arsenault, Celes Davar and Todd Lucier (2011)
Hero Experiences

Hero Experiences are the ‘essence’ of a destination and are those:

- world-class iconic experiences that provide a destination with a real competitive advantage over other destinations
- experiences that focus on what is truly unique or memorable or engaging about a destination
- experiences which meet the needs of our target markets

Why Hero Experiences?

Focussing on a destination’s hero experiences provides an opportunity to:

- respond to the demands of our domestic and international visitors
- gain a competitive advantage over other destinations
- focus the efforts of tourism stakeholders and create partnerships

“Living the brand is about delivering a distinctive or unique type of service or experience that enhances the guest’s destination experience to the point where it is truly pleasurable and memorable,”

Destination Hero Experiences

In conjunction with destination stakeholders, destination ‘Hero Experiences’ have been identified for each of Queensland’s 13 destinations.

To download the Destination Hero Experience Factsheets visit: 
teq.queensland.com/heroexperiences
Tips for supporting and strengthening your destination’s Hero Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Accommodation Providers</strong></th>
<th><strong>Visitor Information Centres</strong></th>
<th><strong>Tour Operators</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Personal one-on-one recommendations</td>
<td>• Train and educate staff and volunteers on your destination and its hero experiences</td>
<td>• Plan tour itineraries around hero experiences in your region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Theme or decorate foyer or meeting rooms with your destination’s hero experiences</td>
<td>• Assist visitors with locating hero experiences</td>
<td>• Value add by joining forces with a like-minded tourism business to deliver destination hero experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Team meetings to discuss what’s new in the region</td>
<td>• Share local experiences such as weekend activities, dining options and community events that highlight and celebrate your destination hero experiences</td>
<td>• Cross promote other tourism businesses in the region on your website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ask a tour operator or local attraction to present to staff on recent innovations</td>
<td>• Package experiences with other operators around the “heroes” in your region</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Package experiences with other operators around the “heroes” in your region</td>
<td>• Think simple and authentic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Signature Experiences**

**What is a ‘Signature Experience’?**

Your written signature is unique, confirms your identity and makes your promise legally binding. It is similar for your ‘signature experience’. This defines what is unique and different about your product, something you do especially well, distinguishes you from other products, and makes you stand out in people’s minds. It is consistent with your brand and the image you want to project, and it encompasses your commitment and promise to your guests.

“Be different or be dead. Memorable experiences are about creating value. Value is the defining factor. When there is no difference people buy on price alone. You can only compete on price for so long, but you can compete on value forever,”

*The Experience Economy*
EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT | DELIVERING WORLD-CLASS EXPERIENCES

The following 10 tips were used to define Queensland’s destination hero experiences and they can also assist you in identifying your individual product signature experience.

1. **Only in your destination**
   - Nowhere else on earth
   - No one does it better
   - If travellers want to have this experience, your destination is the best place in the world for it
   - This experience makes your destination truly unique, puts Queensland on a global stage and attract visitors on its own merits
   - Contributing factors could include a unique setting, unique wildlife, local customs or food

2. **An inspirational story**
   Does the experience:
   - Feature an inspirational story or theme?
   - Tell the story of local characters, customs and culture, or flora and fauna?
   - Provide the visitor with an opportunity to interact with and learn about your destination?

3. **The customer in the ‘lead role’**
   - Would travellers from all over the globe want to come to your destination to be part of this experience?
   - Is it a ‘must-do’ draw card that will excite and attract your target audience?
   - Will the experience exceed your customers’ expectations?

4. **Touch, smell, taste, sight, sound**
   Is the experience:
   - Multisensory and provokes emotion?
   - Interactive with hands-on elements?

5. **A ‘backstage pass’**
   Does the experience:
   - Provide a special insight into how your operation ticks?
   - Make your visitors feel truly special?
   - Give visitors a feeling of exclusivity?
   - Deliver a once-in-a-lifetime feel, bragging rights?

6. **Feel like a local**
   - Does the experience make your visitors feel like they are part of your local way of life?
   - Do you make your visitors feel really welcome, like an old friend and not just like another tourist?

7. **Authentic and genuine**
   - The experience is real, does not have a staged mass-market feel and is not commercialised or superficial

8. **Your destination brand and brand Queensland**
   Is the experience an embodiment of your destination brand?
   Does your experience deliver on any of the following brand Queensland themes:
   - Adventure?
   - Natural Encounters?
   - Island and beaches?
   - Queensland lifestyle?

9. **Surprise**
   - Does the experience feature an element of surprise and create the unexpected?

10. **Create lasting memories**
    Ultimately, does the experience:
    - Engage visitors emotionally, adding meaning to their personal lives?
    - Allow visitors to take home lasting memories that they will share with families and friends?
Steps for delivering your own ‘signature experiences’

1. Focus on your key markets, who they are and what experiences they want
2. Examine what experiences fit with your business, what your business can offer, and how you can involve the community and other partners
3. Plan your experience/s around how guests can be involved, how you can provide a wow factor and how to link with your destination hero experiences
4. Train staff and business partners on your signature experience/s so they can deliver on the experience promise and guest expectations
5. Think about how you will market to potential consumers and your main communication with them to maximize the attraction and appeal of your signature experience/s
6. Deliver and evaluate needs and modify the experience/s if necessary

Staffing and front office

- Ensure staff are aware of the signature experience/s your business is aiming to deliver through integrating key messages into orientation programs
- Provide guest service training that incorporates open-ended questions of guests (e.g. what are you planning on doing while you are here?) with the aim of promoting your destination hero experiences
- Have copies of regional guides and event calendars at reception to give to customers
- Incorporate key elements of your signature experience/s into your business’ answering machine message
- Encourage your staff to attend community business networking events to educate people about your signature experience/s, support the promotion of your destination hero experiences, to keep up-to-date on current events and develop community contacts

A picture says a thousand words

Use great images for your brochure, website, media kits and other promotional materials. A consistent approach is required and by using images that highlight your destination hero as a guide, it will help to promote and communicate your business’ signature experience/s.

Tourism and Events Queensland has an extensive [image gallery available for promotional use by tourism businesses.]

Capture your signature and hero experiences in words

When writing copy for brochures, websites, media kits and other promotional materials, use language which sells your signature experience/s and associated destination hero experiences.

Develop a media release when you have something new to announce and incorporate your signature experience/s and destination hero experiences into this messaging. Distribute to local media, your Regional Tourism Organisation and Tourism and Events Queensland.

Host a lunch with local media or stage a media familiarisation to establish relationships with media.

Align your signature experience/s with your destination’s hero experiences to enable you to answer a common journalist question: “So, what’s great about your destination?”

More information can be found in the Media and Publicity section of this guide.
Tourism experiences – worksheets

Tourism and Events Queensland, in partnership with Griffith University, has created a series of videos and supporting worksheets to assist tourism operators to respond to increasing visitor demand for exciting, engaging, and authentic experiences. They are designed to assist tourism operators who want to rejuvenate or develop a ‘WOW’ experience that is memorable, and delights and surprises the guest. These resources will explore how to bring your experience to life through story making and experiential marketing.

**Worksheet 1 – Inspiring experiential travel in Queensland**
Evolve and revolutionise. Look to provide awe-inspiring, positive word-of-mouth, holiday-of-a-lifetime experiences.

**Worksheet 2 – Creating a memorable experience**
What experience do you offer? What are your region’s hero experiences? How can you leverage off these and what hidden gems could you share?

**Worksheet 3 – Knowing your guests and what they want**
Understand your current guests, identify who is your ideal customer, and adapt to changing markets.

**Worksheet 4 – Bringing your experiences to life**
What are you passionate about in your destination? What can you share? How can you share local history of the region? How can you weave your story into the product delivery? How can you surprise and delight your customers?

**Worksheet 5 – Delivering on the promise**
What is your brand promise and how does the experience you offer connect to it? What is your destination brand promise and how does the experience you offer connect to it? Do your staff live the brand and what can you do to improve?

To download the Tourism Experiences Factsheets and the video series visit: [teq.queensland.com/experiencedevelopment](http://teq.queensland.com/experiencedevelopment)
Operator insight

“We are a helicopter ride and have services that go from Cairns to a number of locations on the Great Barrier Reef. After working with TEQ we realised that we wanted to take it from being just a ride to an experience, so 18 months ago we looked at our facilities where the helipad is based and from the moment you walk in the door the experience begins. You’ve got imagery on the walls, videos playing and our front office staff are seated in approachable low desks.

From the minute visitors walk in they are brought into the experience. There is always something going on so you can always hear or see something is happening. Once the briefing is out of the way we tell them about the type of helicopter on which they will be flying and also about the pilot.

“We partner with other companies out on the Great Barrier Reef and our experience is part of the entire experience. We have a crew member out on the platform to ensure a seamless transition to the next experience.

“On board the pilots are trained quite rigorously in the region and not just about Cairns and the Great Barrier Reef but the Daintree and the unique environment in which they operate. For our Chinese visitors we have an inflight Chinese commentary.

“The impact of these changes has been very positive. We get absolutely rave reviews. We had someone recently who said the pilot made the experience.

“Sure, we have helicopters and the Great Barrier Reef but it is not always a beautiful day, the sun is not always shining and we don’t always get sea turtles so having your people in the air and on the ground trained, they know how to make sure the visitor has a great experience. We have a wet season and we definitely have our challenges.

“We recently had a client who couldn’t hear the inflight commentary. I downloaded the USB onto a company video and she received a whole lot more information than she would have and was happy. Things can go wrong, but it depends on how you go about it. We always have to keep in mind that people are here for an experience.”

Harriet Ganfield, Head of Tourism Sales, GBR Helicopters, Cairns

Hot tips

- Surprise and delight customers. A small surprise can go a long way
- Exceed guest expectations with outstanding customer service and by creating a positive customer service culture within your workplace
- Work with your local community
- Make your guests feel like VIPs. Give them a backstage pass to your business and destination
- Encourage your guests to rave about their quality experience through various social media platforms
- Stand out from the crowd with something which makes your product unique
One experience does not make a destination!

Your experience is usually one of many in a destination and no matter how good you are, the visitor’s overall experience is generally determined by the sum of all their experiences in your destination.

That is why it is important that tourism businesses and other service operators in a destination work together as much as possible to provide not only practical and functional links to one another’s products but also emotional connections between their experiences so as to provide visitors with a seamless and memorable destination experience.

Tour operators and businesses who adopt this approach are far more likely to generate visitor recommendations, attract new customers and achieve repeat visitation than those who wish to ‘stand alone’.

In addition, by working this way, operators are in a better position to bundle and package their offerings and gain a competitive advantage by participating in cooperative newspaper and television marketing campaigns, leveraging off each other’s social media platforms and together transforming a destination into one of many experiences worth visiting.

Even if you do not experience the direct benefits on the first visit, chances are you will likely be top-of-mind for their return and your destination will be viewed, spoken about, and promoted as vibrant, creative and engaging.

More information on packaging and bundling can be found in the Domestic Marketing section.

“Destinations and tourism operators need to focus on how they can create a strong competitive position that will distinguish themselves from competitors in a way that is meaningful to their guests.”

From customer service to G.U.E.S.T.™ hospitality

The customer is always right. Never has a more truer word been spoken. In tourism, the customer is king and should be treated like one. These are the people who can make or break your business.

A key element of any visitor experience is the service quality – how well customers get what they want, when they want it and in the best possible way. However, to provide a truly engaging and memorable visitor experience tourism operators need to deliver more than just great customer service, they need to provide genuine ‘hospitality’ because service is what you do whereas hospitality is how you make someone feel. It’s about making a real emotional connection.

To help facilitate this transition from mere customer service to authentic hospitality, Duane Knapp, an expert brand strategist, contends that we need to see our visitors and customers as ‘guests’ because a visitor is just someone who is passing through and a customer is someone we are having a transaction with, but a guest is someone who is invited and more highly valued and afforded special treatment.

As outlined in the following, Knapp has developed a G.U.E.S.T.™ philosophy to guide service providers to go beyond customer service and provide one-of-a-kind hospitality:

**G.U.E.S.T.™ hospitality**

**Greeting** – The initial greeting is always designed to communicate. ‘We’re glad you’re here.’

**Understanding** – Listen, learn and understand your guests, their needs and their feelings. ‘We always listen for the way our guests feel.’

**Efficiency** – Efficiently handle requests and concerns. Fast and easy is always the answer. ‘We respect your time, we know it’s valuable.’

**Special Treatment** – There is always something you can do to make guests feel special. Remember, ‘We have the power to provide a pleasant surprise for our guests’

**Thankfulness** – Thank each and every guest for his or her patronage. ‘We don’t take your business for granted, we want you to be a friend and we understand the lifetime value of your relationship.’
One of a kind ... from service to HOSPITALITY

Service is how well something is done technically!
HOSPITALITY is how good something feels emotionally...
...the art of greeting guests with graciousness and appreciation

Ten tips to further delight your guests

- Greet every guest with a smile and a hello
- If you cannot provide an advertised service for some reason, offer an alternative
- Deploy basic manners such as please and thank you
- Treat your guests how you would wish to be treated
- If you make an obvious mistake, admit it, apologise and offer to rectify it
- Surprise your guests with a small gift or gesture
- Follow up when your guests leave with a thank you email, letter or phone call
- Be friendly but not overly familiar
- Remember your guests’ names and special anniversaries or events
- Offer assistance with other activities, outlets and operators in your destination
Branding
Brand development to build business

Takeaways
- Understand more about your customers’ needs and how you can match them
- Effectively differentiate your product and position it in the marketplace
- Brand your product so your customers know and trust what you stand for and deliver
- Develop enduring relationships between your product and your customers
- Manage your brand from a holistic point of view
Introduction

When people search on the internet, or look through dozens of brochures looking for that ‘perfect holiday experience’, they are actually looking to make a connection with your brand.

We don’t mean your name or logo – it’s more than that. They are looking for the emotional triggers that jump out of the page and hit them straight in the eye – the look, feel, and promise of an experience that connects your product with their holiday dreams and desires. It’s an interactive, intuitive and aspirational process. It’s the ‘I want to be there’ factor.

To brand your business identity is to create impressions about your product in the minds of consumers and then transform those ideas into authentic experiences. It’s a powerful tool when done well.

In order to get it right, you must firstly know what you stand for – your product vision, values, personality and guarantees. You must also know your customers and which target markets are most likely to seek those values and qualities from you. Finally, use every available means to develop the relationship between the two through your brand messaging.

You have no doubt heard the phrases ‘a brand you can trust’ or ‘a name you can depend on’. That trust is built on strong brand messaging which consistently meets consumer expectations.

The fulfilment of the brand will come easily if you understand one crucial principle – everything you do counts. Every aspect of your business carries your brand messaging, or to put it more accurately, your brand messaging affects every aspect of your business.

Focus on your product strengths to tell your story. Take the unique qualities that set you apart from other similar products and weave them into your branding elements – the look, feel and experience.

Below we’ve outlined a framework you can use to develop a strong and powerful brand for your business.
## Brand Framework

### Step 1. Create a brand blueprint

Spend time mapping out what your brand represents. If you research brand messaging, you’ll find there are many methods such as ‘brand blueprints’, ‘brand pyramids’ or ‘brand summaries.’ Most approaches generally ask you to consider the elements listed below as a way to help you flesh out what you’re trying to achieve with your brand, your advertising, and the way you do things. Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) manages the Queensland brand and these brand elements are provided as an example for you. Your staff and key partners should be able to offer you some valuable insights as well, so make sure you seek their input.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand element</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>‘Brand Queensland’ example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brand position</strong></td>
<td>What is your promise to the market?</td>
<td>Queensland – Where Australia feels most alive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brand values</strong></td>
<td>What the brand stands for and cannot be compromised on</td>
<td>Pride in Queensland, hospitality, authenticity, creating holiday experiences that delight visitors – ‘The holiday state’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brand personality</strong></td>
<td>The human characteristics of the brand; its style</td>
<td>Warm, friendly, welcoming, outgoing, positive, carefree, cheeky, accepting, non-judgemental, unpretentious and down-to-earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attributes</strong></td>
<td>The characteristics which are important to consumers, usually limited to functional and economic, not psychological or emotional</td>
<td>Queensland has a huge variety of attributes. Some of the key ones are beach, natural attractions, tropical islands, Great Barrier Reef, rainforest, theme parks, natural encounters, dining and shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core benefits</strong></td>
<td>The emotional rewards derived by the user of the brand. How customers feel when buying or experiencing the brand</td>
<td>Connected with loved ones, friends, locals, the place and even with a deeper part of themselves. Relaxation, happiness, energy, rejuvenation. A Queensland holiday lets you be ‘the person you want to be’, even if it’s only for the duration of the holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target audience</strong></td>
<td>Who the brand is targeting for profitable business generation</td>
<td>Domestic holiday makers: Social Fun-seekers, Connectors, Active Explorers. International holiday-makers: Global Experience Seekers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 2. Develop creative elements and guidelines for your brand

Use the above brand blueprint to develop your brand’s creative elements. You may decide to call on the expertise of others to help you develop some of your brand features. Ask around and talk to recommended brand and marketing consultants and graphic design companies in your region. Give them your blueprint as the basis for developing your brand creative elements and guidelines.

Hire the people with whom you have a rapport and who are enthusiastic about being part of your creative team. It’s best to build your brand on the fundamentals of your business. Base the brand on your product, the markets you target, and what they would expect to see, hear and feel about your business. Keep in mind the objective is to develop a single-minded and compelling message.

Be faithful to the process. All the great logos, catchy slogans and pretty pictures in the world will not amount to much if your customer service is lacking or your product is poorly organised and run. In fact, you’ll just be wasting your money.

Step 3. Use your brand messaging in your marketing activity

When developing the creative for your advertising, such as print advertisements or brochures, and merchandise such as pens, caps and coffee cups, make sure the designer understands how the creative elements are to be used so that your brand messaging remains true.

Step 4. Live your brand!

Your brand should permeate all aspects of your business. In the introduction to this section we talked about your brand as being your look, feel and the experience you offer. From your advertising to your front door, your reception, service and culture, everything should represent your brand values and what your brand stands for in order to deliver the promise.

Step 5. Review your brand

Your brand attributes should be based on your product qualities that are likely to endure. That’s not to say you shouldn’t move with the times either. As your product and business grows and times change, your brand blueprint will need to be reviewed. In many cases, a timely refresh of your brand creative can be a vital way of staying in touch with your consumers. The idea is to monitor your brand and service delivery and always keep on the lookout for what’s working in regards to your brand and what’s not.

Hot tips

- Apply and align your brand messaging to all parts of your business including design features such as logos, slogans, signage, stationery, uniforms, fixtures and fittings, piped music, fragrances, images and marketing collateral like websites and brochures.
- Ensure your customer services and service standards, administration, policies and practices reflect the brand values of your product.
- Live your brand! Make sure your staff know about your brand values and personality, and help and encourage them to always live up to the name.
- Develop a one-page brand blueprint, summarising the key points about your brand, e.g. your values, target markets, logo and tag lines. Put it on the office wall as a constant reminder. It’s also a handy document to give to people like designers and new staff to help them understand what your brand is all about.
- Keep track of where your brand is used. If you are updating your brand, remember to contact all of your partners to inform them. It is better to do this than to have old logos/brand content listed on several websites.
Queensland and Australia Brands

Tourism and Events Queensland is responsible for the Queensland Brand and has developed a global brand strategy that will help to take Queensland to the world. As part of the brand, signature Queensland experiences have been identified.

Tourism and Events Queensland has grouped these signature experiences under four themes:

- **Queensland Lifestyle**
- **Natural Encounters**
- **Island & Beaches**
- **Adventure**

These four signature Queensland experiences emphasise and promote the depth of unique and evolving experiences offered in Queensland.

Most Queensland destinations also have their own brand messaging. Make sure you’re across your destination branding as it’s likely to share similarities with your own brand and might help you with mapping out your brand attributes. TEQ has online information on destination brands under each of the Queensland regions or you could ask your Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) or Local Tourism Organisation (LTO).

If you sell your product to international markets you can also talk to Tourism Australia about Brand Australia. The use of Tourism Australia logos is trademarked and there are guidelines around usage. You will need to provide Tourism Australia with examples of how the logos are intended to be used so they can ensure it meets their requirements.
Operator insight

“Your brand is the most valuable asset your business has. It is essential to protect and treat your brand with the upmost respect and integrity. Branding is about what’s in your heart, a reflection of what you value, whereas advertising is about what’s in your pocket. In many ways you brand without intention. To be a ‘brand champion’ you have to live and breathe your brand.

Branding is more than a logo. It begins with the way you answer the phone through to your final feedback form. We communicate our brand using a consistent message. It takes years to build your brand. It can be quickly destroyed by thoughtless actions. All our staff are ‘brand ambassadors’ and responsible for upholding our brand values.

We protect our brand by responding to negative feedback and monitoring our reputation in the marketplace, especially in this age of social networking. We find it’s good to get someone from outside the business to review our brand from time to time because we are often too close to see the key attributes and differences.”

Shane O’Reilly, Managing Director, O’Reilly’s Rainforest Retreat

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**QUICK LINKS**

- Brand Queensland [teq.queensland.com/brandqueensland](http://teq.queensland.com/brandqueensland)
- Brand Australia [tourism.australia.com/aboutus](http://tourism.australia.com/aboutus)
- Tourism and Events Queensland eNewsletters [teq.queensland.com/eNewsletters](http://teq.queensland.com/eNewsletters)
- Queensland Research & Insights [teq.queensland.com/research](http://teq.queensland.com/research)

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**Hot tips**

- Sign up for Tourism and Events Queensland’s eNewsletters
- Attend seminars and workshops to learn more about research and consumer trends
- Collect information from your customers about where they are from and how they found you
- Request customer feedback and use this information to make improvements to your business. This can be collected either through a room card, guest book, email survey or face to face
- Monitor online travel review sites such as TripAdvisor and respond to posts
Target Markets

Domestic target markets
Tourism and Events Queensland undertook research to identify the needs and wants of Australians while on their ideal holiday.

Unlike demographic research that categorises markets based on attributes such as origin, education, professional status and income, this research looks at the emotional and psychological motivations of a person. Consumer trends are telling us people are:

- Searching for ‘meaning’ and enrichment
- Motivated to seek/pioneer new experiences
- Yearning to ‘reconnect’ – a feeling of belonging, being part of the local lifestyle and feeling ‘at home’
- Looking for passionate service – a sense that people care

The research revealed consumers fall into one of the following six categories:

**Active Explorers**
Holidays are about pushing boundaries through challenging themselves via physical activity. They enjoy the company of others, but their focus is on exploring the extremes of their physical environment and themselves. It’s about feeling alive.

**Stylish Travellers**
A holiday is a chance to demonstrate their achievements both to themselves and others. They do this by seeking out unique and exotic experiences and products that will make them feel discerning, stylish and successful.

**Self-Discoverers**
Holidays are about discovery, nourishment and enrichment of self (physically and intellectually). They seek to immerse themselves in holiday experiences that deliver this, gaining insight or a sense of well-being.

**Social Fun-Seekers**
Their holiday is about having a fun time. While they do a lot of different activities, sharing the experience with friends and other holidaymakers is what makes the difference.

**Unwinders**
For Unwinders, holidays are all about relaxation and release, and focusing on themselves as an escape from their busy lives. They seek an unstructured holiday. Decisions are made when at the destination. This allows them to catch their breath, feel calm, peaceful and gain perspective.

**Connectors**
They see holidays as a chance to connect with people they most care about. They will often compromise their own activity choices to ensure everyone has a good time. It’s about what is real and what is important.

For more information on domestic target markets visit [teq.queensland.com/research](http://teq.queensland.com/research)
It’s handy to know that on the domestic front, Tourism and Events Queensland targets Connectors in the intrastate market, and Social Fun-seekers in the interstate markets.

The Tourism and Events Queensland website has a lot of information on each of these market segments as well as tips on how to pitch and channel your advertising messages to reach each of your target groups.

You can use either demographics or this new research to identify the markets you’d like to target, and guide your marketing ideas and product decision-making. It’s also wise to do your own research to better understand:

- How your customers learn about your product or services – advertisements, direct mail, word of mouth, websites, social media etc.
- Patterns or habits your customers and potential customers share, i.e. what they read, watch and listen to
- Qualities your customers value most about your product or service – selection, convenience, service, reliability, availability, affordability
- What your customers like least about your product or services, and then adapt your product if possible based on that feedback

**International target markets**

Tourism Australia undertook a research project which identified common segments across different cultures that would be receptive to the Australian experience and classified these as ‘Experience Seekers’.

Experience Seekers share common attitudes about travel, personal development and everyday life, regardless of their country of origin. Typically, they are more likely to:

- Be experienced international travellers
- Be opinion leaders – early adopters and influencers
- Be open minded
- Be selective in their media consumption – media that is personally relevant and motivating
- Of the opinion that travel is an important part of their lifestyle
- Stay longer and spend more
- Travel beyond major cities

- Be less materialistic
- Have a higher-than-average household income
- Be educated and informed on a range of subjects

**Experience Seekers want:**

- Authentic personal experiences
- Social interactions – to make friends and develop personal relationships
- To meet and interact with the locals
- To experience something different from their normal day-to-day life
- To understand and learn about different lifestyles and cultures
- To participate in the local lifestyle and experience rather than observe it
- To challenge themselves – physically, emotionally and/or mentally
- To visit authentic destinations that are not necessarily part of the regular tourist route
- Exposure to unique and personally compelling experiences

**TEQ targets Experience Seekers in the following source markets:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Markets</th>
<th>UK, USA, Japan, Singapore, New Zealand, Hong Kong, China, Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Markets</td>
<td>Canada, Korea, Malaysia, Switzerland, India, Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Middle East, Indonesia, South America, Europe – Italy, France and Scandinavia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whether you target domestic or international markets or both, knowing how to directly engage with your consumers based on a clear understanding of their needs, wants and expectations definitely puts you at an advantage. If you know your customers and deliver the services they want, they’ll recommend your business and keep coming back.
Imagery

Image guidelines to get you started

The quality of your images and how they are used can make a huge difference to your business. They literally ‘speak’ to you and conjure up all kinds of thoughts and emotions.

Of course, you want your images to work for you and sell your product. That’s their job. And there’s plenty you can do to make that happen.

Tourism and Events Queensland has a fantastic online image and footage gallery of high-quality stock images and moving footage. Just about every conceivable Queensland destination and tourism experience is covered.

If you’re on a tight budget, the gallery is a great way to gather the images or footage you need for your marketing collateral without the expense of hiring a photographer. Once you join the image gallery, you will be able to access selected free images or purchase what you need.

Your RTO may have some good destination images too and if you operate in the international market certainly check out Tourism Australia’s online image gallery.

The above-mentioned resources are fantastic tools at your disposal, however, in an era where content is king, it is worthwhile considering investing in a professional photographer to undertake a photo shoot of high-resolution images of your business. While stock images are useful, a targeted photo shoot which specifically captures your brand and business is an invaluable tool for marketing and media purposes.

Whichever resource you use, there are a few basics to selecting the right images for your purpose. Follow these hints and specifications and you’ll be fine:

- Be aware of cultural sensitivities - some cultures have protocols about the use of images such as brief swimwear
- If you’re using images that include people, get them to sign a talent release form – this is a form which provides consent to use the person’s image in marketing materials developed by your business and can avoid problems down the track
- Be truthful – never misrepresent the facts using images
- Use high-resolution images to prevent pixilation problems
- Apply common sense – don’t overcrowd the page with images. For example, in brochures use a mix of small images and large images to break things up
- Have a mixture of landscape and portrait images for various media uses
- Be aware that “staged” pictures using talent or models may work well in marketing but nature images work better for media

QUICK LINKS

Tourism and Events Queensland Image Gallery
teq.lookat.me.com.au

Tourism and Events Queensland Footage Gallery
teq.lookat.me.com.au

Tourism Australia Image Gallery
images.australia.com

Tourism Australia Video Gallery
video.australia.com

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Whichever resource you use, there are a few basics to selecting the right images for your purpose. Follow these hints and specifications and you’ll be fine:

- Choose images that will appeal to your target markets – customers need to be able to identify with your product and imagine themselves enjoying your experience
- Use colourful images that draw attention and tell your story – if an image doesn’t provoke a positive response, then don’t use it
Image specifications
When you start dealing with graphic designers or printers they’ll probably ask you to supply images in a particular format. Don’t panic. Here’s some handy hints and information on imagery and formats.

Digital image file types
There are several digital file types commonly used. For print advertising, such as brochures, print suppliers will accept TIFF, JPEG and EPS files. To check the file type, right click on the image and click ‘Properties’.

- RAW: is the original image file. A raw image contains minimally-processed data from the image sensor of a digital camera
- TIFF (Tagged Image File Format): an uncompressed photographic image
- JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group): a compressed photographic image. The compressing process makes the file size smaller
- EPS (Encapsulated Post Script): used mainly for graphics such as logos

CMYK versus RGB colour spectrum
Printers need images to be supplied in CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow and black) because it helps preserve the best possible detail and vibrancy. RGB (red, green and blue) files are the colour format used for website design. Like monitors, printing inks also produce colours that are a subset of the spectrum. For this reason colours, even of the same art work, can look different on a computer screen from the printed page. The basic rule of thumb is to use CMYK for all print jobs. A designer or printer with Photoshop software will be able to tell you if the file is CMYK or RGB.

Resolution size
DPI or ‘dots per inch’ are the recommended resolutions used in advertising – the higher the DPI resolution, the better the image quality. For example, use a 300DPI high-resolution image for your brochures. You’ll need an even higher resolution for billboards and transit advertisements. Newspapers use 120DPI medium resolution images while websites handle low resolution images of 72DPI. If you’re not sure about the resolution of an image ask your graphic designer or printer with Photoshop software to tell you the image file size.

Recommend file size requirements
The file sizes below are recommended for various advertising formats.

- Thumbnail – A4
- Standard magazine requirement A5–A4
- Magazine cover – A4–A3
- Double-page spread – A3–A2
- Outdoor display or billboard – A1–A0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A0</th>
<th>A1</th>
<th>A2</th>
<th>A3</th>
<th>A4</th>
<th>A5</th>
<th>A6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>841x1189</td>
<td>594x841</td>
<td>420x594</td>
<td>297x420</td>
<td>210x297</td>
<td>148x210</td>
<td>105x148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hot tips
- Use images that are true to size, don’t stretch them
- Your images should vividly show the best attributes of your product without over exaggerating them
- Maximise the location – showcase what’s on offer beyond the actual product
- Use tourism industry image resources
- People in images should look like they are naturally enjoying themselves
- Text backgrounds should be plain and uncluttered
Portraits vs landscape images

Portraits and landscape images can be used in different ways:

**PORTRAIT**
Suitable for magazine front covers, full page ads, etc.

**LANDSCAPE**
Suitable for double page ads, postcards, etc.

Image checklist

When using an image in a publication or for signage, check that you have obtained written permission:

- From the photographer/copyright owner of the image (via a copyright agreement, image release agreement)
- From any people/models that feature in the image (via a talent release agreement)

If you are conducting your own photographic shoot, you must also have:

- Written permission from the property owner e.g. restaurant, accommodation (through a venue release agreement)
- Permits if you are shooting in a national park, on council land or at a shopping centre

Footage formats for cinemas or television

Sometimes you need to provide footage for television or cinema campaigns. The recommended footage formats for television or cinema are:

- HD (High Definition)
- Digital Betacam
- DV Cam
- Mini DV

Website or DVD

When footage is loaded on to a website or DVD, the video file needs to be in one of the following formats. Footage shot on your own digital camera will be an mpeg file.

- MPEG
- WMV
- AVI
Domestic Marketing
Becoming domestic ready

Takeaways

- How to be ready for the domestic market
- Key pathways to promoting your business in the domestic market
- Packaging your product with others
- Pricing and yield management
- Understanding of the tourism distribution channels and commission structures
- Learn about cooperative advertising opportunities available to you
Introduction

More than 90 per cent of visitors to Queensland are domestic visitors. Given this, there’s a fair chance it’s your biggest market too.

As we know from looking at the 5 Ps – product, packaging, price, place and promotion – there’s a lot to consider and frankly, to get right in order to attract and grow your slice of that market.

This section deals with packaging, price, place and promotion. Together, these four elements can help you reach your domestic customer, whether they are from across the road or across the continent.

There’s a huge network of wholesalers, retail travel agents (RTAs) and online travel agents (OTAs) whose job it is to distribute your product. They partner with you and other operators to package, promote and sell tourism products and experiences.

In order to be domestic ready (ready to service the domestic market), you need to understand how these partnerships work so you can utilise them to your advantage. It’s important to understand the distribution channels and commission levels that you will be expected to pay and what you can expect in return.

You will also need to research your domestic markets and make the connections between your product and your target markets so you can better meet your specific customers’ needs.

As we’ve said before, correctly identifying your customers will give you the edge when it comes to your marketing decisions. One of the most fundamental aspects of your marketing is to match your product and experiences to your customer needs and make their holiday dreams come true.
Understanding your target market

There are two ways of reaching potential customers:

1. **Directly** – through advertising, website, brochure, consumer shows, social media or referrals from partners
2. **Indirectly** – through a third party such as a retail travel agent, wholesalers, inbound tour operators (ITOs), or online travel agents (OTAs)

‘Everyone’ is not your target market. Defining who is will help you distinguish the ways to reach them.

Tourism and Events Queensland has identified six consumer segments in the domestic market. Of these, Connectors are Queensland’s primary intrastate target market and Social Fun-seekers are its primary interstate target market.

So, who are you targeting now and how? Are these the best markets or are there other markets that could offer better returns? Are there other businesses you could package with to make what you offer more attractive? Is your product promoted and sold through channels that naturally link with your markets? And are you using the right advertising mix to reach potential customers.

These are the first questions to ask when it comes to your marketing because unless you know the basics, you’ll probably be wasting time and money. Once you’re clear about whom you’re targeting, you can plan your marketing mix – product, packaging, price, place and promotion strategies – to fit with your customers’ needs, wants, habits and preferences.

**Hot tips**

- Use [Tourism and Events Queensland’s market segmentation](#) to help you better understand your customers’ needs
- Subscribe to [Tourism and Events Queensland’s Research Updates](#) for the latest market and research insights
- Team up with reliable operators and products that complement your business
- Refer to your region’s [Destination Tourism Plan](#) for more information on the shared direction and strategies in place to increase tourism visitation and expenditure to your region

**Marketing partners**

Relationships rule at this end of the business. The strength and reliability of the products with whom you decide to package; how you distribute your product; and how you promote it to your target markets can position you to achieve greater competitive advantage and success.

In marketing, there’s no end to what’s possible and nothing stays the same for too long. The real clincher is your attitude. In order to have an astute, organised, flexible and cooperative marketing approach you have to think and act that way.

This is exciting stuff. It’s really where the product hits the pavement and teaming up with the right people can create brilliant opportunities and excellent returns. You stand to be much better off than if you try to go it alone.

You need to consider:

- setting up solid packaging partnerships with other operators that complement your products and services
- working closely with the best travel distributors to get your product out there on the shelves and online
- advertising and promoting through the mediums your consumers use and understand
Because of the size, spread and maturity of Queensland’s tourism industry, there are lots of ways to tap into experience and expertise that will support you right from the start. The tourism industry is made up of organisations which provide leadership and support – from destination marketing at a state level through to contributing to the visitor experience at a local level.

Having an understanding of how your business fits into the broader tourism industry and how you can become involved is important because it provides you with access to:

- Insights into what is happening in the industry and emerging trends
- Networking opportunities with other tourism providers and business leaders
- Business development initiatives/education programs
- Cooperative marketing programs to leverage off state and destination brand awareness campaigns to maximise your marketing spend and reach

The key organisations in Queensland include:

- Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ)
- Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs)
- Local Tourism Organisations (LTOs)
- Local Government Authorities (LGAs)
- Local industry-specific networks, i.e. Accommodation Association of Australia (AAA)
- Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC)

More information on tourism networks can be found in the Introduction section of this guide.

Membership with your Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) provides numerous cooperative marketing opportunities and benefits. It’s also a link to TEQ’s marketing resources, support and latest campaigns as well as up-to-date information on tourism and travel trends.

Having a good understanding of what’s happening in the marketplace will help you to refresh your product, distribution and promotional activity in ways that continue to attract your customers and deliver increased market share.
Packaging

You see packaging all the time, particularly in the tourism industry when two or more products and/or services team up to create special deals or value-adding benefits in ways that capture consumer attention and imagination. Packages provide the customer with either greater convenience or a more competitive price. Packages can be linked in many ways and for a variety of lengths of time – from a half-day to multiple-day packages.

There are four types of packaging:

1. **Packaging Your Own Product**
   Packaging your product with the inclusion of value-adds. For example offering a ‘Romantic Couples’ package that includes two nights’ accommodation, a bottle of sparkling wine, chocolates on arrival and daily buffet breakfast.

2. **Packaging with Other Compatible Product in Your Region**
   Also known as ‘bundling’. This method is used to create a more complete experience package that will attract and keep your customers in the region for longer. For example, a Whitsundays accommodation product may bundle with a Whitsundays tour operator and complementary local attractions to provide an all-inclusive experience.

3. **Packaging Through Your Distribution Partners**
   When one of your distribution partners, such as a wholesaler, chooses to package your product with other operators aimed at the same target market.

4. **Packaging with Events**
   For example, offering a package that includes event tickets, accommodation and a value-add such as a late checkout or free breakfast.

Almost anything can be packaged, as long as the elements are complementary and provide a memorable experience for the customer.

The beauty of packaging is that you can keep refreshing and selling your product in many different ways using different partners. Every deal is different. You can be flexible and change your packages to suit market conditions. Just be sure to plan how you’re going to promote them and work out what it’s going to cost. The other benefits of packaging and bundling include:

- New relationships and partnerships
- Create demand during low periods
- Pre-booked business
- Early payments or deposits from the sale of the package
- Increased margins

It’s not necessary for your packages to be based on discounting. Packaging is about adding value to your product and thereby adding value for your customers. Packages should save your customers time and money.

With a package, you’re banking on four outcomes:

1. Economies of scale
2. Greater volume of sales
3. Increased expenditure
4. Increased length of stay

On the other hand, consumers are always searching for the experiences that will satisfy their needs and wants. Value for money is a huge driver. Value-add or extras that can be included that appear not to cost them anything are definitely a drawcard and more than often the deal sealer. If a consumer can see that buying a package will cost less than buying the individual parts of the package, they will opt to buy the package every time.

Working with other tourism operators and ‘bundling’ a package can help you to achieve economies of scale in relation to marketing costs and provides further opportunities to raise the profile of your tourism business. Not only does each individual operator benefit from such arrangements, but the region in general benefits from attracting visitors and their spending.
### 10 top tips for packaging

| **1. Define Your Target Market** | It is important to define whom your ideal customers are and your target markets e.g. honeymooners, couples and families. Consider what motivates them, where they are from, who they travel with and how long they stay. |
| **2. Define Reasons for Packaging** | For example, is it to fill low demand, financial objectives, build repeat business, build new relationships, capitalise on a special event/occasion or to introduce a new product or experience? |
| **3. Decide What Your Package Will Include** | Brainstorm a list of all the experiences that your target market would enjoy. Determine all of the elements, e.g. Two night’s accommodation, dinner for two, late checkout etc. |
| **4. Name or Theme Your Package** | For example, themes may include a ‘Romantic Package’, ‘Cultural Package’, ‘Family Package’ or ‘Aussie Package’. Think of a package name that will be appealing to your target market. |
| **5. Identify Package Partners and Discuss How the Package Will Be Managed and Distributed** | Remember to check the operator you’re partnering with has a good reputation. Ensure clarity between package partners on how things are going to work and discuss all terms and conditions. |
| **6. Calculate the Costing and Pricing** | The price of the package must be appealing to the consumer and be profitable for all parties concerned. If you are using a distribution partner, factor in the commission rate. |
| **7. Manage Your Package Logistics** | Determine the timing of when your package will be sold and for how long. Determine how each operator will be accepting bookings. Will it be done separately or will there be one contact/ensure all partners have licensing and comply with all regulations. |
| **8. Develop an Operations Plan** | Train staff about the components of the package and inform them on the terms and conditions, including how to take the booking. |
| **9. Promote and Market the Package** | Consider all options such as the internet (Google AdWords, website, OTAs), wholesalers and ITOs, RTOs, visitor information centres (VICs), local promotions as well as printed materials such as brochures and newspapers. |
| **10. Track Results and Evaluate** | Will you have a unique code or other tracking method? Monitor the booking results and refine your package if needed. |
Don’t be tempted to make it too complicated. When promoting a package deal you want to communicate the whole message quickly and in plain terms. Otherwise, you may risk losing sales because consumers get lost in the information.

For special deals, where you’re aiming for high-volume sales by appealing to the consumers’ hip pocket, keep the packages and messages simple. Name your packages so they are easy for consumers to remember, and reflect what you’re selling. This will also help you to track how well each package is doing.

For example, a rainforest resort package called ‘Come As You Are’ says to the consumer ‘this is a no-fuss deal’ you don’t have to plan, you’re going to go somewhere to relax and unwind that will accept you just the way you are. To a couple who just wants to get away and relax for a few days, it sends all the right messages.

**Hot tips**
- Be innovative and look for complementary and interesting experiences that feature the attributes of your region. You live in a beautiful part of the country so show and tell your customers about it
- Don’t hide your qualities under the price tag. Show them what’s special about your product and the overall value of the experiences you offer
- Think about your customer and ensure your package is easy to book

**COME AS YOU ARE**

2 Nights, 4½ Star Resort + breakfast.
- Stay in a 1 bedroom King Spa cabin
  + FREE Buffet breakfast daily
  + BONUS $100 dining voucher

Set in the lush rainforest of the Gold Coast Hinterland, Rainforest Resort & Spa is located just 10 mins north of Mt Tamborine. The luxurious king spa cabin includes a private spa bath with breathtaking views overlooking the hinterland, a perfect setting for a romantic weekend away.

[1800 777 777](tel:1800777777) rainforestresort.com from [AUD$450](http://rainforestresort.com) *

* Terms & Conditions: Only valid until 17 December 2016. Subject to availability. Not valid on public holidays. Twin share based on minimum 2 night stay.

A catchy package title says to the consumer this is a no-fuss deal.

Value-add words like ‘FREE’ and ‘BONUS’ bring the items to the consumer’s attention. They show value for money.

The consumer is given two booking options. Bold text draws the consumer’s attention. Package details should be included on the call-to-action website.

Terms and Conditions (T&Cs) must be clear to the consumer and include all of the booking conditions.

* Note this package is an example only.
Being featured in a campaign with a wholesaler is often at the discretion of the product manager and is based on the timing and theme of the individual campaign.

Flight Centre Travel Group is the largest travel retailer in Australia and sells Queensland holiday experiences to visitors from around the world. When participating in a campaign with a retail partner such as Flight Centre most products provide their best deal, such as a “pay 4, stay 5” or an exclusive offer to make their product appealing.

For example, this deal includes flights AND 3 nights’ accommodation AND return airport transfers.

### Mantra Mooloolaba Beach, Sunshine Coast

**DEAL NUMBER 3657907**

**Duration**
- Flights + 3 Nights

**Destination**
- Sunshine Coast

**Valid Dates**
- 1 August – 31 October 2015

**What’s Included?**
- Return economy class airfare to Sunshine Coast including prepaid taxes.
- 3 nights accommodation at the Self Rated 4.5-star Mantra Mooloolaba Beach in a 1 Bedroom.
- Return shared airport transfers from Sunshine Coast Airport.

**Departure Dates**
- 1 August – 31 October 2015.

**Visit Sunshine Coast**

**Travel departing from:**
- Hobart from $809*
- Melbourne from $629*
- Sydney from $555*

*Found right on the waterfront Mantra Mooloolaba Beach is a must in Sunshine Coast accommodation. Located on the esplanade and offering self-contained accommodation with over 30 restaurants, cafes and shops all on your doorstep.

Another example shows a dollar saving, with a package inclusive of accommodation, airport transfers AND a river cruise.

### The Rise Noosa

3 nights 4½-star + river cruise
- Stay in a 2 Bedroom Apartment
- Return airport transfers
- Noosa Everglades River Cruise

Set on Noosa Hill, this hotel is just a short walk away from Noosa’s main beach and the restaurants and boutiques of Hastings Street. Relax on a cruise through the magnificent lakes and wetlands as you navigate your way into the mysterious and tranquil waters of the Noosa Everglades finishing with an authentic Australian BBQ lunch.

**from $469**

### Spicers Tamarind Retreat & Spa, Maleny

2 nights 5-star + car hire
- Stay in a 1 Bedroom Pavilion
- Breakfast daily
- 3 days’ car hire*

**BONUS $100 dining voucher.**

Set near a waterfall in a stunning rainforest in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland just east of Maleny, this hotel is an intimately unique retreat where Thai style meets the tranquillity of the Australian bush.

**from $449**

Here’s an example of a retail package with accommodation, car hire AND daily breakfast, with a bonus $100 dining voucher.
Pricing

It is important to get your pricing right! Setting pricing for tourism businesses is a strong mix of marketing strategy and analysis. To be successful you must price your tourism product competitively. The price you sell your product for can vary. Some factors that influence price include:

- **Seasonality:** you may vary your price depending on high or low season
- **Operating costs:** the higher your operating cost the more expensive your prices need to be so that you cover all of your expenses
- **Competition:** you need to stay competitive in the market place or be able to justify a higher price
- **Demand:** consumers will pay more if there is a high demand for a product. They are also likely to pay less if there is lots of choice for a similar product

It is important to consider the following when pricing your product:

- How unique is your product or experience? the more unique, the more flexible you can be when determining your price.
- What value-added services do you provide that enhances the perceived value to your customers?
- What markets do you want to attract and who does your product or experience appeal to? eg. young families, youth and backpacker market etc.
- What are your fixed, variable and operating costs?
- What price are your competitors charging for a similar product or service?

**Be realistic when calculating your costs to ensure you obtain a profit while retaining a competitive edge.**

**Hot tips**

- Speak to your trade partners about upcoming marketing campaigns
- Don't overuse discounting. It can backfire and devalue your product in the minds of consumers. Focus on adding value
- Giving your customers good value for money has less to do with price and more to do with quality and service
- Be flexible in your approach to packaging and try new product/experience combinations
- Create packages you can use to attract consumers through low season and shoulder periods
Fixed cost – this stays the same regardless of the sales you make. They do not vary. Fixed costs include: rent, insurance, machinery etc.

Variable cost – this will generally change in proportion to the goods or services that a business produces. Variable costs include: wages, electricity, maintenance, uniforms etc.

One of the main aims of any business is to make a profit. The only way to do that is to correctly price your product, factoring in a markup. There is no set figure. Whatever markup you set, it needs to make you a profit and be competitive.

Regardless of your pricing structure, you’ll need to work out your gross rate (retail or rack rate) and the nett rate of your product.

The gross or retail rate of a product is the amount the consumer pays and should be consistent across all distribution channels. The customer should pay the same whether they book direct through your website or via a travel agent. Consumers won’t purchase the product from your distribution partners if they know they can purchase it directly from you at a reduced price, your business needs to maintain rate parity.

The nett rate is the gross (retail or rack rate) of your product less the commission paid to the booking agent. Your nett rate should include all your costs and your profit margin. It is the amount you receive from your distribution partner and should be kept confidential.

**Tips for effective pricing**

- Do your research – understand your market and compare it with the prices of your competitors
- Ensure your price structure will generate profitability
- Keep track of who you distribute your rates to and when
- Ensure validity date and booking T&Cs are clearly stated on all correspondence
- You don’t want your price to be radically different to that of your competitors. If it’s too cheap your professionalism may be questioned. If it is too expensive and isn’t value for money you may lose future customers.
Yield management

Yield management first appeared in the aviation industry in the 1970s when the industry saw the opportunity to maximise efficiency ensuring all seats were occupied before takeoff, by offering varied price structures to the consumer. The airlines realised the simple concept that supply and demand could maximise revenue. Selling all their seats at the same price was never an achievable model. They need their base seats sold to cover expenses before take off, but at the same time have the ability to raise the prices after that base is obtained.

The link to both the aviation and the tourism industry is that both inventories are ‘perishable’. Once that boat leaves the harbour, you can’t sell any more seats until tomorrow, and it’s the same with a room empty overnight, the opportunity for revenue is lost forever. The products and services offered by the tourism industry generally have anything from a one to 24-hour shelf life.

Yield, put simply, is the amount of profit your business makes after all your costs have been deducted from what you have earned. “Yield Management is allocating the right type of capacity to the right kind of customer at the right price,” Kimes, 1989.

\[
\text{Yield} = \frac{\text{Profit}}{\text{Number of visitors or room nights}}
\]

Working out your yield on a monthly basis will tell you more about the seasonal fluctuations in your business

Yield management is the umbrella term for a set of strategies that enable perishable products or services to realise optimum revenue through the process of:

**Understanding** – having historical data; knowing what customers come to your destination

**Anticipating** – looking at customer and traveller trends, e.g. drive touring market, aging population etc.

**Influencing customer behaviour** – constantly updating your position to create demand for your product

For more information on yield management view the Tourism and Events Queensland Yield Management Tutorial.
Commission

Commission is often the primary revenue source for retail travel agents (RTAs), wholesalers, inbound tour operators (ITOs), online travel agents (OTAs) and visitor information centres (VICs). The level of commission incurred will depend on who sells your product and which distribution method is used.

When you use distribution partners, everyone gets a slice of the action. You will pay a commission for each distributor, at each level, on each sale. Paying a commission is a commercial business decision. If you don’t want to pay commission for bookings you cannot expect distribution partners to promote your product.

Remember commission is only paid once a sale has been made!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade distribution partner</th>
<th>Average commission</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct booking</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Through your website, over the phone, walk in or over the phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail travel agents</td>
<td>10 to 15%</td>
<td>Flight Centre, STA travel, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor information centres</td>
<td>10 to 15%</td>
<td>Speak to your local VIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online travel agent</td>
<td>10 to 15%</td>
<td>Wotif, Lastminute, Expedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesalers</td>
<td>25 to 30%</td>
<td>Qantas Holidays, Sunlover, Infinity Holidays, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The above is an example only. Commercial arrangements around commission levels could be more or less.

For information on international commissions refer to the International Marketing section of this guide.

Rate parity

When distributing your product it is critical to maintain rate parity particularly when distributing online. When rate parity is implemented, it ensures the consumer is confident in booking the product.

Your product needs to be consistently priced across all distribution channels, whether it is published in printed or electronic formats. Rate parity is a guarantee to your partners and customers that they can rely on and trust your prices.

If you try to undercut your distributors by selling direct to customers at a lower rate, you’ll lose their trust and therefore their business.

Rate validity

Keep it as simple as possible. If your product is seasonal or if you have chosen mid-week and weekend rates, keep the season and prices categories to a minimum. When offering special rates or packages ensure they are structured to include all levels of distribution. Be sure to clearly state rate validity and T&Cs.

It is important to clearly state all of your booking T&C with your rates. Try and keep the T&Cs to one page and attached to your rates.

Include the following:

- Name of your business clearly stated
- Contact details – website, phone and email
- Rate validity dates (e.g. 1 April to 31 March 2015)
- Cancellation charges – based on different periods prior to travel
- Child rates and ages
- Booking amendment charges
- Minimum night stay
- Minimum and maximum guest capacity
- Be clear – are your rates per person, per room, etc?
- Bedding configurations
- Departure pick up and drop offs (if applicable)
- Inclusions and exclusions
- Payment policy
- Special conditions
- Black-out dates
- Gross and nett rates including GST
Place – Distributing Your Product

Place is the where and how you distribute your product so it reaches the customer. Customers can be targeted directly through advertising, brochure distribution, websites, social media and so on.

Alternatively, your target markets can be reached indirectly through a third party by using tourism distribution channels such as RTAs, wholesalers and ITOs.

The main distribution channels are listed below:

- Regional tourism brochures or travel planners (produced by RTOs)
- Visitor Information Centres (VICs)
- Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)
- State Tourism Organisation (STO) consumer websites such as Tourism and Events Queensland’s queensland.com
- Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) websites and online booking systems
- Direct to the consumer
- Wholesalers
- Retail and online travel agents

Domestic distribution structure

The following diagrams set out the traditional structure for domestic travel distribution. However, with the growth of online distribution, which is more flexible in its approach, the structure can vary from this as commissions tend to change from site to site.

Direct sales to the consumer involve no commission. Between 20 to 30% commission is paid if your product is listed with a domestic wholesaler’s program and is being sold through retail travel agents.

For more information on the New Distribution Channel structure, including international distribution, refer to the International Marketing section of this guide.

It’s impossible for any tourism product, no matter how big they are, to reach all of their potential customers alone. The majority of operators rely on the wide network of distribution partners to do that job for them. Understanding the tourism distribution systems, recommended rates of commission and the roles of various booking agents is essential for a profitable business. It’s up to you to choose which distribution channels work best for you and your customers.
Traditional systems have changed to meet emerging consumer trends in how holidays are planned and booked. Consumers may:

- research, plan and book online
- research, plan and book through a shopfront travel agent
- research and plan online, then book through a shopfront travel agent
- research and plan online, then phone the operator and book direct
- or any combination of the above

**Hot Tips**

- Make sure there is price/rate parity across all your promotional material, be it printed or in electronic version
- Don’t forget to utilise your local distribution partners and work with VICs to promote and sell your product; display your brochures in local businesses; and advertise in local newspapers
- Treat your wholesale and retail partners like your customers – make it easy for them to promote your business
- Become involved with professional and industry groups and call on their available resources

**What is a retail travel agent (RTA)?**

RTAs sell travel services direct to the customer and act on their behalf to book and buy holiday packages, travel, accommodation and tours. They normally have a shop front and are traditionally the conduit between the customers and the wholesaler whether that be domestically or internationally.

RTAs often sell the products from the wholesaler programs with which they are aligned. For example, Flight Centre sells AOT Holidays’ (Sunlover Holidays) products but also has its own wholesaling company, Infinity Holidays.

Key retail travel agents in Queensland include:

- Flight Centre Ltd
- Helloworld
- Harvey World Travel
- STA Travel
- Student Flights
- Queensland Rail Travel Centre

**Tips for working with retail travel agents**

- Tourism operators will rarely deal directly with a RTA and instead go through a tour wholesaler or an ITO.
- Retail agents can assist customers with several travel queries and make all bookings at the one location
- Local visitor centres such as VICs can also be considered a retail agent
**What is a wholesaler?**

Wholesalers can be a great asset to your business. They package travel, accommodation and tours and sell them to RTAs on your behalf. Whether domestic or international, a wholesaler develops itineraries/packages and programs that can be sold either to retail or directly to the consumer.

Wholesalers are the prime movers of product. They deal in big numbers when it comes to sales and marketing – packaging hundreds of products to go to thousands of retail travel agents to be sold on to many more thousands of consumers. Sure, these partnerships might come at a cost, but in the end, they’re a very effective way to get your product to market.

The wholesaler decides what products are going to appeal to a particular market and packages them accordingly. For instance, they’ll ask you and other products for rates and then feature these products in their brochures and possibly on their website. These brochures are distributed to the travel agency chains and are a valuable tool for travel agents when recommending and selling your product.

**The brochure validity period or contract period for wholesalers’ annual programs is 1 April through to 31 March.**

Advertising campaigns including in-store merchandising and window displays are done by wholesalers on a regular basis. These efforts are geared to target both consumers and travel agents.

It pays for the wholesaler to train RTAs in the packages they offer and how to sell them. They also regularly run training for new and existing products. This is a great benefit because the more travel agents know about your product the more likely they are to sell it.

Key wholesalers include:
- AOT Holidays
- Sunlover Holidays
- Flight Centre’s Infinity Holidays
- Virgin Australia Holidays
- Qantas Holidays
- Harvey World Travel’s Harvey’s Choice Holidays

**Tips for working with wholesalers**

- Tour wholesalers will deal directly with tourism operators
- Wholesalers will only include products in their brochure that have a good track record – relationships are key
- Wholesalers link individual tourism operators with retailers
- Ask your wholesaler about product training. Is there an opportunity for you to promote new or exciting things happening with your business?
- Don’t forget a little something such as morning tea; a small giveaway with your company logo; or an invitation to experience your product?

When you first deal with wholesalers or retailers, they’ll look at your business and assess it. They’ll want to be sure your product offers:
- high-quality experiences
- high-quality customer service
- reliability
- friendly staff
- good operational practices
- accepted methods of communication, e.g. phone, email, website, fax, and reliable and efficient turnaround and response times
- consistent pricing policies
- a suitable allocation or allotment of stock for them to sell

**If you’re an accommodation provider and you only have a small number of rooms, it may not be worth your while going through a wholesaler. This is because you won’t have the amount of stock they require to make it profitable for them to include you in their program. In fact, the profit margins won’t be big enough for either of you. However, if you are unsure, do not hesitate to meet with them.**
What is an online travel agent (OTA)?

OTAs deal exclusively in the online environment. With many consumers now planning and booking their entire itinerary online, it may be an area worth your time and investment. Online booking sites are convenient for the consumer as they can search and book travel at their fingertips.

Online distribution isn’t as structured as traditional distribution methods. However, the rules of engagement are the same. As with your traditional wholesale and retail partners, OTAs also work to commission rates. In the online environment commissions vary from site to site based on how the site works. Generally speaking though, the commission is less than you would pay traditional partners.

Key OTAs include:
- Wotif
- Lastminute
- Booking.com
- Quickbeds.com
- Needitnow.com
- Expedia
- Zuji
- Travelocity

Tips for working with OTAs

- Do your homework and find out how different sites operate, how they’ll promote your product and how your information will be managed.
- Partner with the sites that suit your needs. Some will expect you to maintain information yourself, while others will do it for you. Keep note of where your business is advertised, check your listing online, keep your partners informed of any changes to your product and remember to send them updated images.
- For a fee you might also arrange a channel manager to look after your inventory across multiple distributors. One of the advantages of using a channel manager is the exposure they can gain for your business with many distributors at the one time, even if you’re a small operator.
- Unlike a brochure, which is a hard copy document that’s printed annually and can only be changed from year to year, being online gives you the flexibility to change your information whenever you like.
- You can give online distributors access to your inventory all of the time and availability is updated automatically. This is referred to as real-time inventory.

Developing a good relationship with all of your distribution partners is vital and will make a big difference to your bottom line. After all, they are selling your product to the world and the more they like you and your product the more they will sell it.
DOMESTIC MARKETING | BECOMING DOMESTIC READY

Australian Tourism Data Warehouse
Tourism and Events Queensland works in partnership with the ATDW, which is Australia’s primary resource for tourism businesses to get their information online. It is a centralised national database that feeds information and photographs on your tourism business into a network of up to 60 websites including:
- Tourism and Events Queensland's consumer site queensland.com
- Tourism Australia australia.com
- Inclusion in the Queensland Holidays iPhone Application (downloaded more than 150,000 times)
- Queensland’s Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) websites, plus many more.

Product categories stored within the ATDW include accommodation, attractions, restaurants, tours, hire, transport, events and general services.

Check out the full list of ATDW distributors and details on how to register via www.teq.queensland.com/atdw

Accredited visitor information centres
VICs are a fantastic resource for visitors already in your city or town. They provide local, regional and state-wide information to visitors on all things tourism.

Your local VIC is a great way to distribute your brochures. Through building up your relationships with the staff, keeping them informed, and providing them with easy reference material, you'll find more referrals knocking on your door.

For more information visit teq.queensland.com/VIC-Portal

Hot tips
- Subscribe to ATDW, the national tourism database
- Get to know the volunteer staff at your local VICs and offer training to help them learn about your product
- Download the ‘This is Queensland App’ which includes Queensland-listed ATDW products and the VICs in Queensland Finder

Promotion
Marketing is often considered the fun side of the business. It’s not just about running an ad in the newspaper or radio – advertising and promotion can take many forms. Cover your bases and don’t be afraid to try different ways to reach your target markets. Many things can influence a campaign. The one enduring principle is to track and measure all your activities to confirm how well they’ve performed.

Advertising and promotional options include:
- Advertising
  - brochures and flyers
  - television, radio, outdoor, magazine and transit
  - Social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, TripAdvisor/travel review sites
  - Search-engine optimisation as well as digital and social advertising
  - Advertising through trade partners
  - Cooperative advertising
- Public Relations (PR) and publicity
  - familiarisations (famils)
  - travel blogs
  - media releases
  - PR Kits
- Trade and consumer engagement
  - trade shows
  - consumer shows
  - sales calls, missions and promotions
  - Travel agent training
- Sales promotions
  - sales incentives
  - competitions
  - live marketing activations
- Direct marketing
  - telephone sales and marketing
  - SMS marketing
  - mail outs
  - email and eNewsletter blasts

PR, publicity and digital marketing play a big part in your domestic marketing. However, we are only going to touch on these topics here because they are covered in greater depth under their own sections within this guide.
Advertising

Advertising is a powerful means of communicating your message and influencing consumers to buy your product. Advertising builds brand presence and familiarity in the marketplace. If people are in the market to buy a particular product and they know a brand well, it will come to mind first. For example, if you think tissues, you think Kleenex.

However, there’s a lot of advertising noise and clutter out there and it’s not easy to achieve cut-through, especially when you’re working to a tight budget. Consumers hear and see what they want. They switch their attention on and off to information around them, only taking in those messages that hold some interest for them. Essentially, that’s why you can’t target everyone when you run a campaign.

Only certain consumers will be ready to listen to and hear your message because it makes them feel a certain way – it rings true for them. Those feelings create the desire for a need or want to be met. That’s why junk food ads run around meal times.

Before you start to advertise, you should be clear about who you want to target, what you need to say and the way you’re going to say it so your messages can appeal to your target market. Consider using a combination of above and below-the-line advertising methods.

Above-the-line (ATL) advertising uses conventional means to reach the audience, e.g. TV, radio, newspapers and magazines, internet and billboards/transit, while below-the-line (BTL) activities may include direct mail, email, public relations and sales promotions.

To think of it another way, ATL is mass-media coverage to reach the most number of people at any given time, whereas BTL reaches the consumer on an individual level, face to face or through their mail-box – one person at a time. Both offer advantages.

Cooperative advertising

Advertising with partners can be advantageous. It spreads the costs giving you more bang for your buck.

For example, you might allocate money for a marketing campaign and share the cost of that activity by approaching partners that you package with to become involved.

By doing this, you can share advertising production and placement costs. The added dollars will also give you more exposure, i.e. advertising can run over a longer period of time or can be more frequent over a shorter time.

Cooperative advertising opportunities are regularly offered through wholesalers, RTAs, RTOs and Tourism and Events Queensland.

Devising a successful advertising strategy can take a bit of time and effort. Your advertising tactics should reflect your brand and your business philosophy.

You need to:
- research the media channels your markets use and when they use them
- create the ideas and let the words and pictures tell your story in a consistent and coherent way
- reflect your business look and feel
- develop a schedule that maximises your media exposure and return on investment
- use a mix of ATL and BTL advertising methods

If it’s more convenient, you can employ an advertising agency to develop an advertising strategy for you.

The media channels you choose to use vary greatly in terms of cost, preparation and production, but they should all be focused on the one result – sales.
Brochure

A brochure is a popular form of marketing to promote a product or service. It is an important form of advertising to establish brand identity and capture the attention of potential customers.

When developing your brochure remember to include the following:

- contact details, including your phone number, email address and website
- validity dates of the brochure – the tourism industry season is usually from 1 April to 31 March
- address and map
- prices – remember not to alter these throughout the season to keep your brochure current
- high-quality images of your product
- unique aspects about your product and a regional context
- opening times
- business logo

Use standard brochure sizes – DL or A4 to reduce your production costs and ensure your brochure fits neatly into display racks.

Make the copy easy to read, factual and accurate. Don’t get too flowery with your words. Although it may sound obvious, put your product name where it will stand out and people will notice it. Besides producing your own brochures, you will be constantly bombarded with opportunities to advertise in other travel and tourism brochures. Before deciding on which, if any, brochures you will run with, ask how many are being printed, how they are being distributed, whether there is a theme to the brochure and what types of other product are involved.

Six simple steps to creating an effective brochure:

1. Research your target market and the type of brochure they are looking for, look at your competitors brochures, consider your budget and the size of your brochure you would like to produce
2. Content should include key headings, bullet points, simple language and full contact details
3. Write a catchy heading for the front cover to entice consumers to your brochure
4. Choose a ‘hero shot’ for the front cover that best represents your product. Ensure images are of a high quality and contain people experiencing your product. Include a simple map along with your address
5. Consider using a professional designer, printer, and copywriter
6. Think about distribution and where it will displayed, such as your local VIC, local businesses, accommodation outlets, shopping centres and trade shows

Television, radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards and transit

The media listed in the heading above are the traditional mass media used for advertising. If needed, media sales representatives, advertising and PR companies can help you design the right media mix for your campaigns.

Here are some tips on how to make the most of your marketing spend:

- Know your target audience and tailor your messaging and media to suit them
- Keep your message simple and be brief – don’t drown out your message with too many words
- For billboard and transit advertising let your pictures tell the story. Use no more than five to eight words plus your call to action, i.e. either a website address or telephone number
- For newspapers and magazines, try to buy space on the odd pages, i.e. 3, 5, 7, etc. These are the first pages readers see when they turn the page
- For radio and TV, consider working with a media buyer on a schedule with a mix of 15-second and 30-second ads to give you more coverage
- Where possible, schedule advertising in the time slot and within the programs your target audiences watch and listen
- Print publications often have discount rates on distressed space, i.e. advertising space that hasn’t sold close to the print deadline. If a particular media channel is used by your consumers, then go for it. But remember, there’s no advantage to compromising your advertising strategy for a cheap deal
Public relations and publicity
Building your corporate identity and credibility with consumers and trade partners is best achieved through old-fashioned relationship building or networking, otherwise known as PR.

Familiarisations
Familiarisations (famils) enable your trade, media contacts and partners to experience your product first hand. In the domestic market, they are regularly organised by operators, RTOs and Tourism and Events Queensland, as well as some wholesalers.

Below are some general tips for managing your famils:
- Be a good host. Greet your famil guests and treat them as VIPs during their stay
- Take the time to show them your product
- Be on time and well organised with your scheduling
- Cater to their individual needs
- Check on how they are going throughout their visit
- Don’t pack too much in to the day – let them take time to enjoy the best of your experience
- Get their contact details
- Don’t offer them anything you wouldn’t give a regular guest
- Say goodbye and follow up within a few days with a short note of thanks

See the Trade and Media Familiarisations section for more on this topic.

Media releases
Getting your message to consumers through the media often requires sending a media release to travel and tourism journalists.

Here are some things to keep in mind when thinking about press releases:
- Get to know travel writers and the travel press, and build a rapport with them
- Only issue media releases when you have important news to tell about your product
- There must be a point or hook to your release, e.g. a new tour, major upgrades, received an award, etc
- Start with the facts of who, what, when and where, then explain the how and why later in the release
- Stick to the facts and be short, sharp and truthful. The maximum length of a release should be one A4 page
- Put the main information in the top few paragraphs and use one sentence per paragraph
- Don’t ask to see what a journalist’s article says before it is printed. Journalists fiercely protect their objectivity and don’t want to be told what they should write

See the Media and Publicity section for more tips on this topic.

PR kits
These include brochures, business cards, media releases and a USB or disk of high-resolution images of your product and experiences.

Provide easy-to-pack promotional gifts that are either unique or everyday items branded with your logo and contact details such as a toll-free number and website address. Always offer to send PR information in a digital format if required.

See the Media and Publicity section for more tips on this topic.
Trade and consumer engagement

You are the best person to sell your destination and business. You’re passionate and driven and understand what you do best. By utilising your personal selling style, you can have an incredible influence on your sales and promotions. That personal touch can make the difference in how people enjoy and remember their experience of and with you.

Trade shows

If you’re looking for a cost-effective way to reach many trade partners at the one time, then trade shows are a must. These provide an opportunity for one-on-one discussion about your product.

Many wholesalers and travel agency chains such as Flight Centre run trade shows or events during the year and invite operators to participate.

Some RTOs run workshops for domestic travel buyers, often as part of a regional famil and will invite their members to meet with trade partners, generally for a fee.

Consumer shows

Consumer shows and expos give you a chance to sell direct to your potential customers. Different shows target different audiences. Depending on your product and target market, there’s probably a show to suit, e.g. travel, caravan and camping shows, and even more specialised events such as boating shows. If you are an exhibitor:

- Select a site close to the action, close to the entry or centre of the exhibition, or on the main aisle of the venue
- Share costs by finding a product that is complementary to your own and partner in an exhibit, or speak to your RTO to see if they are attending
- Your stand needs to reflect your destination and experience. Attract consumers with music or action footage or some other kind of interesting/captivating feature
- Have plenty of brochures and information materials on hand and consider giveaway coupons or vouchers as added enticement
- Promote your destination first and your product second. It is the destination that speaks first and foremost to the consumer

Hot tips

- Remember to sell and promote the destination and the range of experiences available
- Your trade partners love to hear about what’s new – remember to keep them updated with your new products or experiences
- Keeping in touch and developing strong relationships with your trade partners is critical to the success of your business
- You compete with many other products for their attention and unless you are prepared to invest time and energy in cultivating close links with your trade partners’ agents, you’re likely to drop off the radar
Sales calls
Sales calls are when you organise individual appointments with your trade partners. They are sometimes coordinated by RTOs and involve a number of operators working together. Sales calls arranged by the RTOs tend to promote similar types of products from the same destination. Below are some tips to get the most out of your sales calls:

- Develop a schedule for your sales calls based on the level of turnover or potential turnover an agency or wholesaler can generate. If this is coordinated by your RTO, request a copy of your meetings so you know who you are meeting with.
- If you haven’t got time to do all the calls yourself, consider contracting a company to do it for you.
- If you have a new product or experience offering, remember to share this with your trade partners.
- Make appointments with the distributor with plenty of notice and be on time.
- Prepare material that is helpful to your trade partners and sells your product and experiences in the best light, e.g. fact sheets, brochures, display material and a USB or DVD of images.
- Your promotional material should accurately reflect your brand and give a professional look and feel to your information.
- Find out as much as possible about who you are dealing with and pitch your product to them in ways that meet their needs.
- Remember to actively promote the destination you operate in and the experiences it offers. A well-known phrase in tourism is ‘destination first, product second’.
- Make sure you follow up on your sales calls and the people you meet, and stick to your commitments.

Product training
You can lose potential sales if your staff and trade partners aren’t fully informed and kept up to date on changes to your product, procedures, rates and/or prices. It is important to:

- Hold fun and informative training sessions for your staff and trade partners.
- Put together training manuals to help wholesalers and Retail Travel Agents learn about your product, services and experiences.
- Consider including other products to make the training more interesting for participants and more cost-effective for you.
- Think of ways that trade partners can sell your product and share these ideas with them.
Sales promotions

Use promotions to drive sales through shoulder or quiet periods; introduce new product or services; and remind customers and trade partners about your experiences. These can be introductory rates for a new experience or a special rate for bookings leading up to special occasions such as Valentine’s Day, Mother’s Day or Father’s Day.

Sales promotions need to be integrated into your marketing campaigns so that every aspect of the campaign is working together for the best result.

Sales incentives

Offering incentives to wholesale and RTAs is a great way to increase sales. Incentives are a reward for sales performance. They can be gift vouchers for your product or to top events, retail stores, or other experiences. When an agent exceeds their sales targets, another way to reward their efforts is to pay a higher commission rate.

To claim an incentive, wholesalers and agents need to become extremely familiar with your product and get used to talking it up to customers. This will cement your product in their minds and you may find that long after the incentive promotion is over, they’re still selling your business because it comes naturally to them.

Sales incentives should be part of a concerted effort to engage with your key wholesale and retail partners.

If you’re running an advertising campaign or other major marketing activity, that’s the time to consider running an incentive program with your trade partners.

Competitions

Customers love competitions, particularly if they can win a free holiday package. Competitions help to reinforce your advertising messages.

- Partner with the media, trade partners or other product to develop a competition that will attract lots of interest
- Tie your competition back to your overall marketing strategy – a competition is simply a means of emphasising your message
- In some cases a permit might be needed to run a competition (see below)
- Use the opportunity to build your database by seeking entrants’ permission to contact them with other information

There’s a lot to consider before you undertake a competition – it’s a complex process. For example, each state has different rules and regulations governing competitions and how they are run. Your best bet is to check with Queensland’s Office of Fair Trading where you plan to conduct your competition. That way you can be confident of avoiding any snags along the way. The following links will help with information and support: Queensland’s Office of Fair Trading and the ACCC.
Direct marketing
If you want to take a personalised approach with your consumers, there are some direct marketing options you can use. These include telephone, SMS, mail out and email. Direct marketing is most likely to succeed when you keep on message, provide a good offer or deal, and use a high-quality and validated database.

- Create your own customer database or buy a contact list that is based on your target markets and ensure the database is professionally maintained
- Arrange for vouchers and coupons to be inserted in your local newspapers, magazines or local business directories
- Letterbox drops can be effective; companies offering this service can provide you with statistics on which locations will most likely match your target market
- Use eNewsletters and subscriber notices to promote upcoming promotions. Ensure to get permission to use your customers email address. Refer to the Spam Act 2013 for more information
- Use SMS or text messages which include information about on site events, dining and entertainments options and special loyalty deals

Digital marketing
The internet is a key way to promote your product. There’s lots of ways to use technology to your marketing advantage. Website, eNewsletters, social networking sites, search-engine marketing, digital advertising, podcasting and SMS messaging are all ways to reach consumers.

Find out more from the Digital Marketing section in this guide.

No matter how much money, time and effort you spend promoting your product, and however you do it, if you don’t deliver the experience your consumers expect, all your hard work can go to waste. Word of mouth can be the best recommendation for your product or the worst. Make sure you give your customers what you’ve promised.

Tracking and monitoring
Keeping track of what worked and what didn’t work and why, will help you to get better at putting your advertising mix together.

- At the first point of contact ask your customers how they heard about you
- Name and assign a special code for each of your packages so you’re able to track enquiries and sales
- Have a tick and flick survey sheet that your staff can quickly complete at the time of enquiry or booking
- Track hits to your website and where they came from
- Keep track of the number of coupons redeemed
- Ask media outlets to provide you with a report on the completion of each campaign that will show if your advertising reached its mark

Keep checking and questioning your strategy. Ask yourself questions like how consumers will feel when they hear, see or read your ads.
Tourism and Events Queensland advertising resources

Tourism and Events Queensland cooperative advertising opportunities

Each year Tourism and Events Queensland puts together an advertising campaign program to promote Queensland and its destinations.

Sometimes these campaigns are run in conjunction with wholesalers. You will have to be in that wholesaler’s program to be part of the campaign and bookings will go via the wholesaler. At other times, there’ll be no wholesale partner and the call to action will be direct to the operator.

Whatever the case, there’s a process to follow and you need to be a member of your RTO to become involved.

1. Before a program starts, TEQ sends out a proposal to operators. The proposal outlines the campaign details and participation options.

2. If you’re interested, you complete the form at the end of the proposal, which will include your offer. For example, three nights for $XXX.

3. You then pay a fee to participate. For example, advertising an online holiday deal on queensland.com costs around $150 for a two-month period.

4. Your offer is then included in the campaign advertising, i.e. on the campaign website and/or the campaign press ads, depending on which participation option you’ve selected.

5. If you’ve signed up for a campaign, know when the advertisements are going to appear and inform all key staff so you can effectively track the business it’s generating.

6. Tourism and Events Queensland will ask you to complete a feedback form on the sales generated by the campaign. This information is kept confidential and helps the organisation with its planning for future campaign activity.

Benefits of Tourism and Events Queensland cooperative advertising

- Being part of a large and targeted campaign with a substantial media spend
- Cost-effective advertising
- Your product is associated with the valued Queensland and destination brands
Example of a Gold Coast cooperative print feature
Example of a destination cooperative print feature (in this case, The Mackay Region)

Tourism and Events Queensland standalone advertising
The Queensland Government annually spends a significant amount purchasing media, which provides them with buying power. As such, it qualifies for special media rates in most Queensland and national newspapers, magazines and other media.

As a statutory body of the Queensland Government, Tourism and Events Queensland can pass on these specially-negotiated rates so you save money on your own advertising campaigns.

If you're interested in finding out more about marketing campaigns and advertising opportunities visit teg.queensland.com/Advertising.

There are some conditions associated with standalone advertising such as the need to include Queensland or destination branding in your ad. This can be as simple as a banner, which runs along the bottom of the ad. These destination banners have recognition in the marketplace. Using them can strengthen your appeal and credibility in the minds of consumers.
Digital Marketing
Making the most of your online marketing

Takeaways

- How to develop and manage an effective website
- Integrate and manage your online content
- How to maximise your online sales
- Successfully develop and manage customer relationships through the online environment
- Know how to optimise your website for search engines
- Reaching your target markets through social media
MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR ONLINE MARKETING

Introduction

The internet is sophisticated, fast moving, flexible and can link your product to the global mass market in a nanosecond. With 80 per cent of consumers using the internet to research holiday and leisure options, it’s a primary source for tourism information and booking transactions. As far as business is concerned, the benefits of the internet can’t be underestimated. It offers:

- fast and cost-effective ways to reach potential consumers and target markets
- efficient administration and management of your bookings through online booking systems
- exposure of your product through online distributors
- extensive opportunities for advertising, promotions and sales
- easy ways to measure and track online marketing campaign activity as well as consumer visitation to your site and their activities
- opportunity for your existing and potential visitors to share your information and their experiences easily
- identification and development of new markets
- improved customer service
- cost savings in communication, accounting, banking and financial management

"OK", we hear you say, "I’m up with the times, I have a website." That’s all well and good but it’s really just the start. This section of the guide will take you through all the facets of digital marketing that will help you get the best from your online investment, including:

- content, e.g. words, images, video, interactive tools etc.
- technology, e.g. content management systems, templates, booking systems etc.
- marketing tools to promote your site, e.g. pay per click (PPC), eNewsletters, social media etc.
Planning Your Online Strategy

Components of an online strategy

It’s a good idea to consider and bring the components of digital marketing together in an overall online strategy for your business, such as we’ve done in the diagram below. These components should work together to ensure that you are achieving the most from your online presence and marketing efforts.

**WEBSITE AND CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**
- Graphic design of website
- Programming of website
- Copywriting
- Integration into a content management system
- Hosting
- Domain name
- Online booking system

**SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION**
- Initial keyword research and search engine optimisation of content
- Regular development of new content
- Regular assessment of search engine rankings, Google Analytics, referring traffic sources, online bookings and enquiries, and any other digital activity

**ONLINE MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA**
- Email marketing
- Online advertising
- Online distribution
- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest
- Photo and video sharing
- Paid search
- Online reviews
- Other online marketing
An appealing website that is optimised for mobile, interactive and integrated, and that you can update whenever you need to via a content management system (CMS), is critical to making a success of your online presence.

**Your website** is the first impression customers receive of your product and your primary means for communicating with them and converting their interest into bookings. You need to greet them through your online personality and presence with the same energy, care and attention as you would if they walked through your door. Additionally, as many customers will be visiting your site using a smartphone or tablet, it needs to work on small as well as large screens. It should be attractive, showcase your business well, and allow users to easily find and locate information.

- **Search engine optimisation (SEO)** enables your consumers to easily locate your business online. It boosts your ranking in search engine results pages (such as a Google search) so your site appears high up in the listings.

- **Social media, online reviews and rich content** offer visitors to your site a range of experiences that enrich their understanding of your product, and offer affinity with your brand as well as the functionality to have real-time interactions with you. For example, social networking and content sharing sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram, booking facilities, blogs or review sites such as TripAdvisor. These are referred to as Web 2.0 technologies because they are about two-way communication and the exchange of information online.

- **Integration** takes a holistic approach to both online and offline marketing. The idea is to maximise campaign coverage and penetration in your target markets using a mix of communication channels to attract consumer buy-in. Digital marketing may include the use of email, PPC advertising, banner ads promoting your product on other websites, beacons, digital out-of-home advertising, blogs, Really Simple Syndication (RSS), location-based, podcasting and social networking sites.

Offline marketing through broadcast and print media, billboards and transit advertising, flyers, brochures, events and promotions can strongly reinforce digital marketing campaigns and should be considered as part of any online marketing strategy. It is recommended that you include your website address and indicate which social channels your business is involved in.

The potential of digital marketing is incredible and powerful. However, the fundamental principles are exactly the same as traditional forms of marketing. You need to do your research. You have to know your target markets, how they use the internet and other technologies such as mobile phones or tablets, what is likely to attract them, and how to convert consumer interest into sales. You also have to look at your own business, how you operate now, and your operational capacity in the future. Your digital marketing strategy should account for how you plan to conduct and/or manage:

- your future communication needs
- your expected business growth
- future business development and partnerships
- your internet marketing, resources and budget
- competitiveness
- customer service delivery

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**Hot tips**

- Use web professionals to help you set up, design and optimise your website
- Ask your web professional about off-the-shelf webpage templates like [WordPress.com](http://WordPress.com), [Joomla.com](http://Joomla.com), [templatemonster.com](http://templatemonster.com) and other low cost website options. This can save you time and money
- Keep in mind your email protocols so you can manage your online relationships with success
- Use the [online business planning template](http://onlinebusinessplanningtemplate.com) to help you get started with your online strategy
The digital environment is evolving all the time as new technologies emerge. As well as maximising your capabilities for now, you want to be in the know and well positioned enough so that when the next big thing breaks you’ll be ready, willing and able to use it to grow your business.

In fact, that’s probably the biggest requirement of all – to be willing to change with the times and prepared to invest in new technologies and up-skilling yourself and your staff. Within your circle of friends, family, staff and business associates there’s a wealth of knowledge you can tap into. Everyone can contribute to your further understanding of ways to improve your website and keep up with the latest trends. Online discussion groups, newspapers and magazines are also excellent sources of information.

If you need help getting started with your online strategy, try the online business planning template, available via the Federal Department of Communications and the Arts’ website. It will step you through the process of planning your online strategy, identify where your business can benefit from online technologies and setting your priorities.

Tourism Tribe is an online community that uniquely combines learning resources, tourism experts and digital coaches to make a real and immediate difference to the business capability of the tourism industry.

Members of Tourism Tribe have access to:

- 70 tourism tutorials covering 12 topics focused on online marketing and distribution designed specifically for the tourism industry
- Help forums moderated by accredited Tourism Tribe e-kit trainers as well as digital and tourism experts
- An online chat hotline for quick advice and guidance on where to find help
- Critical updates and tips to alert members to crucial technology changes and how to deal with them, including bite-sized pieces of advice and instructions to quickly equip members with new skills
- Customised one-on-one coaching with accredited trainers and tourism experts, for an additional charge

Tourism Tribe operates on a subscription basis. For more information visit tourismtribe.com.
Planning and Managing Your Website

A great website brings together a rich formula of functionality, navigation, content, look and feel and back-end smarts to provide visitors to the site with an overall rewarding experience. Above all, it must be interesting, informative, logical, easy to navigate and accurate. This might sound basic but it can be a challenge to get things right.

Planning is important. Not just planning what’s on your site but planning for how it will be managed and maintained over the long term. The web is no different to other avenues you use to attract business, such as product marketing and development, sales, or customer service and delivery. Your web presence sells you and your experience.

Prepare for the fact that websites are always a work in progress. It’s not a static medium. Just like with your business, you never stop tweaking and changing things to increase your appeal, and every now and then you need to give them an overhaul. Think of it this way – your website promotes your product to potential consumers everywhere. Even if you only target the domestic market, you’re playing in a big pond. No matter where you are in the world, people can click onto your site to see who you are, what you do and what you offer.

So, put yourself in the consumers’ shoes. Be them searching for an ideal holiday experience. Look objectively at what you get from your site and how it stacks up against your competitors. Does it have all those qualities we mentioned above? Is it a positive experience to visit your site? Does your website have the wow factor? Is it easy for visitors to find the information they need, and to contact you or book?

Also ask your family, friends and staff what they think about your site and how you can improve it. If consumers come to you online and can’t find what they are looking for fast, they’ll quickly move on, most likely never to return.

Targeting your online consumers takes finesse. You can’t hard sell. You need to shape your online presence in ways that connect with and communicate your story to your consumers. This is achieved in many different ways but at the frontend it has a lot to do with your look and feel. There are some dos and don’ts that govern the look and feel of your website which help to achieve the results you and your customers are looking for.

Graphic design

- First impressions count. Welcome your guests to a website that’s well laid out, uncluttered and intuitive to their needs
- Use graphics, imagery and video to communicate the nature of your product and highlight the experiences on offer
- Stick to a template for your webpage layouts so consumers know what to expect as they move around your site
- Have consistent and multi-navigation points on each page
- It’s best to use colours that tone in with your logo and brand, and that convey the essence of your business (as long as they can be seen on a screen)
- For readability, use easy-to-read fonts, for example: Verdana, Arial, Trebuchet and Century Gothic, and avoid italics in small text
- Make sure there is good contrast between the text and the background colours
- Make calls-to-action obvious and bookings facilities easy to use
- The resolution of your images will dictate how large you can make them on the screen
- Use images that are clear, well defined and neatly fit the space of your template
- Never stretch images to fit, and avoid the use of blurred, faded or pixel-blotted images
Other website tips:

- Video is a brilliant way to show off your product and if done well, can be a strong tool for converting consumers.
- DIY video is absolutely fine to use and you can film, edit and publish it using a smartphone camera (iPhone, Samsung or other smartphone provided it has at least a 5 megapixel camera).
- If you don’t have a digital video camera, just be sure the vision you take is in focus and close up to the action.
- When you’re launching a new marketing campaign, make sure you have left enough time to create new website pages or update existing pages to include supporting information.
- When running a campaign, ensure all information such as pricing, dates and offers is consistent (and remember to update your site once your campaign is over).

Programming your website

You don’t have to be a programmer to build a good website these days.

Websites such as Wix and Weebly have ready-made site templates while WYSIWYG editors or WordPress allows you to customise a website with your own images, colours, logo and information for a small monthly fee. Alternatively, you can work with a website design and development person or agency, who will produce a custom-built website for you.

Whichever option you choose, make sure your website is built in search-engine friendly code – preferably the latest HTML standard, called HTML 5, and the latest CSS standard, called CSS3. Avoid building your website using programs such as Flash or Silverlight as they are not read by search engines and rely on up-to-date plugins to be used properly.

Don’t forget about mobile. Mobile device usage in travel is growing rapidly and it’s important to take this into account when planning and designing your website. Growing numbers of travellers are viewing your websites on a smartphone or tablet – either when planning their trip at home or when they have arrived in your region and are looking for accommodation, dining options or activities. Can they navigate and use your website on their phone just as easily as on a desktop or laptop? Can they book using a very small screen, or will they get frustrated and leave?

Your website should work and render well on a small screen. Either design and build a separate website that is purpose-built for a small screen or build your website using responsive design. A responsive website is one that resizes without breaking to fit on any size screen from a smartphone to a large desktop monitor. Ask your developers about responsive design or their solutions for accommodating mobile users.
Copywriting and content

In order to successfully target your markets through the web, you need to know how they tick, how they search for your business online, and their expectations once they enter your website. Regardless of the age of your consumers, online users expect the basics, which are:

- content – information about your product or service that is of interest and useful to your audience
- good quality (high resolution) images and videos showcasing the experience/s you offer
- contact details including telephone number, email address and office hours/opening hours
- map/location of your product, with directions if necessary

The diagram below gives an example of how you might approach planning your online content.

Planning your website content

Ensure that your website copy showcases and describes your business in its best light. As well as information about your business, location, prices, and specials, include useful links to other businesses that provide complementary services to yours, for example transfers to/from your accommodation/tour.

Don’t forget to make it easy for visitors to book via a “Book Now” button located in a prominent position on all pages of your website, or via an enquiry or booking form that you check daily.
Copywriting for the web

Reading online is different to reading print, and it’s important to take account of this when you are writing your copy. Keep your content short, interesting and informative and write in plain English, with no unnecessary words or confusing jargon. Put key information up the top, don’t bury it down the page. Give logical and short names to your website navigation, and break up a long page of text with logical subheadings that summarise each paragraph. Keep sentences short and paragraphs small, with one idea per paragraph. Bullet points are also acceptable.

Increase information accessibility for people with disabilities (for example, use alternative tags or captions that briefly describe the image on all photos). Remember that your users may be reading your copy on a very small screen, so keep it short and snappy.

Think about how your users will be moving through your site and write your copy to help them do this quickly and with minimum effort. Clearly define the experiences and activities your product offers without too many adjectives or ‘flowery’ language.

Make sure you also highlight other products in your region to help visitors decide to visit. You can now link other Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) products to your website for a cost of $100 (ex GST) per month. For more information, visit distribution.atdw.com.au/pricing

Integration into a content management system

Updating and managing your website via a CMS will save you many wasted hours and dollars, and give you flexibility to change and update your website whenever you need to. Apart from flexibility, regularly updating your content will help your website to rank more highly in Google search results, so it’s more important than ever to have an easy way to update your site.

There are many CMS options, both open source and custom-built. Some of the well-known open-source systems include WordPress and Joomla. Your agency or developer may also have developed their own system. Whichever option you choose, it’s wise to consider the following before committing:

- **Cost** – how much will the CMS cost you to implement and for ongoing use?
- **Ease of use** – how easy is it for you to login, edit and publish content?
- **Flexibility** – can you edit everything in your site including adding pages, changing copy and images, adding or embedding video and PDFs? How will the CMS work with your online booking system if you have one?
- **Training** – is training available to help you learn the system? How much support is offered and is there a cost?
- **Upgrades** – if you are using a custom-built system, has your agency factored in upgrading and maintaining the system so that it works with new versions of browsers and Google search algorithms?
Online Booking Systems

Once you have established a good website with great information, an online booking system is the ideal next step. Without this capability, your website is acting more like a printed brochure and you’re not taking advantage of your real-time connection with consumers or online exposure. Bookings are your business and utilising your website for conversions is the most efficient means of getting ‘bums in beds and bums on seats’. There are basic functions that your booking system needs to perform. These include the ability to:

- display your availability in realtime
- accept payments in a secure environment
- integrate with other selected distributors’ websites
- update your inventory on your website and all networked distributor sites when a purchase is made

So, how do you go about choosing a booking system for your business?

You can look into custom-building a system, however, in the long run that’s likely to be the most expensive option and it may not give you the stability, integrity and integration capabilities you need. There are plenty of off-the-shelf products that will do the job. The benefits of purchasing an existing booking system are that you receive guarantees and back-up support. These programs have been tested and proven over time, and that’s a very handy thing when it comes to technology. Before deciding on the system best suited to your business we suggest you scrutinise the list of systems available and talk to people in the industry, including other local businesses and your regional or local tourism organisation, to get an idea of what they’re using, what’s working and what’s not. Once your system is installed, it’s then a case of up-skilling so you and your reservations team can handle the applications with confidence and ease.

Hosting

All websites require hosting – that is, storing your website files on a server that allows access to the internet. Hosting costs vary depending on the size of your site, the level of traffic you will generate, the amount of storage space you need, as well as the level of security you require.

Ask your developer to recommend some options for you, or other businesses with websites similar to yours. The main issues with hosting apart from cost are uptime – how much the hosting provider is prepared to guarantee that your website will be live 100 per cent of the time, and security – how safe your site is from malicious attacks and hackers.

Domain name

A simple and easy-to-remember domain name that fits your business and actually means something to your target markets will go a long way towards your online success. Your domain name will become your main call-to-action on all advertising so it needs to be easy to remember.

You can have a few different domain names to cover your product offerings, but try to stick to one main website address in your advertising and always include your business name. If you’re a farm-stay product you might have a domain name like blackmountainfarmstay.com.au or blackmountainfarmholiday.com.au.

Make sure you write out your domain name in full and look at it from all angles to make sure it makes sense and there are no unfortunate letter combinations. Also ensure it is not too long as you may be limited for space in some print and online publications.
Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

SEO is the key to getting your website ranked high in search engine results (e.g. on Google or Bing search results pages). If your site isn’t optimised you won’t get much business coming through and ultimately, for what it will cost to set up, you won’t get a return on investment. There’s a fair bit you can do to get optimised and it’s best to do it in the initial stages of setting up your site.

Initial keyword research and optimisation of content

A web professional can help you identify the keywords and phrases consumers are likely to use when searching online for your product and service type. When a consumer jumps online to search using a search engine such as Google, Yahoo! or Bing, they enter words that describe what they’re looking for.

Search engines determine how relevant web pages are to user searches by looking at keywords and related words on the pages of your website, how many quality sites are linking to your site and when your content was recently updated. You need to think of obvious and not-so-obvious keyword searches because not everyone thinks the same way.

When you’re putting your list of keywords and phrases together, start with the product and the experiences you offer, your location, your brand name and then extend these words out to include the descriptions of the types of experiences your consumers are looking for.

For example, if you’re a bed & breakfast at Maleny in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland called Jan’s B&B, your keywords might include bed and breakfast, B&B accommodation, weekend getaway, romantic weekend packages, secluded holiday cottage, Maleny, Sunshine Coast hinterland, art galleries and wineries, and the name of your business. These keywords should then be included in your website’s pages. Try to have no more than one or two per page, and avoid ‘keyword stuffing’ – in other words, write natural content that is easy to use, including each keyword at least once per page.

Make sure that all the pages you want Google to find are linked into your main site navigation in a logical hierarchy. Avoid having pages sitting out alone on the web without linking into your site as they are unlikely to be found by search engines and will not help your rankings.

Note that search engines still only read text, so have captions or descriptions around your photos and videos to make sure they are ‘indexed’ as well. Avoid using Flash for your website as search engines can’t read it.

If you’d like to start researching your own keywords, there are some easy-to-use free tools to help you. The Google Keyword Planner Tool can suggest keywords for you based on your ideas, show you the number of searches for each keyword and even what you could expect to pay per click if you decide to buy them.
Backlink strategy
Another key way to drive traffic to your site and improve your search engine ranking is to have other good quality and relevant sites link to you. Links into your site from affiliated sites create more threads on the internet for search engines to pick up on and follow and act as ‘votes’ for your site, helping to increase your ranking when someone searches for you in Google. Set up mutually beneficial links between your packaging partners, suppliers and anyone else who might have a genuine interest in linking their customers to your site.

Developing new content
Google prefers sites with regularly updated content – so make sure you are keeping your site fresh either with a blog, a specials page that you change regularly, or something similar. It’s best to update your site with fresh content at least monthly (even weekly or daily if you can), but make sure the content is good quality – no spelling or grammar mistakes – and ensure it is useful and relevant to your site overall.

Assessment of search engine rankings
There are a number of tools that you can use to check how you are ranking for particular keywords. The web browsers Firefox and Chrome have add-ons or extension tools, mostly free, that you can download and use with your browser to check rankings.

You can also just type your keywords into Google and see where you rank compared to your competitors, however make sure you try this on different computers as you will get different results based on your past browsing history whether or not you are logged into Google, and many other factors. Regardless, you can still pick up valuable insights this way.

If you want to tackle SEO at a higher level, then Moz is a great place to start, offering helpful tools, checklists, advice and commentary.

Hot tips
- Optimise your website in the development phase. If you already have a site, look into whether it’s better to optimise it or start again with a new site
- Avoid using Flash and other programs that will make your site content harder for search engines to understand
- Update your website’s content regularly to help your rankings, either via a blog, a specials page that changes regularly or another method
Other website considerations

Bringing your web elements together into one user-friendly package is the aim of all your web planning. There are usability guidelines to follow, but in general, the rules are:

- Minimise the time it takes for your site and web pages to load
- Include a site map and site-search tool
- Keep your website up to date
- Test links on a regular basis and ensure they take the user where they expect to go
- Ensure your site is secure – (HTTPS) if you are taking payments, and that you comply with the Australian Privacy Act if you are capturing email addresses or other personal details

A static website is of little use to you and your consumers. Creating a strong online presence and maintaining it to a high standard are essential to reach your audience online.

Online Marketing

It’s gratifying when you search online and find your product popping up all over the place, but the last thing you want to do is burn money on marketing that doesn’t work. There are some great and cost-effective ways to market online, but like all marketing, you have to pick your mark, know what you’re doing and integrate your activities to maximise the opportunity.

Until you get the hang of things, you might need to experiment to see what works – don’t forget you can track most digital marketing and this will help you to see if your efforts have been successful. You can use the range of digital marketing activity options listed below to drive traffic to your website.

- Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)
- Email marketing
- Pay per click (PPC) – also known as search engine marketing (SEM) or AdWords
- Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and YouTube
- Banner advertising
- Email marketing
- Customer review and location-aware sites such as TripAdvisor, Yelp, Foursquare and Swarm
- Working with digital influencers, i.e. bloggers (don’t forget to ensure they use links to your website)
- Media releases
- Partnering and bundling with other operators

Your best chance of converting customers online comes from using a mix of these tools and resources. In the online environment, your website is your product. A well-planned, attractive, interesting and informative site that’s easy to use and ideally, offers secure booking facilities, will appeal to consumers, and assist in turning them from browsers into buyers.

Hot Tips

- Use email to directly communicate and build relationships with previous and potential customers
- Use PPC/SEM to run cost-effective online campaigns in the lead up to peak times and shoulder periods
- Become a member of Google My Business, visit the site regularly and take advantage of the free resources it offers to businesses
Email marketing

Use the digital environment to communicate regularly with your past customers through an email newsletter program. You can use your own customer database, partner databases or purchase relevant databases to communicate with your target markets about special offers, packages and new developments or regional news.

A well-maintained database of interested contacts is an important asset that you can use for promotions and repeat business. It’s best to use an email tool such as MailChimp or Create & Send, or a service such as Vision 6 rather than Outlook, as you are less likely to be blocked or caught in spam filters when you send bulk emails. You can also glean valuable information about your customers from these tools that will help you to become very effective at email campaigns as they allow you to track i.e. open and click-through rates.

Avoid problems with the Spam Act 2003 and damage to your brand by ensuring you have consent to email people. The easiest and best way is to have a checkbox for people to tick on your enquiry or subscription form, or an email signup widget on your website (make sure neither of these are pre-ticked!) You could also have a paper form on your registration desk and encourage people to sign up with an incentive.

If you are collecting email addresses you must also adhere to the Australian Privacy Act 1998 which has rules around collecting, storage and use of people’s data.

Keep your database up to date – unsubscribe people quickly (most email tools such as Mailchimp will do this automatically) and ensure email addresses are correct in order to minimise bounced email addresses. If your list is not up to date and there are a lot of bounces each time you send an email, you may risk being blocked as a spammer by some internet service providers (ISPs).

Finally, track how many emails were opened and which links were clicked, as well as how many sales you got from your emails to help you understand what information and offers your target market is most interested in.
Online distribution

These days, consumers might use both traditional and online sources when making their travel arrangements. For instance, they might scour through brochures and then book online, or search on Google, visit travel websites, find what they are looking for and book over the phone or through an agent. Even so, they are increasingly more likely to book online because it’s fast, easy and convenient.

In the tourism industry, the best way to gain more exposure for your business online is through the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) – a national tourism database that feeds a network of up to 60 travel sites including queensland.com, australia.com and Regional Tourism Organisation websites. Consumers use these sites to source information about destinations and product such as accommodation, tours, attractions, events and transport.

How the ATDW works

For further information visit teq.queensland.com/atdw or contact TEQ’s ATDW team via atdw@queensland.com or call 1800 629 749

What’s in it for me?

- Distribute your tourism business on up to 60 websites.
- ATDW automatically updates the distributor websites on your behalf.
- Maintain your own listing online and update at any time.
- Participate in Tourism and Events Queensland’s online and cooperative advertising campaigns.
- Inclusion in the This is Queensland application for both iPhone and Android devices.
- Access to the Tourism Exchange Australia (TXA) booking platform which transfers ATDW product listings into a “bookable” product.
- ATDW monthly website performance reports showing top page views, keywords and the most popular distributor websites. These are available now, once you log in to myATDW.
- Subscription to the ATDW eNews
Managing your distribution

Managing your distribution is a complex business. Australia has a massive number of distributors. Some of the best known are Siteminder, the Booking Button, or Rezdy. To keep on top of things, you’ll need to track where your bookings come from and how much they are costing you. This kind of monitoring will enable you to evaluate each of your distribution channels and compare their market effectiveness and your return on investment.

Fees and charges vary based on the distribution channels you use. In the online environment, you might want to work with channel managers who, like wholesalers, can simultaneously distribute your product widely across the networks without fuss. For example, Tourism Exchange Australia (TXA) is a booking platform that draws on the information you provide to the ATDW. You only have to enter your details once and update the information as required. Once you settle on your main distribution partners, you can concentrate on exploring new opportunities as they arise.

One trap to watch for, however, is that consumers often expect to pay less if they purchase direct and online. But no matter how they book – through an agent, direct or online, you need to ensure price parity. There’s nothing worse than selling your product at different prices and then having your customers and distribution partners discovering the difference down the track. They just end up feeling like you’ve ripped them off.

A set amount of your inventory can be allocated to your distributors each day. Alternatively, through real-time inventory, you give distributors access to your entire inventory all the time and availability is automatically updated. Obviously, there are definite efficiency dividends in using real time.

The online environment is brilliant for managing your distressed inventory as well. Sites such as Wotif.com, lastminute.com.au, hotelclub.com.au and RatesToGo.com.au are examples of the many sites dedicated to moving your distressed stock fast at discount prices.

Tourism and Events Queensland’s consumer website Queensland.com has a global website presence. By becoming a member of the ATDW your product is also distributed through the following:

**Apps:**

- Apple & Android Smartphone App
- IPad App
- Apple & Android adds (simplified & traditional Chinese)

**Global social channels:**

- Facebook
- Pinterest
- Twitter
- Weibo (China)
- Instagram
- WeChast (China)
- YouTube
- Youku (China)
- Consumer eMail marketing programs globally

Tourism and Events Queensland’s consumer website Queensland.com is the number one travel site for holiday planning in Queensland. Tourism and Events Queensland invests considerable resources into promoting it throughout Australia and the world. Queensland.com promotes Queensland tourism operators through product listings via the ATDW. Therefore, it’s a massive advantage to belong to the ATDW to leverage the benefits of this marketing force.
Online advertising

Finally, if you’d like to advertise online, in addition to PPC or SEM offered with search engines such as Google and Yahoo! there are a range of other travel sites, news websites and other publishers to consider. Many provide opportunities such as banner/display advertising, text links and email marketing. Market intelligence is used to place advertising on the pages most likely to be viewed by your target consumers.

But be aware, the results of these types of placements can vary as consumers tend to scan pages and unless they are actually looking for a business such as yours, may not be tempted to even look. For this reason, PPC can be a very cost-effective method of driving traffic to your website as you only pay a predetermined amount when someone clicks on your ad. This type of advertising targets consumers who are searching online for a particular product or service. Once you get them to your website, you’ll have a much higher chance of converting them to a sale.
Tracking and reporting

‘You can’t manage what you can’t measure’ is an enduring business truism. It is important to measure, track and report on how well your website is working. With resources such as Google Analytics, you can automatically track:

- visits to your website
- traffic sources – search engine, direct traffic and referring sites
- content – what visitors are looking at on your site and in what order
- conversions – bookings, email
- enquiries, subscriptions to your newsletter, etc.

If you track your website traffic, over time you can find out the best sources of traffic and conversions, as well as the most relevant and engaging content, and identify any roadblocks that might be stopping your website visitors from contacting you or booking. You can even receive information like the country or city that most of your website visitors come from, their age, interests and lots of other valuable information that will help you refine your products and marketing messages to achieve maximum effectiveness.

In short, the data you can extract from the reports allows you to see in a snapshot what’s working on your site and what’s not. You can track your traffic as frequently as you like – what consumers are interested in, how long they stay on your site and your conversion rates.

The information you get from Google Analytics can make evident the things you might need to fix on your website and also highlight new opportunities.

You can also track your site’s effectiveness on social media, your email newsletters, and your banner or PPC advertising campaigns. You should receive regular reports and reconciliation from your online booking system and your distribution partners, if you have them. The more data you learn to read and interpret, the more effective you will be in internet marketing and managing your business.

TEQ Digital Ready video tutorials

Why not learn about a new digital marketing topic from the comfort of your own computer? Tourism and Events Queensland provides access to free one-hour tutorials via its corporate website. Digital Ready video tutorials feature popular topics to help your tourism business prosper online.

The tutorials have been recorded and published on YouTube for you to view as often as you wish.
Social Media

Getting started and benefits

Being accessible to your target markets via a website is a basic requirement these days. As we discussed in the introduction to this section, as part of your digital marketing strategy, you could also consider extending your digital presence using social media sites such as:

- microblogging sites – Twitter, Tumblr
- content sharing sites – YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr, Instagram, Pinterest,
- online networking sites – Facebook
- trip review and location-aware sites and apps – TripAdvisor, Yelp, Foursquare and Swarm

The benefits of marketing using social media can be enormous. Social media platforms allow you to distribute your content much further than can be reached via your website, and to target audiences who would never have thought of searching for you.

It’s also a great way to provide customer service, answering queries and dealing with complaints or compliments.

Whether or not you have a social media presence, your business may be being discussed on platforms such as Facebook, or reviewed on TripAdvisor. Studies show that 80–90 per cent of potential customers believe online reviews and are influenced by them when researching a trip, whether or not they know the reviewer. So it’s a good idea to get across the basics of social media even if you don’t intend to start using it yourself.
Social media platforms

Facebook is both a great way for customers to reach you directly, and an effective ‘bragging rights’ platform where potential customers can find out about you via posts from their Facebook friends. Get to know how to manage and use Facebook – it is an incredibly successful social networking site.

Twitter is all about short and sharp messages that are 140 characters or less, and needs regular attention. Make sure that your tweets add value to your users – are you posting valuable engaging content that they are interested in, or just talking about yourself?

Include hashtags on Twitter and Instagram to help users find your content and to reach new audiences. Some of the standard hashtags for tourism businesses in Queensland are #thisisqueensland, and #seeAustralia #restaurantAustralia. You could also include your region’s hashtag (#visitsunshinecoast), location (#Maleny) or your type of business (#bedandbreakfast). Do some research on what hashtags your target audience is using.

Photo-sharing sites like Pinterest, Facebook and Instagram are a wonderful opportunity to distribute quality images of your business. Create an attractive photo gallery on Instagram or Pinterest that shows your product, function centre, rooms, wildlife or anything else that is relevant and attractive.

Good quality videos of your product and other visitors enjoying themselves are a good way to get noticed and convince a potential customer to book with you. Upload your video footage to YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Vimeo or Flickr.

Constantly check TripAdvisor, Yelp or your Google Plus page for feedback on your product and ask happy customers to post a message and share how they felt about their experience.

Hot tips

Respond positively to negative feedback on TripAdvisor or Facebook. It’s best not to let a complaint or bad review sit there unanswered – respond as quickly as you can, or delete negative feedback as this may aggravate the complaint owner and other consumers. Thank the consumer for their comments, and calmly and politely state your side of the story. Correct the facts if they are incorrect, and solve the problem if you possibly can.
Photos worth sharing

Queensland’s social media team knows their audience loves photos. Luckily for us, Queensland is one of the most photogenic places in the world.

On social media, it’s important to use photos and videos with the wow factor – something remarkable that stops followers in their tracks and leaves them with no choice but to hit the like and share button.

Here are some examples of popular content:

**Landscapes**
Inviting slices of paradise
Photo by Thala Beach Lodge
[See it on Facebook](#)

**Surprises**
Surprisingly Queensland experiences
Photo by Sue Reid
[See it on Facebook](#)

**Sunshine**
Sunrise. Sunset
Photo by 1770 Liquid Adventure
[See it on Facebook](#)

**Cute**
Cute animals doing cute things
Photo by Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary
[See it on Facebook](#)

**Envious**
From where you’d rather be
Photo by qualia
[See it on Facebook](#)

**Entertaining**
Entertaining with humour mixed in
Photo by Jester / Hamilton Island
[See it on Facebook](#)
Developing a social media strategy

Using social media platforms to market your business takes time and commitment. Don’t try to take on too much, too early. Get your website right first and then look into other opportunities. Perhaps choose one platform to start, such as Facebook, and do that well, before strategically selecting others to work on.

A social media strategy should have a posting calendar – a calendar of articles, photos, videos or other content and the date that you will be posting, which platform it will be posted on, and any notes that are relevant. You should also develop a social media policy for your business that clearly states who can post, what is and is not acceptable to say, what to do if there are complaints or negative feedback, and anything else that staff might need to know.

How often should you post, and what are consumer expectations around frequency? There is no absolute answer to this, but as a rule of thumb, you should post as often as you can – at least once per day – and deal with queries or complaints as soon as possible, preferably immediately. Consumers who might be quite happy to wait on a call centre for 20 minutes will expect an immediate answer to their question on Facebook.

So one consideration before entering into social media is whether you have the resources to manage it well and respond quickly to consumers. The table below will give you some idea of best practice and is intended as a guide only.

Week of social media and content posting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Album post (what visitors did on the weekend)</td>
<td>Inspiring photo post (use an image from Instagram)</td>
<td>Deal or offer lead link</td>
<td>Promote YouTube video</td>
<td>Photo post with weekend focus message</td>
<td>Photo post (schedule)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Daily post and monitor community</td>
<td>Daily post and monitor community</td>
<td>Daily post and monitor community</td>
<td>Daily post and monitor community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TripAdvisor</td>
<td>Review feedback and respond</td>
<td>Review feedback and respond</td>
<td>Review feedback and respond</td>
<td>Review feedback and respond</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Upload video</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>Pin image or website content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Approach to social media and content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Why should I use this channel?</th>
<th>Moderation of audience or community</th>
<th>Content Type and Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blog/website</td>
<td>2 times a week</td>
<td>Fresh content is important for visitors to your website and for search engines.</td>
<td>Respond to comments on blogs, Review Google Analytics data regularly to understand what consumers are doing on your site and tailor as required.</td>
<td>Photo blogs, Video blogs, How to blogs, Itinerary blogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eNews</td>
<td>Send once a month</td>
<td>Promote content on your website and blog, Promote content from digital influencers and media. Re-use images from social media (where you have approval) Use tactical offers and deals when needed.</td>
<td>Review database monthly or quarterly, Is your email audience opening your email? Are they clicking through to your website or other digital assets?</td>
<td>It’s best to use short segments of copy, strong images and bold call-to-action buttons or text links to encourage clicks through to your website or other digital asset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Once daily Max. 3 times a day Min 2 hours apart.</td>
<td>Connect with your visitors and potential visitors. Build up a story with your Facebook fans with inspiring images, helpful planning tips and deals with links to relevant areas to book on your website.</td>
<td>Daily moderation is recommended. Consumers on Facebook always want to know the location of images.</td>
<td>Images, Video, Blog and website links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>Once daily Allow at least 3 hours between posts</td>
<td>Connect with people who have experienced your product. Remember to share your Instagram account name and hashtag. A great way to source images to use in social media (if a hashtag is used).</td>
<td>Daily moderation is recommended. ‘Instagrammers’ always want to know the location of images.</td>
<td>Images and videos including Flipagrams. (don’t forget to keep an eye on user-generated content, i.e. people tagging your business or using your hashtag).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Ideally multiple times a day NOTE: Tweets with images are much more engaging!</td>
<td>Engage with Twitter community (and your potential visitors). Share inspiring content and deals. Retweet your visitors’ experiences.</td>
<td>Important to review mentions and people using your hashtag for engagement or feedback purposes.</td>
<td>Images, Video, Blog and website links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TripAdvisor</td>
<td>2–3 times per week</td>
<td>See what consumers are saying about you and get involved in conversations with potential and existing customers.</td>
<td>Responding to people’s reviews (whether positive or negative) is very important.</td>
<td>Written feedback, Images of your business (provided by you and your visitors).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>As videos are available – ideally weekly</td>
<td>YouTube is the second biggest search engine in the world. Video content is important for destination selection and accommodation and things to see and do.</td>
<td>Check in on video comments.</td>
<td>Video content (don’t forget about writing a strong title and video description that will help people find your video in YouTube)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>2 times a week Max. 5 pins at a time</td>
<td>Create Pinterest boards and pin related content to these. When you want to use Pinterest to drive traffic to your website, ensure you have included the correct link.</td>
<td>Understand who is repinning your content and check your followers.</td>
<td>Pin website pages or blog content and use high-end imagery and video thumbnails.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measuring success on social media

Major platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have their own measurement analytics that will help you identify which posts were the most popular, how many fans, followers or visitors you have. Some platforms will also give you information on your users, such as age, interests and location. This information can tell you where you are succeeding and what needs to be improved, which means that you can become more effective with the types of content your can publish. You can also track which platforms are sending traffic to your website via referrals in your website's Google Analytics data.

While it’s important to know how many followers you have, it’s also important to know how engaged they are with your posts, so make sure you are tracking engagement, likes, retweets, comments and shares, as well as the size of your audience.

You can also use link-shortening services such as bit.ly to help you track the popularity (or otherwise) of your posts.
Local networks
There are opportunities to have your photos or posts featured on Tourism and Events Queensland and Tourism Australia’s social media sites, opening your content up to a wider audience.

Follow and connect with Tourism and Events Queensland

Find us on Facebook:
facebook.com/visitqueensland

Follow us on Instagram:
Instagram.com/queensland
@queensland
#thisisqueensland

Follow us on Twitter:
Corporate account – twitter.com/teqld @teqld
Consumer account – twitter.com/Queensland @Queensland
#thisisqueensland

Find us on YouTube:
youtube.com/queensland

Download our free app:
The This is Queensland App is available for iPhone and Android queensland.com/apps as is the Explore the Sunshine iPad app

Follow and connect with Tourism Australia

Facebook:
facebook.com/seeaustralia
#seeaustralia

Instagram:
Instagram.com/australia
@Australia
#seeaustralia, #restaurantaustralia

Twitter:
Corporate account – twitter.com/TourismAus @TourismAus
Consumer account – twitter.com/australia @Australia
#seeaustralia, #restaurantaustralia

YouTube:
youtube.com/australia

Australia app:
Download the There’s Nothing Like Australia App for free on iTunes
Three ways to strike up a conversation

1. **Post a Queensland photo** to the Visit Queensland, Australia Facebook page. This is one of the places where the social media team looks for new content to post. When a photo is reposted a credit will be attributed by tagging the Facebook page of the photo owner.

2. **Use the #thisisqueensland hashtag** on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Google + and Pinterest. This hashtag is one of the tools Tourism and Events Queensland uses to collect community photos and stories for retweeting or featuring. (TIP: Also use #seeaustralia in Twitter and Instagram to let @Australia know about your photos too).

3. **Mention @queensland** on Twitter and Instagram to let us know what’s happening.

Managing multiple accounts

There are many platforms to help you keep track if you have multiple social media accounts. Hootsuite is one of the best known. You can view your social media feeds in real time, schedule posts, allocate tasks to staff members, receive alerts for potential complaints, and much more. It has a series of tutorials to help you get started, and is low cost.

While managing multiple accounts seems daunting, it is possible to update daily without cutting too much into your day if you are efficient and use some of the tools provided. Sean Blochesidge of the Market River Discovery Co. recorded a helpful tutorial with Tourism and Events Queensland full of tips and hints to make your social media management easier and simpler.

Social media and the law

Social media is covered by consumer and advertising legislation. Some of the areas where you could fall foul of the law include:

- Employer-employee issues such as unfair dismissal
- Intellectual property/IP/copyright infringement
- Defamation
- Competition provisions

It’s important to understand your responsibilities as there have been cases of prosecution in the above and some other areas.
Mobile marketing and apps

Apps can be an excellent way to tap into the mobile market. It is not difficult now to build a simple app yourself using platforms that don’t require coding such as Appy Pie or AppMakr, or you can tap into apps such as Tourism and Events Queensland’s This is Queensland App which showcases your region and business via your ATDW listing.

While a website houses your main presence, an app can be an excellent way to enhance your online presence and your brand, as well as drive interested traffic and bookings to your site. If you can see that users who are on the go need information, help, or functionality that will assist them and drive business to you, consider how an app could fill this need. If an app is outside of your budget, a resource dedicated to managing website enquiries can assist consumers when they’re on the go.

Digital marketing in China

China is the hot market for many tourism operators as many visitors from China are fascinated by Australia and see it as their ideal holiday destination. However, marketing to Chinese visitors can be quite different to marketing to Australian audiences, and it is possible to outlay a lot of effort and budget without success if you are not sure what you are doing and do not understand the Chinese culture.

For more information on Becoming China Ready visit: teq.queensland.com/Be-China-Ready

Buzz words

The online environment can feel like another world when you first become involved and for some the experience can be intimidating – even scary. This is compounded by the fact that everyone speaks a different language. Yes, like every other industry, the internet has its buzz words and acronyms.

Getting to know online terms and acronyms is a key to unlocking some of the mysticism that surrounds the Internet and its applications. Not only will you have a better understanding of what your web professionals are talking about, knowing the language will help you work out how things fit together. Once you’re up to speed it’s easy to grasp new concepts, applications and terms when they arise.

Need more information on social media buzz words like ‘Tweet’, ‘Like’ or ‘Share’ – Check out Hootsuite’s social media glossary
International Marketing
Setting your sight on the global stage

Takeaways
- Everything you need to prepare your product for international business
- An understanding of Queensland’s international target markets
- How to work effectively with international distribution systems
- Making the most of international trade and consumer shows
- Utilising international marketing opportunities
SETTING YOUR SIGHT ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

Introduction

Worldwide, Australia aims to position itself as offering many of the hero experiences that appeal to international visitors and has earned the reputation for being a ‘must-see’ destination.

Tourism is Queensland’s second largest export earner. In the year ending June 2015, Queensland welcomed 2.2 million international visitors who spent over 50 million nights in the state and $4.6 billion on their visits.

These kinds of figures can quicken the pulse, but unless your product is ready, you’ll need to do some serious work before launching to inbound markets. Much research, planning and preparation is required to ensure a product is ready for the international stage. You need to:

- build your knowledge and contacts through advice from the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC), Tourism and Events Queensland, your Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) and local operators who are already working internationally
- know the inbound markets that Queensland and Australia targets
- research these markets and learn what the customer is seeking
- identify your potential to sell to those target markets
- understand how the international distribution systems work and the commission required
- develop your plan of attack, i.e. a marketing and distribution strategy for each market
- make the necessary changes to your business to account for the needs of each market

Be aware that international visitors are restricted in the time they have to experience your product. Tailor experiences based on these constraints and make it feasible for customers to participate in your activities in relaxed and convenient ways.
Inbound target markets

In most cases, operators begin by marketing their product domestically, grow into a strong position, and then take on the inbound markets. This is often the best approach. At the highest level, Australia divides its markets into Western and Eastern markets. Queensland targets several key and emerging markets in both, and each market has its own trade structure and marketing needs.

Tourism and Events Queensland has a presence in 14 international markets in addition to a head office based in Brisbane, and it targets:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market definition</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Markets</td>
<td>UK, USA, Japan, Singapore, New Zealand, Hong Kong, China, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary markets</td>
<td>Canada, Korea, Malaysia, Switzerland, India, Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging markets</td>
<td>Middle East, Indonesia, South America, Europe – Italy, France and Scandanavia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Markets often vary in the types of experiences they seek and how they tend to travel. Your product may not gain traction across all inbound markets, even if it’s top quality. This is because so many factors come into play when you’re dealing at the international level. Your ability to meet market demand is affected by:

- the range and uniqueness of your experiences and their cultural appeal
- the convenience of your location
- visitor age, travel itineraries and time constraints
- routine travel patterns of international visitors within your destination
- aviation schedules and capacity
- quality or degree of surrounding infrastructure
- where your competitors are located and how long they’ve been established
- the effectiveness of your distribution networks
- the level of cooperative regional activity that occurs in each inbound market
- the reliability of your prices.

Your strategy will need to align to the industry’s international operating environment, as well as the cultural nuances of each market in order to succeed. It’s important to work within the markets that offer the best potential and expand into other markets as you gain ground.

**Hot tips**

- Do your research – identify the needs and expectations of each target market and which of these are most compatible with your product and experiences
- Take a good look at your competitors. Visit their product and learn as much as possible about their international operations and their target markets
- Become familiar with aviation routes, timetables and seat capacities of airlines and the travel habits of your target markets
- Prepare a market strategy and budget for each market you plan to target. Be realistic in your predictions for success, set prices for the medium term and account for distribution commission structures and rates

Subscribe to Tourism and Events Queensland research updates teq.queensland.com/eNewsletters
Planning for International Markets

The strategy basics

Tourism and Events Queensland works in many different markets. What really counts is having support in place from your Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) to assist in driving numbers of international visitors directly into your region. Tourism and Events Queensland, Tourism Australia, RTOs and relevant airports partner together to develop sustainable direct international and domestic airline services, and to increase aviation capacity into the state. Queensland has a big advantage over other states because it has five international airports, including – Brisbane, Cairns, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Townsville – which all offer enormous growth potential. Secondary feeders are cruise shipping, drive and touring routes also play important roles in attracting visitors to Queensland.

For product that isn’t located close to an international airport, the ability to expand into international markets is reliant on having frequent and reliable transfer systems in place to collect and deliver visitors door-to-door at their convenience. Another good strategy is to either package or work with other product in your region to create a strong and united force to promote your products and destination. If these basics are in place, you will need to think long term about the resources it will take to break into the markets you’re going to target. Consider how much you’re prepared to invest and set realistic expectations for a return on that investment.

Establishing and growing your distribution channels and international presence takes time, energy and significant financial backing. Trade and marketing opportunities roll in thick and fast and it’s crucial for you to regularly and repeatedly:

- attend trade missions overseas and in Australia
- build strong links with product buyers, sellers and inbound tour operators (ITOs) and visit them regularly
- support and work on cooperative campaigns with Tourism and Events Queensland and Tourism Australia’s international teams
- independently develop marketing packages, partnerships and campaigns

The benefits

Once you go global, you’re competing in a massive marketplace but like most things in life, the more you invest, the greater the reward. Exporting your product offers its own benefits and enables you to:

- diversify into new markets
- bridge shoulder periods and override seasonal fluctuations
- spread your risk across domestic and international markets
- reach vast numbers of potential consumers
- increase your profitability (yield)
- improve your product and experiences
- develop a world-wide network of colleagues and friends
- promote Australia, Queensland and your region as well as its unique and exciting qualities
- improve your product standing and reputation within the global tourism industry

Global travellers

Tourism and Events Queensland and Tourism Australia target ‘Experience Seekers’ across a range of international visitor markets. Within this broad category, travellers are defined by other particular nuances such as origin; travel choice based on cultural preferences; the style of travel; and type of experiences they enjoy.

As pointed out earlier, the markets are often broken into Western and Eastern – to reflect their varying cultural needs. We also refer to them as long-haul and short-haul markets based on their distance from Australia.

Traditionally, travellers from long-haul markets have seen Australia as a big holiday commitment. For them, it’s a once-in-a-lifetime experience that is going to take time and cost a lot of money. They tend to visit the iconic spots and cram as much as possible into tight itineraries. This perception is likely to change however, as new and larger aircraft enter the market and direct flights become more common.

On the other hand, short-haul travellers view Australia as a convenient holiday destination and visit often, getting to know the place and their way around. They may visit the icons but are more likely to take their time to accomplish travel goals over a number of trips.
Travel styles

Visitors choose their style of travel according to the purpose of their trip whether it is for business, family, leisure or other reasons. Budget, cultural inclinations, age and travel experience play a part in how visitors prefer to travel. Tourism Australia defines the style modes as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Inclusive Tour or Travellers (GIT)</th>
<th>Fully Independent Travellers (FIT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Pre-purchase the bulk of their holiday before leaving home via distributors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Prefer structured itineraries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have highly organised and pre booked tour arrangements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use distributor’s preferred products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Common in less mature markets and with certain segments such as educational groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Like the freedom of planning their own arrangements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Arrange some core holiday components prior to arrival</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- organise the bulk of their itinerary independently often after their arrival</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rely heavily on word of mouth, the internet and social media when planning their trip</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partially packaged travellers</th>
<th>Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Pre-book 'skeleton package' of airfares, transfers and accommodation prior to arrival</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Search for competitive rates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Optional themed extras such as car hire and tours are offered at the point of sale to appeal to different segments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cite friends and relatives as the primary reason for travel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Often travel beyond the family base to other destinations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rely on the recommendations and advice of their Australian-based friends and relatives when planning their trip</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Education Travellers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Spend at least one night in a backpacker hotel or youth hostel during their stay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Traditionally 18 to 25 year olds but often people aged 30 and beyond travel this way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Prefer a highly independent and unstructured approach towards travel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rely heavily on the internet and social media for information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Often include voluntourism in their travels - volunteering for a charitable cause</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Include short course participants, long term university students, school excursions and exchanges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cite study as the main purpose of their visit but there may be a tourism component to the trip</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have families who may visit and travel throughout the course of study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Often require specialised arrangements depending on the age of students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Travellers</th>
<th>Special Interest Travellers (SIT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Include delegates of a large conference or an individual on a business trip</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Often include a component of leisure travel during their visit such as pre and post-conference touring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Include delegates participating in an incentive tour – a specialised business segment which rewards performance with travel experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Offer high yield as the per-head spend is often very high</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Travel for reasons associated with personal interests such as agritourism, health and wellness or bird watching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 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</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have customised itineraries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Offer high yield but often low volume</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism Australia, Planning for Inbound Success, Volume 3
International Distribution Channels

Unlike the domestic market where everyone uses the same distribution structure, international distribution systems vary from market to market. It’s vital you know and understand what structures are in place in the markets you plan to target.

The traditional structure of the international distribution system includes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Inbound tour operators (ITOs)</strong> based in Australia. Their role is to package itineraries and sell them direct to ‘in-market’ (overseas-based) wholesalers and distributors. For this reason, ITOs are extremely helpful in getting your product to market.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Wholesalers:</strong> Wholesalers are located in 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.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Retail travel agent (retailer or RTA):</strong> based overseas and is the link to the international consumer. International distribution can vary considerably from market to market. It is not uncommon for an ITO to be part of a larger company that may also operate as a wholesaler in an overseas market, or for a wholesaler to operate the travel agencies that sell the product.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Wholesalers and travel agents rely on ITO recommendations because they are based in Australia and have knowledge of tourism products and a single point of contact for information on new Australian product and experiences. ITOs know the individual products and their operators as well as where they fit the market. They will help you work out which markets your product is best suited to, package it into suitable itineraries and sell it into multiple markets at one time.

At any given point, you may be working with several ITOs depending on how many markets you are targeting. Each ITO will specialise in certain markets and have a deep understanding of the respective consumer needs, industry players and how the structures operate. They are valuable resources. You will need to get to know them well, communicate with them openly and frequently, and make it as easy as possible for them to sell your product by providing them with good quality and up-to-date information, brochures and training support.

It is important to recognise the rapid growth of online travel bookings through online travel agents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Online travel agents (OTAs)</strong> specialise in online distribution and have no intermediaries. They deal directly with consumers and tourism product. Consumers can purchase products or an entire holiday package from the comfort of their home. Online distribution is less structured than the traditional distribution system and commission levels may vary. Before establishing a contract with online partners do your research, visit their site online, see how it operates and how the site will promote your product.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
How the distribution system works

With the relentless and rapid change in technology, consumer knowledge and booking trends, the distribution supply chain is a moving feast. The individual parts in the chain are clearly defined but increasingly, they are evolving to meet new demands. Businesses are engaging in a mix of distribution partners to ensure the most effective way of reaching their target customers.

The diagram below shows the Traditional Distribution Channels chain and highlights the customer’s ability to deal directly with suppliers, wholesalers or travel agents depending on their booking preference. The New Distribution Channels chain highlights that traditional distribution continues to evolve with the increase of wholesalers and travel taking an online approach. According to Tourism Australia, the chain will vary 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.

Traditional Distribution Channels

![Traditional Distribution Channels Diagram]

New Distribution Channels

![New Distribution Channels Diagram]

How the booking process works:

1. A TOURIST in the USA has seen some beautiful footage of the Great Barrier Reef on television and has been recently chatting to her friend about their amazing holiday in Queensland Australia. Australia has always been on her bucket list so she decides to find out more.

2. The TOURIST visits her local RETAIL TRAVEL AGENT in the USA to enquire about a trip to Queensland. She decides to book the holiday of her dreams, a six-week adventure including a diving trip to the Great Barrier Reef, accommodation, flights and car rental.

3. The RETAIL TRAVEL AGENT plans a Queensland Itinerary through the brochure of a TOUR WHOLESALER and then proceeds to book all tour options through them.

4. The TOUR WHOLESALER contacts an INBOUND TOUR OPERATOR to book each individual element of the tour itinerary.

5. The ITO contacts the individual LOCAL TOUR OPERATORS in Queensland to book each individual element of the tour itinerary.
International commission

When considering your rates, you must set your prices for the medium to long term and consistently apply them so that each link in the chain is able to extract a commission fee without impacting on your bottom line.

If you plan to sell your product through the distribution system, you will need to factor commissions into your pricing structure. Commissions are the fees paid to your trade partners to market, distribute and sell your product.

Each level of distribution system receives a different rate of commission. Your product needs to allow for these levels of payment otherwise it will make it very difficult to market your product through an ITO, wholesaler or OTA. From the diagram below you can pay around 10 per cent for each distribution channel with a maximum of approximately 30 per cent in total going to your distribution partners.

Where does this commission go?

You pay an INBOUND TOUR OPERATOR 30% commission directly

INBOUND TOUR OPERATOR

30%

TOUR WHOLESALER

The ITO keeps 10% and gives 20% to a TOUR WHOLESALER

20%

RETAIL TRAVEL AGENT

The Tour Wholesaler keeps 10% and gives the remaining 10% to the RETAIL TRAVEL AGENT

10% retained

10% retained

10% retained

Note: the diagram above is an example only. Many traditional travel distributors such as wholesalers and travel agents are taking an online approach and offering service from a retail store.
Rate parity is important – remember not to undercut your rate structures. Pay everyone their due and ensure everyone in the distribution channel offers the same gross rate.

It may seem that agents receive a large proportion of your profit. It is important to consider the volume of international business coming from each channel as a percentage of your total business as well as the benefits of working with international trade. Remember commission is only paid once a sale has been made.

On the point of being fair with your customers, it’s important to keep prices the same for both international and domestic customers. The customer should always pay the same price.

**Hot tips**
- Guarantee your prices from 1 April to 31 March each year
- Include validity dates on rate contracts and make sure all booking conditions are clearly stated
- Keep track of your distribution partners and don’t allow any to drop off the radar
- Simultaneously update them on changes so you’re not favouring anyone
- Point out seasonal changes in your product and the corresponding rate changes, if any, i.e. peak and low seasons, but avoid too many changes as they can lead to confusion

Note: Information on commission levels is intended as a guide only.
INTERNATIONAL MARKETING | SETTING YOUR SIGHT ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

If you publish a special deal on your website, it will be seen globally so remember to communicate with all of your distribution partners.

International visitors will expect to receive the equivalent price and your trade partners will want to be kept informed so they can make the necessary changes and pass it on. When you’re running a campaign for the domestic market only, or vice versa, make sure you use appropriate and discreet advertising and distribution channels.

Finally, regularly monitor how your distribution channels are performing. Work closely with your partners to set sales targets, improve sales training, and offer famils (familiarisation visits) and incentives so their job is made easier and they gain advantages for selling your product.

Items to consider:
- It can take many years for your product to be recognised or used by wholesalers in international markets. You need to be willing to commit to the long term
- Structure and develop your packages to suit the market you are targeting
- Visitors are often limited in the time they spend in any one location. Access is vital and a transfer strategy may be needed to overcome barriers of distance
- International visitors often have high expectations. Your standards in service delivery also reflect on your region, Queensland and Australia as a whole. Review and improve your service standards on a continual basis
- Visitors to Australia want to experience our way of life. Your product should have an Australian feel to it, offer unmistakable cultural qualities and experiences
- It’s important to have an existing customer base that can back up your credibility. Not all products are ready for a stand-up start in international markets. You might start out as part of a package with other tourism products and build up slowly through your ITO and distribution networks
- Don’t try to enter too many markets at once. It’s better to pick your markets carefully and make them a success
- Your RTO can help you to promote your product, offering marketing opportunities as they arise. It’s an excellent source of information and advice
- When producing brochures, websites and other marketing and promotional collateral, keep in mind they should appeal to both your domestic and international markets. See the tips on international marketing collateral
- It should be quick and easy to book your product no matter which distribution channels are being used, and terms should be clearly stated up front
- Maintaining regular contact with your distribution partners and providing them with updated information on your product is vital. Plan regular visits and participate in Tourism Australia and Tourism and Events Queensland trade mission shows and market briefings whenever possible
- Develop an ITO sales kit with all the relevant information about your product, including rates and high-resolution images
- If international target markets are some of your primary visitors, you may wish to publish your brochure, online information and promotional material in the languages of the markets you’re targeting
- Keep the ITOs, wholesalers and travel agents up to date with your product and regularly become involved in networking events, workshops and famils
- Build solid relationships, check the credibility of all your distributors, be upfront when dealing with issues and give them prompt and reliable service and turnaround times

Hot tips
Are you international ready?

Not all products are suitable for marketing overseas. Some products may need to be further developed before being marketed to international customers or only suit specific or niche consumer segments. Before investing your time and money in the international market refer to Tourism Australia’s checklist, if you tick **YES** to these questions then you are on your way to becoming international (export) ready.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is your business established in the domestic market?</strong></td>
<td>Very few businesses enter the inbound market without first establishing themselves in the domestic market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you have booking mechanisms in place for international markets?</strong></td>
<td>You should offer same-day booking confirmation via email or the internet within 3 to 4 hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you understand the international distribution system?</strong></td>
<td>Be familiar with the role of an inbound tour operator, wholesaler, online and retail travel agent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are you familiar with commission levels?</strong></td>
<td>You should allow up to 30% commission for distribution through Inbound tour operators and 20% for wholesalers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you understand online distribution channels?</strong></td>
<td>Understand how to distribute your product online and how this impacts on other distribution partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you understand the concept of pricing?</strong></td>
<td>Set and guarantee rates up to 18 months ahead to coincide with the travel industry calendar, from 1 April – 31 March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you understand where consumers can source information about your product?</strong></td>
<td>Be aware of user-generated-content travel websites and how these influence consumer’s product choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Have you researched international markets to establish where your product fits?</strong></td>
<td>Use industry resources to understand key source markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you understand the needs of international markets?</strong></td>
<td>Consider the travel styles, motivations, expectations language and cultural differences of international travellers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you have an active quality-assurance program?</strong></td>
<td>Provide consistent levels of service, quality products and reliable operating schedules to adhere to consumer protection laws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are you prepared to work cooperatively with Tourism Australia, your state tourism organisation (STO), RTO and local tourism organisation (LTO)?</strong></td>
<td>These organisations can offer a range of cooperative advertising and promotional opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Planning for Inbound Success, Tourism Australia*
Operator insight

“You’ve got to really understand each market and how it differs from the rest. Culturally, each market is diverse and this influences the way things are done. You need to understand how they operate and their distribution networks and adjust your sales and marketing approach accordingly.

It’s important to determine which markets are "the best fit" to your product. Be realistic. For example, your product may be suited to some markets, but not as a stand-alone. If this is the case, look at working/packaging with other complementary products already established in the markets of interest. And never forget the three basic rules of all good international marketing...relationships, relationships, relationships!"

Ben Woodward, Sales Manager – Western Markets, The CaPTA Group

International marketing collateral

Your promotional material needs to account for market differences. The following tips will help you get the basics right. Make sure to:

- look at other materials that have been prepared for your markets, how they are pitched and what they include
- use words that have an Australian ‘flavour’
- give concise, accurate and informative descriptions of your products and experiences
- use high-res imagery that supports your text
- include a map with Australia, Queensland and your business
- provide information on how to get to your business (use both miles and kilometres)
- include months of operation (not seasons as they are reversed in the Northern Hemisphere) if your product is seasonal
- tell them how to book, your full address, telephone and fax numbers with area codes, email address and website
- clearly set out the costs in Australian dollars
- allow space for the travel agent’s stamp and sticker – usually on the back of the brochure
- ensure your brochure is available for download from your website

Images should capture the Australian flavour
Smart Selling

International missions and trade shows are held all the time and are a valuable way to get to know product buyers and sellers from Australia’s key markets.

The benefits of these events are unquestionable, providing you target your involvement, do your pre-planning, have the right resources and follow up to make the most of each opportunity.

When you are starting out in international markets, you want to make a great first impression. Preparation and presentations for these events will vary depending on who you are meeting with.

Tourism and Events Queensland has an Industry Events Calendar that shows the dates and details of upcoming trade events. You’ll also often see these events mentioned in Tourism and Events Queensland’s weekly eNewsletter TEQ Industry News. Your RTO and Tourism Australia also organise and advertise trade events well ahead of schedule, giving you time to prepare.

Before you sign up to a trade event ensure you understand the terms and conditions. Talk to people who know the ropes and can help you avoid the pitfalls. You’ll get plenty of hints, tips and reminders from the organisers but don’t solely rely on them.

Do

- Have good knowledge about the markets you want to target
- Have your prices worked out and be ready to negotiate
- Expect to negotiate as buyers have a big choice of product and may not give ground to represent you
- Put effort into your planning, preparation and delivery
- Be flexible. Make changes to your product, services and booking procedures and incentives to secure their support
- Attend trade events, missions and market briefings
- Schedule your appointments well in advance – confirm a day or two before and be on time
- Know the top selling points that make your product stand out
- Make presentations brief and entertaining, packed with information, and include great images
- In Asia, use multilingual business cards, dress conservatively, learn the local customs, give gifts, ask advice and return their hospitality

Don’t

- Visit during public holiday periods or when major trade events are being held elsewhere in the world
- Play one operator against another or discredit another operator – they talk
- Neglect to keep records of your discussions or agreements, especially in relation to your rates and services
- Turn up without an appointment
What is a trade show?

Trade shows are a forum to meet key industry players 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. Events may be more cost and time-effective than conducting individual sales calls, however often your appointment time will be limited. If attending trade events, especially those held overseas, it is a good idea to incorporate individual sales calls, pre or post the event, into the visit.

Hot tips

- Trade shows require an organised and targeted approach, with clearly set goals and committed staff, to ensure you meet your trade marketing objectives
- Trade shows are held throughout the year, each targeting different audiences and designed to achieve different objectives
- They may target specific members of the trade distribution system (wholesalers, ITOs, frontline retail staff), specific market segments (adventure, backpacker) or particular industries (business events)
- Consider the selection criteria, structure and cost of the trade event
- Research the participation options
- Ask if the trade event is suitable for new product
- Ask yourself whether it will achieve your goals

Check out the Working with Tourism Australia video. This two-minute video explains how Australian tourism businesses can benefit from the agency’s campaign activity, research and market data. Its covers free resources, marketing opportunities and events.
What is a trade mission?

Tourism Australia, Tourism and Events Queensland and some RTOs conduct sales (or trade) missions into key overseas markets. These missions are useful for first-time entrants into the market as well as operators already established in the market looking to further develop their business. Visiting the market allows you to present your product to the local travel trade. Travelling as part of an organised sales mission allows you to present your product and destination alongside other complementary products to a targeted group of distributors.

What is a sales call?

Individual sales calls that you organise yourself are another way of supporting your international marketing efforts. Maintaining regular contact with your distribution partners and providing them with updated product information helps foster strong relationships. Face-to-face sales calls are an excellent way of building rapport.

Plan ahead. Prioritise who you want to meet with and what you want to achieve. If you conduct sales calls in conjunction with major trade missions or shows, expect that others will have the same idea and it could be difficult to get access to some contacts.

Set up meetings with TEQ’s international market teams. Make these appointments your first calls so you can get as much information as possible on market conditions before you start your rounds. You may also want to have a chat with your RTO and the TEQ International team based in Brisbane before you leave.

Hot tips

- 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 golden rule for international sales missions is ‘do your homework first’. The more preparation you do, the greater the return on your investment
- It is not about the amount of ground covered or even the number of meetings held. It is in seeing the right people from the right organisations that have an interest in seeing you and the potential to sell your product
- Follow up is vital
- Certain countries have customs not usual to Australia. Observing local courtesies and morals will be highly appreciated by your hosts and increase you chance of success
- Read all pre-event information and application forms and carefully note the cancellation policy and deadlines
- If appointments are available, research who is attending and request appointments with those most relevant to your product
- Obtain accurate information on the dimensions of your booth (if required) and its exact location to enable you to plan your display accordingly
- Make sure all your booth (if required) and marketing materials are ordered and delivered well before you need to leave

- Plan a call schedule – the number of times you visit will depend on how much business, current and potential, in-market trade partners generate for you
- You will also have an opportunity to meet with distribution partners at trade shows and workshops that you attend
- For international sales calls, the timing of your visit is also important and this will vary from market to market
- When planning individual sales calls in market for the first time, contact your RTO or Tourism and Events Queensland as they can assist with planning and introductions to key wholesalers and travel agents on your first sales visit
- Make sure you have something new and interesting to discuss or feedback to give
- Make an appointment and turn up on time
Trade missions and shows target Queensland’s key and emerging markets. They are a chance to meet and get to know the movers and shakers, big and small, of tourism distribution in the markets where you operate. It doesn’t matter how many missions or trade shows you attend or even how many buyers and sellers with whom you speak, what’s important is that you meet with the people who are actually going to sell your product. Be selective and attend those events that offer you the best opportunities to present your product to the right people.

Make a commitment to the events and trade shows that offer you value and are appropriate to your product, and turn up each year. This will:

- demonstrate your commitment to the market
- cement your existing relationships and forge new ones
- reinforce the quality of your product and any enhancements you’ve made
- help you plan for future developments
- improve your understanding of the trends and changes that are affecting your markets.

Pre-planning

Missions – based on your knowledge of who’s going to be attending a mission, do your research and find out as much as you can about the buyers and sellers participating.

Trade shows – if appointments are available, find out who’s attending and try to lock away some solid appointment times.

There are also networking opportunities so you can get to know a few new faces as well as catch up with your established contacts.

Remember to always have your business cards with you.

**Rule 1 – Find out which distributors from your markets are participating**

**Rule 2 – Get to know as much as possible about the markets, the distribution structures and who the key players are as well as how they operate.**

**Rule 3 – Never underestimate the power of good presentation – whatever you do, do it well**

**The right resources**

Presentation counts. Buyers and sellers constantly meet with new operators and you need to be switched on if you want to make a lasting positive impression from your personal presentation and friendly cooperative manner to the attitude and professionalism of your staff, the quality of your display material, brochures, training information and tools, giveaways and gifts, attention to detail, and cultural customs, punctuality and reliability.

Involve your staff from the start. Train your team thoroughly in what they’re expected to do and say and discuss all your plans and preparations with them. The more you engage them, the more they’ll give to the process and delivery.

**What you’ll need for tradeshows, trade missions, agent training and sales calls:**

- product brochures (hard copy and digital)
- fact sheets on the key features of your product (hard copy and digital)
- a sales presentation in several formats to give you flexibility and plenty of back up options, e.g. iPad, PowerPoint, CD, DVD or USB stick
- power cord for your laptop and phone, and appropriate adaptors if overseas
- plenty of business cards
- a USB or CD of high-res images
- promotional giveaways that best represent your business
- media kit – on occasion international media will be invited to attend events so be prepared with a media release and images
In addition to these items, when attending trade shows you’ll also need:

- an attractive booth that reflects your product and experiences
- branded packaging and practical/useful bags, gifts and giveaways that are lightweight and easy to pack and carry
- uniform or appropriate business attire
- enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff
- irrepressible energy
- note pad or iPad/laptop to record your discussion and follow up items
- brilliant listening skills

Rule 4 – Always send a thankyou, keep in touch on a regular basis and never stop learning.

Follow up

Regardless of how impressive your meetings have been, it is important to thank them for their time and follow up on any additional information requested in your meeting.

Keeping in touch with existing and new contacts is important. It may take some time for new contacts to kick in and to see some results. Set yourself a regular contact schedule. Call or email your main contacts every few weeks or more regularly to check how things are going and if you can assist them in any way. Also let them know of any changes you’ve made to your product.

Evaluate how things went and debrief with your team. Take note of what went well and what didn’t, and keep in mind the things you saw other operators doing that that impressed you. Include all your learnings into your planning for your next mission or trade show.

Operator insight

“When you first start down the road of being international ready, you seem to talk to lots of people, go to trade shows, send emails and make phone calls and after the first 12 months you start to think is this really worth it or are we out of our depth? You need to remember that you don’t need to get the attention of all of the agents at once, it can start with just one. Develop a relationship by following up and thanking them for their time. Give them good service and try and provide them with something that is new, make sure their clients have a great experience, and let them know that they can trust you. In time more will come. If a little old country girl like me can do it anyone can.”

Elise Wilson, Owner/Operator, Bestbrook Mountain Resort
Programs and Trade Events

Queensland On Tour
Queensland On Tour is an international roadshow that allows industry operators to meet with travel trade including travel agents, product managers and retail sales and travel agents.

Queensland on Tour aims to:
- increase awareness of Queensland and industry operators among trade and media
- meet with key marketing and product decision-makers from key tour operators
- educate frontline travel agents on Queensland product during training workshops

For information visit: tefg.queensland.com

Queensland on Stage
Queensland on Stage is an annual event for Queensland tourism operators and RTOs to showcase their products and develop and establish business relationships with international trade and media partners.

For more information on upcoming Queensland on Stage events visit: tefg.queensland.com

Tourism Australia trade events
Tourism Australia coordinates and participates in a number of international trade shows and events each year to promote Australia as a premier travel destination. The majority of these trade shows and events are held within key international markets bringing together the Australian tourism industry and travel agents and travel wholesalers from around the world.

For more information visit: tradeevents.australia.com

The Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE)
The Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) is Australia’s largest annual travel and tourism business-to-business event. It is a week-long event that brings together Australia’s tourism industry in a forum to showcase their products directly to tourism wholesalers and retailers from around the world, through a combination of scheduled business appointments and networking events. It is also a unique opportunity for international travel buyers to experience Australia firsthand.

For more information visit: tradeevents.australia.com

Inbound tour operator workshops and famils
Workshops and famils are an ideal way for Queensland suppliers to update ITOs on new products and services. It provides a connection for networking and building collaborative relationships.

Famil programs generally run pre or post the workshop event which is another chance to showcase your product.

For more information visit: atec.net.au

Aussie Specialist Program
Australia has developed strong links with distributors in key markets through Tourism Australia’s Aussie Specialist Program. Under the program, these Aussie champions learn all there is to know about our destinations so they can package and sell them with great skill and knowledge.

The program also offer operators marketing and promotional opportunities.

For more information visit: aussiespecialist.com
Trade and Media Familiarisations
Familiarity creates buyers and bookings

Takeaways
- How to prepare your product for trade and media famil
- Understanding of the processes behind famil
- How to make the most of every famil opportunity
- How to prepare your product information to make a positive and lasting impression
FAMILIARITY CREATES BUYERS AND BOOKINGS

Introduction

The best way to convince anyone about the quality of your product is to have them try it, right? Hopefully, having lived and loved the experience, they will come again and spread the word to others about how great it was.

Third-party referrals and testimonials are a fantastic endorsement of your product and strong reinforcement of your formal marketing activities. Generally, people trust word-of-mouth or third-party recommendations because they are seen as untainted. That’s why sites like TripAdvisor are highly valued and popular.

Familiarisations (famils) target three key groups:

- **Trade** – includes wholesalers, travel agents and inbound tour operators (ITOs)
- **Media** – includes journalists and writers for print, broadcast and online media outlets
- **Digital Influencers** – bloggers, Instagrammers, popular Facebook or Twitter users

In the tourism industry, trade and media are key third-party proponents of your product and story. Famils offer trade and media a taste of what’s on offer. It’s your chance to educate and win over the people who influence consumers in making their holiday decisions. If trade partners and travel writers know your product and like it, they can do a lot to sell it through their respective channels.

Tourism and Events Queensland’s communication about Queensland convey that it is made for holidays. As an operator, you can play a major part in spreading that message, particularly in your region, through participation in trade and media familiarisations.

Building trade and media relationships is an essential part of doing tourism business. After all, your product competes not just on a regional level, but with tourism destinations and products across the globe. And famils are a relatively low-cost way to promote your product to larger networks of trade and media.
TRADE AND MEDIA FAMILIARISATIONS | FAMILIARITY CREATES BUYES AND BOOKINGS

Hot tips
- Get to know the organisations that either organise or heavily sponsor famil programs
- Become business ready to host famils. Your operational and management systems will need to be up to scratch
- Think about and plan how to show off your product and experiences in creative fun and memorable ways
- Sell more than your product – sell the other great things about your destination and Queensland, and if you’re working with an international guest, Australia too

How to host a successful famil

Vying for the attention of the travel trade and media can be challenging at the best of times. To make the most of every opportunity and leave your famil guests with a positive lasting impression, you need to be prepared and professional in everything you do.

Let’s go back to first base, your starting point for everything is understanding your target markets and how they align with your marketing plan. This will help you decide if your product is best suited to the domestic market or if it will attract international markets too. For more information on target markets refer to Introduction section of this guide.

Being prepared for famils and gaining returns on your investment largely depends on knowing who you want to attract to your business, then targeting the trade and media that work in those markets because they’ll have the greatest interest in selling your product.

If there’s still a question in your mind about your product’s suitability for the international markets, the International Marketing section of this guide talks at length about preparing your product to be internationally ready. While there are differences in how you gear your product to meet either domestic or international market needs, or both, there are three stages to hosting a successful trade or media famil:

1. Prepare (before)
2. Host (during)
3. Follow up (after)

And here’s the breaking news – hosting famils is never just about you. Sure, your focus should be to educate famil participants on your product and experience, but just as importantly, your region too. You are imparting on them all the reasons why your product is preferable to others and that means talking up the destination as whole.
### How to host a successful famil

This diagram from Tourism Australia’s *Planning for Inbound Success* can be used as a practical checklist. Print this page as a guide to train your staff on how to host a successful famil.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>During</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✧ Understand the participants in the group – who are they, where they are from, what is their position, do they sell your product or have the potential to sell your product?</td>
<td>✧ Make sure that participants are welcomed – introduce yourself and exchange business cards</td>
<td>✧ Add the participants to your contact data base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✧ 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?</td>
<td>✧ Outline the program while at your property or on your tour</td>
<td>✧ Send a thank you email and follow up any requests for additional information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✧ Consider the available time and present your product as the customer would experience it</td>
<td>✧ Escort the group during the famil and be a gracious host</td>
<td>✧ Follow any sales lead opportunities presented by the famil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✧ Brief staff, making sure all staff are aware of the group</td>
<td>✧ Give time and attention to questions and make a note to follow up any requests</td>
<td>✧ Keep participants informed of any relevant changes or updates on your product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✧ Prepare information for each participant, tailored to their needs</td>
<td>✧ Provide an information kit and offer to post to participants</td>
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</table>
The Who and How of Famils

Domestic trade and media famils
On the domestic front, requests to be involved in trade famils will come from a number of sources such as your Regional Tourism Organisation, wholesale distributors and travel agents. Tourism and Events Queensland doesn’t organise domestic trade famils but actively promotes domestic product by organising media famils. If you’re interested in hosting domestic media famils you can let Tourism and Events Queensland know through media@queensland.com.

Inbound tour operators
Tourism and Events Queensland works closely with the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) to organise and run ITO famils, often as joint ventures. They pull together the programs and invite the delegates from different markets based on particular marketing needs, strategies and activities. You will need to be a member of ATEC to be involved.

International trade and media famils
Tourism and Events Queensland and Tourism Australia have international office networks that focus on international trade and media famils. The key objective for the famils program is to match tourism product with the interests and needs of the international famil delegates. The international trade and media famils program plays an important role within Tourism and Events Queensland marketing activities.

Trade
Travel trade representatives come to Queensland to assess product, compare rates, see attractions and inspect local accommodation. Their itineraries cover many more operators than media in a single visit and are much more regimented. They need to know what they are selling and identify other product suitable to their market. Famils can also help the travel trade to:

- Enhance their product knowledge and motivate the retail trade to sell Queensland tourism product
- Demonstrate to wholesalers and inbound operators that Queensland has a broad range of saleable product

Media
Media come here to experience our lifestyle and to discover what is special about Queensland. They then help sell our tourism assets to the world through publications, television programs, online, social media channels and images. Media need facts and a clear idea of what the state has to offer their audiences. They will be inquisitive and ask many questions. Their itineraries need to be flexible to allow times for interviews and other story leads that may arise during their stay. Media famils help to:

- Generate favourable publicity about Queensland as a tourism destination
- Create positive attitudes towards Queensland as a tourism destination in the hearts and minds of key decision-makers or opinion leaders

Tourism and Events Queensland’s international offices do the ground work to bring together the right mix of delegates for each famil. They then work hand-in-hand with the International Media and Trade Relations (IMTR) team based in Tourism and Events Queensland’s Brisbane office who organise the famils. The IMTR team has expertise and relationships with Regional Tourism Organisations and tourism operators. They play a strong role in coordinating these international programs at their respective regional levels.

Tourism and Events Queensland also works in partnership with Tourism Australia to assist with the coordination and hosting of trade delegations through its Aussie Specialist Program, as well as the International Media Hosting Program (IMHP).

Hot tips
- Make sure Tourism and Events Queensland, your RTO and the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) are kept up to date with information on your product and experiences
- Foster close relationships with TEQ team members including Partnerships, Publicity, IMTR (famils) and International. Keep in touch with them on a regular basis.
Ready, Willing and Able

There are some nuts and bolts you’ll need to have in place before you sign up for any famil programs. As well as being prepared to host famils free of charge (FOC) or at a discounted rate, your product should be:

- in excellent order and perform to high standards
- accessible and safe
- commissionable
- a member of your RTO – highly recommended
- registered with the ATDW – highly recommended

Before you commit to hosting a famil, you should also make sure you do your homework:

- Does the famil link to your target market?
- What organisation do they come from?
- What position do they hold in their organisation?
- What opportunities do they offer?
- Do they have real potential to sell your product, e.g. trade – are you already included in their program or is there potential to be considered?
- What value can they offer you, i.e. media – what coverage might you receive in return?

Tourism and Events Queensland provides you with much of the above detail when sending out the ‘Trade Famil Request’ or ‘Media Assessment Details and Request’. However don’t be afraid to ask questions and find out more if you’re unsure about anything.

If you’re planning for international famils, depending on which markets the participants are coming from, you may also need:

- Translated marketing and information collateral e.g. in Chinese, Japanese, German, Korean, etc.
- To provide services, facilities and menus that cater for differing needs be they dietary, cultural or religious. For instance, gluten free options, foods prepared according to Kosher or Halal traditions
- Policies and practices in place that observe cultural sensitivities, e.g. many cultures forbid the consumption of pork. If you serve a buffet, keep pork and its serving utensils separated from the other dishes

Once you’re ready, you need to contact Tourism and Events Queensland or your RTO to let them know you are interested in hosting famils. If either Tourism and Events Queensland or the RTO doesn’t know your product already, they’ll want to meet with you to discuss your operation and experiences to gain a clear understanding of how and where you fit the market. They’ll point out any areas you might need to strengthen before you begin and they can brainstorm with you to come up with good story angles for media famils.

Don’t be afraid to ask questions if you’re unsure about a trade or media famil request
TRADE AND MEDIA FAMILIARISATIONS  |  FAMILIARITY CREATES BUYES AND BOOKINGS

Hot tips
- Gather as much detailed information about the famil and the participants
- Provide commentary with your experiences so delegates can really get to know your product and its best attributes
- Your delegates will have a busy itinerary. Help them to relax and enjoy the time spent with you by being on time and staying on schedule
- Find out what other products are on the itinerary and if any of your competitors are on the list so you can focus on your points of difference and highlight your advantages

The tell and sell of famil success
You want to blow the socks off your media and trade guests because if they love your product, they’ll tell others about it and nothing sells better than glowing referrals and recommendations.

To give your product a leading edge, look for points of difference that will make your famil guests feel special. For example, if you’re hosting a German famil and you have a German chef, introduce them and give them time to chat.

Media are constantly on the lookout for a good story. To make the most of your media opportunities it’s important to know what journalists will need during their stay. Below, we’ve listed a few points to help make each famil worthwhile:
- Do your research on the outlet and what the media is looking for, i.e. what is their story angle, story style or areas of interest
- Plan an interesting and relevant itinerary
- Allow time for interviews and filming/photography
- Allow time for the media to fully experience your product – schedule breaks and time to themselves
- The best stories highlight authentic and unique experiences. Profile Australian personalities or characters or teach the audience something new about the destination

Operator insight
“We are committed to accepting as many famils as we can, and offering them at no charge, subject to availability. We have seen time and time again that the cost of hosting a famil is returned many times over in the free publicity they generate, or the increased bookings we see from agents who are more familiar and enthusiastic about our products. While we want the experience to be as authentic as possible so that media and trade see the product through the eyes of an everyday traveller, we either supply a dedicated host (for VIP famils), or ensure our crew are fully briefed about the famil. We always ensure we supply a trade or media kit so that they have everything at their fingertips after the experience.”

Danielle Krista, PR Manager, Cruise Whitsundays
Information and communication

The success of your famils largely depends on your ability to communicate to the delegates as well as having them experience the product for themselves.

Be mindful that your famil participants usually have a full schedule and are constantly on the road, meeting new people, trying new product and soaking up new information. Great customer service always pays off and if you are organised it will be well appreciated and noted.

Put yourself in their shoes. Think about how you can impress your famil guests without going over the top. In all instances:

- Meet and greet your famil participants
- Ensure all staff who come in contact with them know who they are, why they are there, and what they are doing
- Be accessible – always have someone on hand to look after their needs
- Be authentic – give them the real deal when it comes to your experiences
- Do your ground work, e.g. pre-empt timings, weather conditions, transport schedules, seasonal fluctuations or changes to your offerings, traffic conditions and operating hours of other local services such as restaurants, clubs, galleries, speciality stores and attractions
- Be receptive to additional requests but remember to maintain the schedule
- Exchange business cards – keep in touch and follow up with them after they have left
- Provide a trade or media kit with information about your business. Include high-res (high resolution) images and language-specific material on a USB or as a hard copy
- Offer to mail bulky or heavier items
- Make your product gifts compact, relevant and functional
- Impressions count – remember to follow up and see if there is any additional information they require regarding your product

Operator insight

"I attribute a large percentage of my client base to media famils. I find them extremely beneficial. The journalists who come and visit A140 and Mission Beach really comprehend the beauty that we tend to take for granted. I do ask my clients where they found me and the reply is uniform, ‘we saw the article in the Sunday Mail, Sunday Telegraph, Financial Review, Gourmet Traveller etc’. The media does play a vital role in increasing interest for bookings as does TEQ who brings us to the attention of the media."

Shane Hunter, Altitude ONE40

Hot tips

- Spend time getting to know each media and trade guest. If it’s a larger group, request the assistance of your colleagues
- Compile media and trade information packs which are interesting, comprehensive, compact and light weight
- Be the perfect diplomat. Avoid raising or commenting on topics that could be contentious such as religion, politics, and animal and human rights
- When English is a delegate’s second language, be considerate of their language and communication needs
Media and Publicity
Making media work for you

Takeaways

- How to make the most of your media and public relations opportunities
- What to expect when dealing with media and how to manage media contacts
- How to write media releases and manage media during a crisis
- Who to contact to distribute your stories
MEDIA AND PUBLICITY | MAKING MEDIA WORK FOR YOU

MAKING MEDIA WORK FOR YOU

Introduction

Publicity can be an incredibly powerful marketing tool for tourism operators, particularly if you know how to work it to your advantage. Getting the best from media influencers is as much about being tactical as it is about having an interesting story to tell.

When you hit the mark, your story can reach both mass and targeted audiences and give you excellent returns on your investment. Audiences take note of what the media says and the benefits for you, whether your product is big or small, can include:

- Increased coverage in the media
- Increased coverage on influencer channels (e.g. Instagram, blogs etc)
- A higher profile for you or your business
- Increased credibility with the public
- Extended marketing opportunities

Around the world, audiences are fascinated with travel and lifestyle stories. They love stories, photos, videos and programs that tell of wondrous discoveries in new and exciting destinations. The alluring mix of excitement, fun and a holiday is irresistible.

That said, there is stiff competition for media coverage and the attention of journalists, presenters and influencers who cover travel and lifestyle stories. It pays to be organised and plan your media opportunities well in advance. You’ll need to know:

- The types of media and influencers your target audiences tap into and when, e.g. TV, newspapers, blogs, online, etc.
- The best people to contact, e.g. journalists, producers, bloggers, instagrammers, chiefs of staff etc
- What stories you’re going to pitch to them
- The best time to pitch to them

This type of information should be relatively easy to source by visiting their websites and channels.

You may already have great contacts through the media you advertise with and that you know will reach your target markets. If not, some quick research – calling your RTO or your advertising agency, or checking websites such as the Australian Society of Travel Writers (ASTW) and Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA), should help to identify media of interest to your target market. It’s also valuable to subscribe to the blogs of those who write posts on travel, and follow influencers via their social channels such as Twitter and Instagram.

Media are always looking for the next big story so they are easy to contact. However, you need to prepare a strategy before making your approach. You need to speak to the people who count and that varies depending on the type of media you are contacting. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>Editor, chief of staff, travel writer/journalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV info-tainment and documentary programs</td>
<td>Program researcher or producer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>Program/segment producer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Features/supplements</td>
<td>Features/supplement editor, journalist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialty magazines</td>
<td>Editor, writer/journalist</td>
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<tr>
<td>e.g. travel, food, wine, lifestyle, camping and caravanning, adventure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Media Influencers</td>
<td>Editor, writer, journalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Instagram, Twitter and Facebook accounts, blogs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
No matter what the publication or media outlet, the editor always reigns supreme. He or she is responsible for maintaining the ‘tone’ of the publication and allocating space to stories based on:

- The publisher’s expressed preferences
- The size and nature of big or breaking stories
- Its newsworthy value
- Reader interests
- Each edition’s advertising revenue

A journalist can write a brilliant story but if it doesn’t meet the editor’s criteria for that day or week, chances are it won’t get a run. This can be a harsh reality after you’ve poured effort and resources into preparing media kits and/or holding a media conference or special event.

**Hot tips**

- It is important to be aware of trends that are occurring in the tourism industry and how these could impact your business, regular eNewsletters and updates are available from [Tourism and Events Queensland](https://www.tourismandeventsqueensland.com), [Tourism Australia](https://www.tourismaustralia.com), [Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC)](https://www.atec.org.au), [Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs)](https://www.rtoqld.com.au) and [local tourism organisations (LTOs)](https://www.localtourism.com.au)
- Do your research on the media and influencers you want to target, get to know the names of writers, their style and what they like to write about
- Create a media contact database. Review it on a regular basis and make sure you keep contact information up-to-date. Media move around
- Make a list of your story ideas and the relevant hooks or news values you think they have. This will help to focus you on what media is looking for
- Think about where the story fits. Would it interest regional, state, national or international media services? This will help you pitch it to the right outlets
- Have a new story or angle to tell? You can tell Tourism and Events Queensland as well by sending information to [media@queensland.com](mailto:media@queensland.com). If we don’t know about it, we can’t do anything with it
News Values

Every story needs a ‘hook’. Media groups receive dozens of leads every day and the way they filter information is to look for the hooks or newsworthy values in a story that are guaranteed to capture audience attention.

The cause and effect of your media all starts with your story ideas. When you pitch to media services, they’ll decide whether to run your story based on two criteria – does the story fit their media type and will their audience be interested? The rule of thumb when you’re deciding what stories to suggest to media is to think of the news value – if you were one of their readers/watchers would you be interested in this story?

Hard news values tend to be those things that dominate the news bulletins: conflict, disasters, consequences, impacts, prominence and proximity. Whereas travel media values are entertainment driven and are likely to be events, novelty, quirky, human interest, special interest, lifestyle, animals and proximity.

Because you’re a tourism product, it shouldn’t be too difficult to come up with one, two or even a few story ideas to pitch. However, the hooks are what will sell them to your media contacts. Hooks can be one or a combination of the news values mentioned above, they just have to give your story relevance to the audience.

Old news is not news. Whether you’re running a media campaign or simply sending out a one-off media release, your chances of having it run almost solely depend on its relevance. Go too early with a release and you run the risk of it being buried under a pile of incoming current news and lost forever. Go too late and it becomes stale and useless. Your timing really can mean everything.

News values can change depending on your proximity. Some stories will only be of interest to your local or regional audiences, for instance loyalty offers for your local community, while others will have much broader appeal such as a major or unique event.

If you aren’t experienced at writing media releases, sending journalists an email with dot points or short snippets highlighting your news can be effective.

Tourism and Events Queensland can help you with both domestic and international media. If you have a domestic product, that is a product that generally caters for the Australian market, it may attract local, state and national media. However, the international travel media confines its coverage to product that already operates or has the potential to attract visitors from their particular country.

Check out the Media and Trade Famils and International Marketing sections within this guide for more information.
### Media process at a glance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Foundation work** | - Know your target markets – who they are, what media they use and how they use it  
- List the media you plan to target  
- Have a description of your unique qualities, what sets you apart from others  
- Write your story ideas and think of how you can build on them in the future  
- Identify each story's news values  
- Let Tourism and Events Queensland and your RTO know about your media plans and story ideas to assist with advice or campaign opportunities |
| **Preparation**     | - Prepare your media release or pitch  
- Don't crowd your release with too much information  
- Proofread and edit media release content and correct errors  
- Make sure to include your contact details at the bottom  
- A one-page pitch including some dot points about your story or angle can be more effective than a poorly-written release  
- Include a media section and image library on your website. This should include collateral such as media releases, story angles, copyright-free images, fact sheets, etc  
- Remember, the information you give to media is not the same as the information in your sales pitch  
- Develop media contact lists that are specific to your markets  
- Deliver a solid itinerary for media that shows off particular points of interest about your product but is not just a site  
- Include enough free time for them to explore, or to write and submit their stories – particularly for online media and influencers who are often posting content in real time |
| **Distribution**    | - Distribute media releases and/or kits to your target media  
- Follow up with a call to key media contacts to check if they need any further information  
- Invite the media to experience your product first hand  
- Send your media releases to Tourism and Events Queensland media@queensland.com |
### Stage | Description
--- | ---
**Contact** | • Meet and greet visiting journalists and media famils (familiarisations)
• Where possible, be available or provide a staff escort to answer media questions
• Consider that the needs of a news journalist will be different to those of a travel writer
• Keep in mind journalists have deadlines to meet – be thorough in your preparation and avoid making mistakes
• Nominate the spokesperson/s to be interviewed
• Organise a schedule to account for the best times to see and experience your product as well as the suitable times and locations for interviews and scheduled breaks
• Before an interview, ask the journalist what they are likely to ask and what angles they are thinking to include in their story
• Prepare your responses based on what the journalist is seeking
• Stick to your key points, be factual and don’t waffle
• Avoid media stunts that are tacky, risky or irrelevant
• Don’t be afraid to say you can’t answer a question. Say you’ll get back to them with the right answer and do what you say
• If you organise a media launch be aware media may not turn up depending on other news of the day
• Don’t ask to see a copy of the article before it’s published or goes to air – media are under no obligation to provide this

**After the fact** | • Follow up with any requested additional information
• Don’t complain if you receive a bad rap – move on and work towards getting some good coverage to compensate
• If the journalist produces a good story ring or email them to say thank you. This is a good way to build relationships with media
• Send copies of good feature articles to your relevant tourism partners, e.g. wholesalers

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*Most journalists are passionate about their objectivity and will write about your product or story without prejudice, based on a true account of their experiences. That’s their job – to report the facts as they find them.*
Preparing Media Releases

Travel media are inundated daily with media releases from your competitors. The key to gaining their attention is to write the kind of media release they like to read – a strong, short message that instantly grabs their attention and is easy to follow.

Dates
- Include the relevant date on your release
- If you have an announcement to make, be clear when you want it made public by including instructions. Do this by placing the words: For Immediate Release or Embargo (date and time) underneath the day’s date

The headline
- Your headline should introduce the release topic in no more than six or eight words
- Make it a catchy summary of the key point of your story
- Only capitalise the first letter of the first word and proper nouns, e.g. people and place names
- Bold or underline the heading text
- Use standard size 14 fonts, e.g. Times New Roman, Arial, Verdana, Trebuchet or Century Gothic

Writing your media release
- Media releases are written to a formula known as the inverted pyramid
- Put the most interesting facts about your story in the top two or three paragraphs
- A snappy headline followed by a few punchy and informative paragraphs are the best ways to grab a reader’s attention

The inverted pyramid

Paragraph 1
1 - who
2 - what
3 - where
4 - when

Paragraph 2 & 3
5 - why
6 - how

Paragraph 4 to 8
quotes, minor details, end
Basic rules to writing media releases

- All media release content must contain the facts of your story. These are known as the 5 “Ws” and “H” – who, what, where, when, why and how
- Sentences should be short and make one point. A sentence is a paragraph. The standard formula is one sentence = one paragraph = one point
- Make sure the main facts of your story appear in the top two or three paragraphs of the release
- Your first paragraph should be 25 words or less and address the main facts – who, what, where and when
- Tell your story in the following two paragraphs and include the why and how
- Consider including your media release in the body of your email rather than as an attachment. Some journalists/editors will not open attachments or their computer firewalls and security do not allow attachments
- Make sure your company name is stated at the outset so the journalist will know who it’s from
- Before you quote someone, introduce the person in the paragraph prior – the journalist needs to know who’s speaking – and also, end the first quote with the name of the speaker
- Keep quotes brief and to the point. Make it easy for journalists to get the facts. A one-page release should be ample to gain media interest in your story.
- Use paraphrasing to break up quotes. Paraphrasing means to reword a quote and state it as a fact rather than a quote
- Don’t crowd your release with lots of information, stick to two or three pertinent points
- Finish your release with the word ENDS
- Don’t send large image files with your media release as this may clog up the journalist’s inbox. Rather, say something along the lines of “images are available on request”, or use a file transfer portal such as Hightail which will enable them to download images

Send us your media releases

To keep us up to date with what is happening with your business be sure to send your media releases and news to media@queensland.com so that Tourism and Events Queensland can help share it via our media communications and networks.

Embargoes

Tell media when they can use your information. If your story is ready for immediate media coverage put the words FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE in bold, under the date of issue. However, sometimes you may want to give journalists a heads up on an interesting or important activity such as a launch or major event that involves your product, but you don’t want the news to be made public until a certain date. This is when you EMBARGO your release. All good journalists respect embargoes and won’t run your story until the stipulated embargo date and time.
Media release template example

Today’s date
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE or EMBARGO DATE/TIME

Headline – use bolded or underlined size 14 Arial or Times New Roman font; capitalise the first word and proper nouns only

Paragraph 1 – 25 words or less telling the reader who, what, where and when using standard size 12 Arial or Times New Roman

Paragraph 2 – why and how

Paragraph 3 – introduce the person you’re going to quote

Paragraph 4 – “first quote, end first quote with the person’s name”, e.g. John Smith said.

Paragraph 5 – “quote

Paragraph 6 – “quote and close quote with quotation marks.”

Paragraph 7 – paraphrase

Paragraph 8 – conclusion

ENDS

Media Contact: Your contact name, phone/mobile/email
Media release example

20 November 20XX
Immediate Release

**Stockman’s Crossing snags top country music star**

One of the nation’s biggest country and western stars will feature at Stockman’s Crossing Annual Country Music Festival on 5 February.

Pretty Davis and the Peppercorns will headline the two-day festival program, now a fixture on Queensland’s event calendar, for what organisers believe will be their largest festival yet.

Stockman’s Crossing owner Josey McLain said having Pretty Davis as the headline act was a coup for the festival and would attract up to 5,000 festival goers to the farm stay property.

“Pretty has a huge following throughout Australia and we expect many of her fans won’t want to miss the opportunity to see her and the Peppercorns perform in such an authentic country setting,” Ms McLain said.

“We’re delighted to also have Don Carpenter and his band as well as the Raven Brothers on the program too.

“This festival will be our best yet and we have improved facilities this year to accommodate at least 1000 more campers.”

This is the sixth Stockman’s Crossing Annual Country Music Festival with last year’s festival attracting 3,500 country music fans.

Tickets and camp bookings are available online at www.stockmanscrossingfestival.com.au or call 07 4521 1234.

ENDS

**Media Contact:** Josey McLain
**Phone:** 07 4521 1235
**Email:** joseymac@stockmanscrossing.com.au

Note this is a fictitious release for use as an example only
# Do’s and don’ts of media releases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Don’t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Think about who you’re writing for</td>
<td>Do blanket media mail outs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse your story for news values</td>
<td>Think everything is newsworthy; it’s not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put your key points in the first few lines</td>
<td>Bury your story in too much text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stick to the facts</td>
<td>Exaggerate, beat up or ‘spin’ your story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use your own words</td>
<td>Use clichés, industry jargon or slang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use full names</td>
<td>Use acronyms without outlining what they stand for in full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proof your copy by reading it aloud and correct any errors</td>
<td>Misspell or make factual errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edit unnecessary content</td>
<td>Ramble on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use standard size 14 font for heading and size 12 font for content</td>
<td>Use fancy fonts that are too small or large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep content to one A4 page</td>
<td>Show journalists who else you’ve contacted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the blind copy (bcc) box for email addresses to maintain confidentiality</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## What if I’m not confident in writing my own media releases?

If you don’t have the resources or confidence to write your own media releases a “pitch” can be just effective. These still need to have a news angle as the journalist will ask you ‘what’s new and different about your story?’ You can also use the ‘est’ principle – anything that is the biggest, first, highest, longest, loudest, etc makes something newsworthy.

Once you have established your pitch, the pitching can be done via:

- An email or a one-pager with a few dot points about your story and product
- A phone call to your media contacts

## The media kit

Accurate and interesting information are the elements of all good story telling. Journalists and influencers will usually expect you to have this kind of information prepared for them in the form of a media kit. Remember, a media kit is not the same as a sales kit. Where possible, contact the journalist prior to the visit so you can confirm exactly what information they’ll be after.

Technology has made it easy to share information and these days most media don’t want to carry around a hard copy folder. Rather, you can give this information to them:

- on USB Stick
- on CD/DVD
- through a dedicated media section and image library on your website
- via email – for very large files you can subscribe to an online delivery service such as Hightail

No matter what format you choose to distribute your information, a high-quality media kit should include:

- Media release/s – your news story
- Backgrounder – a fact sheet about your product and experiences
- Hi-res (high-resolution) images – 10+ images that contain hero shots of your product and experiences, maps, logos and features synonymous with your product
- Brochures
- Price details
- Business card or contact details
Global Publicity team
Tourism and Events Queensland has a dedicated publicity team whose job is to build strong links with media, influencers and travel shows to benefit destinations and industry.

Tourism and Events Queensland promotes experiences and product to domestic media through a monthly “Queensland Stories” media e-newsletter and through direct media contact. Send any media stories or new product information to media@queensland.com.

Overseas, TEQ has a presence in 14 international offices who also work with media and influencers in their markets including TA. TA also runs the International Media Hosting Program (IMHP) and works closely with Tourism and Events Queensland’s International Media and Trade Relations team and participating RTOs to manage international media famils.

Here are some tips to help operators who are keen to get media coverage in international markets:

- Use TA’s published research to understand your potential audience because what appeals in one market may not work in another
- Highlight the “Australian-ness” of your product in your press kits, and make the most of your points of difference
- The best stories highlight authentic and unique experiences; profile Australian personalities or characters; or teach the audience something new about the destination

Online savvy
The online environment offers a vast distribution network for media publishing and the added bonus of allowing you to target both domestic and international markets at the same time. Video and imagery rule when it comes to capturing online audience attention, and can exponentially broaden your exposure to new consumers literally overnight.

Embedding video and images
Using links from one media platform to another means you can engage with consumers that might otherwise not know about your product. Embedding videos and images on websites, blogs and social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Flickr can be the strongest aspect and drawcard of an online media campaign. In addition, free applications like bit.ly now make it possible to shorten your URL address, track online activity and traction, and interface with mobile phones to generate QR (quick response) codes used in marketing and advertising campaigns.

Hot tips for working with the media
- Contact news media and stage media events in the morning as news teams have to edit and file their stories in time to make nightly news bulletins
- Don’t hound media. Newsrooms are busy places and you’ll risk getting journalists offside if you keep calling them all the time
- Get to know your local media, particularly journalists who cover tourism, as well as those who are just visiting your region
- Check out and utilise the media resources available through Tourism and Events Queensland, your RTO and TA to make the most of your media opportunities
Social media

Social media is about instant access to information. The dynamic nature of Twitter, Instagram, blogs and Facebook has given rise to a new edict in communication – say it in the least number of words and use pictures to tell the story. Messages are short and factual, often subject to word count restrictions and abbreviations are commonplace. When preparing and pitching media announcements to social and mainstream media sites remember to:

- Use snippets of information to convey the guts of the story
- Write in a friendly and informal way – as if you’re speaking to a friend
- Include Twitter and/or Facebook posts under the media release headline to enable online editors, bloggers and publishers to follow tweets
- Use your own social media channels and links to other sites to increase distribution

For more information refer to the Digital Marketing section of this guide.

Hot tips

Make the most of other organisations’ social media channels by “piggybacking” off them, such as Tourism and Events Queensland and TA.

Tourism and Events Queensland has more than 1 million Facebook connections and 153,000 Instagram followers, TA has more than 6 million Facebook and 1.3 million Instagram followers. By posting onto their sites or using their hashtags (e.g. #thisisqueensland; #seeaustralia) then you are potentially reaching their audiences.

Working with online media and influencers

Newspapers, magazines and independent blog sites are always on the hunt for good online copy. There are a few tips that will help when pushing your media opportunities to journalists, editors and influencers who work in the online environment.

- Regularly read and participate in relevant and influential industry blogs. Look for blogs that generate the most number of unique visitors each month
- Subscribe to and read those blogs whose authors you think would be interested in your product and whose audiences you would like to target (e.g. it’s no use pitching your story to the wrong market, such as a backpacker angle to a blogger who focuses on luxury travel)
- Search relevant websites and print magazines and newspapers for online media contact details, and create a database of online journalists
- When launching a new product or campaign, invite bloggers and online journalists you follow to a famil of your product
- Keep famil on topic and relevant to their interest areas/audience/markets, e.g. families, food and wine, adventure, honeymoon etc
- Include an image gallery with your media releases. Images must be 300 dpi and sent in low res (low resolution), hi res (high resolution), as raw/tiff files, and MUST be captioned
- Attach a link to videos or images that you’ve embedded online
- Always write a two-sentence introduction that can be copied and pasted directly to a website
- Ensure that you’re leveraging both the traditional and online editorial space
20 November 20XX
Immediate Release

Festival blasts previous crowd record

Stockman’s Crossing Music Festival is set to attract a swag of new devotees this year with headline performers to include some of the biggest names in Australian country music.

Since Pretty Davis signed for the two-day fest, to be held 5-6 February, ticket sales have gone through the roof, with organisers now predicting more than 17,000 will attend.

Festival tickets are available from Bookit.com.

ENDS

Media Contact: Josey Mclain, 07 4521 1235 or 0410 123 123, joseymac@stockmanscrossing.com.au

Video and image gallery

Stockman’s Crossing Country Music Festival experts to break crowd records with more than 15,000 tickets already sold.

Stockman’s Crossing Country Music Festival fans.

Note this is a fictitious release for use as an example only
Hot tips

An important note about working with digital influencers such as bloggers and instagarmmers. These days many of the top bloggers and instagarmmers, who often have loyal followers in the hundreds of thousands, or even millions, make a full-time living from their craft. This means that as they generate their own content and are responsible for their own sites and audiences, if you want them to come and cover your product, they may ask to be paid.

Unlike travel writers, who are paid by the outlet they work for or sell their story to, full-time digital influencers must use their own sites and connections as a way of generating an income for themselves and while you may think the opportunity of a “free trip” to experience your awesome product or destination is reward enough, this doesn’t help them pay their bills and put food on their table.

This shouldn’t be looked at as a “cash-for-comment” attitude however, like travel writers who may be supported by you, your RTO or Tourism and Events Queensland, they will still maintain editorial control and integrity over what they publish in order to maintain the trust of their audiences.

There are also many other up-and-coming influencers who may approach you to cover their costs in return for blogging or instagarmming about your product. Some of these have good potential, but many do not so it’s advised before agreeing to host them to carefully check out:

- Their number of followers
- The demographic of their audience
- The quality/regularity of their posts
- Who else they have worked with

If you have any questions about the credentials of a digital influencer who has approached you, you can ask your RTO or Tourism and Events Queensland.
Hosting Media Famils

Media famils are a perfect and popular way to showcase your product, generate new business and foster new market growth. TEQ works with RTOs and TA to help coordinate international, and domestic media famils. For more information see the section on Trade and Media Famils in this guide. In this section we cover the basics for preparing a good media famil itinerary.

Media are constantly on the lookout for a good story. Famils happen right throughout the year. Tourism Australia, Tourism and Events Queensland and RTOs work with you to help host media groups to your region. The journalists on these famils have been invited and are targeted media who will help build our profile in our key markets. You may also receive independent requests from media to assist and support their famils. However, it’s wise to check and validate these requests before you commit to hosting them.

To make the most of your media opportunities it’s important to know what journalists will need during their stay. Below, we’ve listed a few points to help make each famil worthwhile for both you and the journalist:

- Do your research on the publication and what the journalist is seeking
- Meet and greet your media guests on arrival and provide an escort to help them get around, understand more about your product, and experiences and assist with language and/or other barriers where at all possible
- Have newsworthy story angles and interesting spokespersons ready, e.g. owner, General Manager, interesting local characters, etc.
- Cater for any special cultural or dietary needs
- Plan an interesting and relevant itinerary
  - Where possible, schedule times to suit transfer needs
  - Consider photographic light conditions, e.g. shadows and brightness at certain times of the day
  - Allow time for interviews and photography
  - Give the journalist scheduled breaks and plenty of free time to explore
  - Include the best aspects of your product and the experiences it offers
  - Expect to help with any reasonable requests
  - Exchange contact information
- Provide access to free Wi-Fi if possible as many media will want to upload images, comments, etc. onto their social channels in real time, or will file stories during their downtime while still in your destination
- Ask in what format they would like to receive their media kit
- Follow up to see if they need anything more before they leave

A media famil isn’t the same as a trade famil. Journalists need more time to absorb their surroundings. Allow time in their schedule so they can write up notes and think about their story.
Handling an interview

Another way for journalists to get their story is through an interview with the source or spokesperson.

Generally, journalists prefer to go straight to the top and talk to the boss because it adds weight and credibility to the story. On the other hand, you may have an expert within your business who is a great spokesperson for the product, or is an interesting character and feels comfortable talking to the press.

Whoever you decide on as a spokesperson, make the most of the opportunity during photographs and TV interviews by placing them with the product or business name in clear sight and wearing a shirt or cap with your business name on it. It’s important to nominate who does and who doesn’t talk to media to avoid any unexpected grief.

Before giving an interview, it’s also a good idea to ask the journalist what questions they have in mind. This will help you to plan your answers and get across the points you want covered. Always get your facts straight and tell the truth.

Dealing with media can be challenging, even when you’re experienced at it. Without realising it, a throwaway line can catch you out and the results may be far different from what you’d imagined. When being interviewed, it’s important to be natural but also be aware of what you say and do. In particular, avoid tacky stunts – you might think they’re harmless but they can backfire in a big way.

And don’t fall for the old saying, ‘there’s no such thing as bad publicity’. That’s not true. Protecting your public reputation is vital and bad press can set you back further than you might realise. If you’re passionate about your business, that passion will come through in sharing your stories with the writer, as well as your vision and commitment to the tourism industry in your region.

Hot tips

- Nominate only one or two media spokespeople to speak on behalf of your product
- Never speak off the record – nothing is ever off the record
- If you don’t know the answer to a question, don’t guess it. Tell the journalist you’ll get back to them with the right information
- Avoid criticising your competitors or comparing your product with others
- Don’t ask if you can see the story before it airs or is printed – media are under no obligation to share this with you
After the interview

Once an interview is over, make sure you quickly follow up on any additional information you’ve promised the journalist. Thank them for their time and let them know you appreciate how busy they are.

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, journalists also don’t have control over what gets printed and what gets chopped. Don’t attack the journalist if your story doesn’t get a run. There’ll be other opportunities down the track and the last thing you want to do is damage your media relationships.

Occasionally, articles and stories might report incorrect facts or misquotes. If this happens to you, consider:

- Is the journalist reporting opinion, which is their entitlement, or is the article genuinely wrong?
- What are the likely impacts, e.g. loss of reputation or earnings?
- How widespread is the damage likely to be?

Unless the article is going to seriously hurt your reputation, it’s probably not worth worrying about. Nevertheless, if you feel strongly about the issue, there’s no harm in calling the journalist, calmly pointing out the problem and asking for a correction.

Journalists usually won’t mind setting the record straight if they are at fault and the issue is potentially serious, but again, it’s the editor’s call as to whether you get your correction. Try to keep your cool no matter what the outcome.

If you’re still unhappy, you might be tempted to take things into your own hands with a letter to the editor. This is an avenue to seek recourse. However, it’s risky. Letters to the editor appear days, sometimes even weeks after the original article and often only serve to dredge up the negatives again and in some cases, even reinforce them – or create a whole new story. If you do go ahead, write the letter when you’re in a calm frame of mind, sleep on it and have a friend look it over before mailing it off. A letter full of wild accusations is rarely taken seriously by anyone.

In the majority of cases, if an article doesn’t say what you think it should, it’s best to simply swallow your pride and move on. One bad report shouldn’t overwhelm all the positive media you attract elsewhere.

When your product is featured in the media, let your travel and industry partners know about it. Advise them of program screening times or publication release dates, and when you can send them a couple of copies. This is a great way to strengthen your reputation as a product that’s worth their time and attention.

For published stories you’re happy with, it’s a good idea to feature them in a media section on your website along with your media releases, images and links to any online publicity.

If a journo does a great piece on your product, let them know. Journalists are people too and we all like a bit of praise and a thank you for a job well done.

Advertorial

Media sales frequently include offers of editorial coverage as a value add when you buy advertising space. You can use prewritten media releases and product information and copy for these purposes.

Advertorial coverage isn’t considered objective or independent editorial and consumers usually know this. Some print media even include the word ‘Advertorial’ at the top of the ad to warn readers that the content is biased. However, advertorial coverage will help you get more value for your product and give you more control over your message.

You can also request the advertorial to appear in a subsequent edition of the publication to spread the coverage and keep the information separate from paid advertising.
Crisis Media Management

Sometimes bad things happen over which you have little or no control, but they have the potential to seriously impact on your business. Sometimes these events are real, at other times they are part of speculation, rumour-mongering or assumption. It doesn’t make much difference though. True or false, negative media can be a major turnoff for visitors and unfortunately perception is often seen as reality.

Issues likely to attract media attention are:

- Death or injury of a visitor through an accident or deliberate action
- Threats to the health, safety and well being of visitors and the community
- Natural disasters – cyclones, fire, flood, etc
- Man made disasters – pollution, violence, etc
- Negative events that are likely to receive media attention
- Negative commentary on international visitors and foreigners
- Internal issues such as death, injury or an incident involving staff
- A major political issue involving the business or industry – controversial development plans and approvals or environmental impacts
- Major industrial, criminal or “scandalous” action involving staff or former staff

Having the skills to deal with a crisis and manage media through these periods takes planning and discipline, knowing what to say, when and how to say it, and following things through to their natural conclusion.

The one thing you should never do is assume that will never happen to you. It can. Life is full of unpredictable and unforeseen events and these days news travels fast via many different channels.

You’re not alone. Tourism and Events Queensland’s Corporate Affairs team and your RTO can help you with advice on how to respond to a crisis. As soon as you’re aware of an incident that may affect your reputation or ability to do business, don’t be afraid to ask for help.

Ready, Set, Go! Mobile Resilience App – building tourism resilience in the event of a natural disaster

EarthCheck, in partnership with the National Centre for Studies in Travel and Tourism, and the Queensland Tourism Industry Council, through funding from the Australian Government, have developed a free simple interactive mobile application that gets tourism businesses ready to go prior, during and straight after a crisis.

The app has been specifically designed for the Queensland tourism industry, works offline, and allows users to quickly and easily build business resilience to help effectively manage a crisis and get back to business as soon as possible.

The free app is designed to complement existing business continuity and crisis response plans by providing a portable central source that contains essential information and can be accessed quickly and easily in a crisis event. The app also allows users to preset prompts to help guide them through the critical first 24 hours, providing a more streamlined response process that can help alleviate stress on the day.

The app is available for download on both iPhone and Android systems, and is supported by a dedicated homepage complete with templates and risk management resources.

For more information visit: [teq queensland.com/industryresilience](http://teq.queensland.com/industryresilience)
# Stages of a crisis

There are several stages to a crisis and your planning should account for each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Pre-crisis** | You may receive warnings, advice or other indications that an issue is brewing | - Monitor the situation  
- Gather information  
- If possible, try to defuse the issue  
- Where appropriate, let your key partners and affiliates know what’s happening, i.e. distributors, RTO, Tourism and Events Queensland, etc.  
- Nominate someone in a senior position to be the media spokesperson. They should be a clear thinker who can speak with authority  
- Think of the types of questions media might ask and get your spokesperson to practice answering them  
- Prepare media statements or releases in advance, e.g. what, when, where, who, why  
- Hope for the best  
- Prepare for the worst |
| **Crisis** | - The crisis occurs  
- The issue breaks to the public  
- There is general confusion and a lack of clarity  
- The situation may appear far worse than it really is  
- Those directly affected/implicated are in damage control | - Assess the level of media interest  
- Try to anticipate where the story is leading  
- Think about who will need to know what and when  
- Develop three or four key messages that you want to get across and stick to them  
- Be accessible  
- Give the appropriate response for the situation, e.g. delay the interview until you know more or give them the facts as you know them  
- Log all media calls  
- Return calls or issue a statement  
- Meet with your staff regularly to give and get quick updates on the situation |
| **Recovery** | - Damage control continues  
- Conditions become clearer  
- Situation begins to restore  
- Calm is restored  
- Business is picking up  
- Everything is getting back to normal | - Target statements to the media that reach your target markets and try to track where they appear  
- Craft positive messages and send them via email bulletins or your eNewsletter to your wholesale and retail distributors, travel partners and other parties you need to reassure and keep them in the loop  
- Focus on the positives – share all the good things that are happening, the strengths you have gained, give the public reassurances and show your resilience  
- Start planning for post-crisis media famils and advertising campaigns |
MEDIA AND PUBLICITY | MAKING MEDIA WORK FOR YOU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-crisis</td>
<td>Calm is restored</td>
<td>Debrief with your staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Business is picking up</td>
<td>Revise your crisis management plan based on your experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Everything is getting back to normal</td>
<td>Celebrate your recovery and good news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In the case of a major disaster, think of how you can celebrate anniversary dates with media, e.g. after a cyclone how you have managed to rebuild one year on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thank the people who supported you with some kind of special gesture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Operator Insight

“In January 2011, Brisbane experienced some of the worst floods in recent history. Major flooding occurred through most of the Brisbane River catchment and devastated many businesses that operate along the river. Riverlife, a key tourism offering from Brisbane was inundated with water and mud. The Brisbane community came out in force and strangers became friends as they tackled the big clean up. Riverlife was closed for five days while the “mud army” came and lent a helping hand.

News of the flood dominated many local, national and international news channels and Brisbane was being put on the map for all the wrong reasons. As the Director of Riverlife, I activated strategies in order to overcome what was a loss of $245,000 and counting. In addition to employing some of the traditional advertising campaigns, I also worked with local media to spread our open-for-business message. For many Brisbane locals the river had become a negative reminder of the devastating floods, so I focused on sending positive stories to the community to re-engage locals into seeing the river for what it truly was, an asset to the Brisbane story.

In addition, Riverlife focused its media efforts on stories such as giving away free Riverlife activities to affected Brisbane locals and other good news media stories with strong community values. To assist the recovery effort, the Queensland State Government, TEQ and Brisbane Marketing (RTO) worked together with Riverlife and other affected tourism operators to develop a relief package and an advertising campaign. Senior staff kept domestic and international trade partners regularly informed on the clean up and continued to reinforce consistent and positive messages about conditions at Riverlife.”

John Sharpe, Riverlife CEO
Do’s and Don’ts of managing a media crisis

The following list of dos and don’ts will help you to manage each media situation with composure.

Do
- Develop a crisis/disaster management plan
- Delay your response if you are waiting on the results of an investigation, inquiry or up-to-date account of the situation
- Explain what action you are taking to rectify the situation if you're in the wrong, e.g. “we are currently investigating what happened” or “we are working with the authorities/affected customers to rectify the situation.” Show empathy for those affected
- Be accessible
- Decide who needs to know and when
- Take control – if things are getting out of hand and you need a breather, issue a short statement, and appoint a contact person who can tell media that you won’t be making any further statements at this stage
- Remain calm and stick to the facts
- Keep key people in the loop
- Stay positive

Don’t
- Leave things to chance or the last minute
- Guess the situation or outcome
- Outright deny your part, try to cover up, lie, or ‘spin’ your way through
- Say ‘no comment’. Always give the media something – a short holding statement or guarantee as to what action you may be taking to get to the bottom of the matter, and promise to get back to them when you know more
- Be a ‘tell all’. Use your media opportunities wisely, restrain negativity and unguarded comments, particularly around junior staff and customers
- Trap yourself into responding to too many interviews or questions
- Make statements that dramatise, speculate or assume, or are alarmist, pessimistic, defensive, or attacking
- Complain. Remember the infamous comments of the former BP CEO who complained that he just “wanted his life back” after having to deal with the Gulf of Mexico oil spill disaster that claimed multiple lives and devastated the local environment?
- Get so busy you forget to communicate what’s happening with the people who need to know – particularly your staff or customers
- Lose sight of the big picture
Working With Events
How working with events can benefit your business

Takeaways
- How to make the most of working with events
- What you need to do to prepare your product for event business
- The benefits of optimising relationships with event organisers and other partners
- An understanding of event sponsorship and partnership opportunities
HOW WORKING WITH EVENTS CAN BENEFIT YOUR BUSINESS

Introduction

Everyone adores a good event, whether it's an Outback rodeo, a quirky watermelon race, a fun pumpkin festival or a city art gallery launch. In Queensland, we’re extremely blessed with a wide range of eclectic and exciting events which lure tourists to our destinations. Our annual calendar is jam-packed with regular events and it is not only travellers who enjoy the benefits of an event. As a tourism operator, there are scores of ways in which you can not only embrace and enjoy an event in your region, but also ways on which you can capitalise. So, what are some of the benefits to you, when the show comes into town?

Events contribute to the local economy bringing people that need goods, services, accommodation and entertainment. They attract visitors, enhance the profile of the destinations and foster community pride. The most successful events are those that engage the local community in which they are held. In October 2014 Tourism and Events Queensland unveiled the It’s Live! In Queensland events calendar, featuring events throughout the state. The calendar of events is expected to generate $380 million in direct and incremental spend to the state.

Benefits of holding events are far and wide. As well as involving your local community, many events attract visitors from outside the region and in some cases, these are people who may not ordinarily visit the destination.

Events create employment in the local community and can provide a positive impact in both social and cultural realms to a region. They provide the opportunity for people to interact with one another and they create a sense of belonging and social cohesion within a community.

Savvy tourism businesses can reap the benefits of repeat visitation and extended nights in the region. Leveraging off events is a terrific way to stamp your business or product firmly onto the tourist trail at a time when your destination is pumping. An event can expose you to new customers who you may have never considered before, as well as give your loyal customers even more reason to return to your business.

Events also add content and experiences for visitors who are already in the region, encouraging them to stay longer and spend more money. In most cases the visitor will book in advance and if they have a quality experience they will rebook again to attend the event again or come back to the destination for a holiday.

Often, the cost of leveraging off an event will be minimal and all that’s really required is a creative and can-do attitude to value adding.
What can you do to gain more market share from events?

It is important to become familiar with your region’s events calendar and be aware of any events that will be taking place in your destination. Ask yourself how you can leverage off the key events as well as the smaller ones.

Visit queensland.com/events for details of Queensland’s It’s Live! events calendar where you can search by location, date and genre. Connect with the event organiser for more information or with your RTO.

Find out as much as possible about the event, who will be attending, where they are from (domestic or international) and who is the event’s target market. Once you have established from where, work out why they are coming and how you can reach them through your business.

View Queensland’s It’s Live! events calendar at queensland.com/events

Operator insight

“Be proactive. Check with event organisers to see if there are any specific requirements that attendees, participants or spectators require for their event.

See if there are any supporting events that you might be able to provide, subject to event type, such as a team dinner/function, themed dinner/function, event launch, media launch, after party or entertainment that supports/compliments the event.

Event organisers are often open to ideas and suggestions of activities that may support and promote their event. Don’t be afraid to approach event organisers with ideas. They might not want (or have the capacity) to organise additional activities, but they may be happy for you to do something in support of the event. This might be a Chamber of Commerce initiative to do a window dressing competition/promotion in the town themed on the event. It could be every business in town displaying a welcome to the xyz participants.

Be aware of events. Ensure that you have up-to-date information about events that are happening in your area and advise guests as to what is coming up. If you have guests staying in accommodation on Thursday or Friday night and there is a food festival on Saturday, make sure they know about it. They may be in a position to extend their stay if the event is of interest. This could lead to additional room nights. Be aware of the main event seasons such as sporting events and carnivals, seasonal events such as food, harvest, celebration events, and be prepared for them.

“In addition to RTOs, LTOs, local councils and visitor information centres can also provide information about upcoming events. Some of these may be smaller events that still could provide opportunities.”

Brent Randall, Tourism Development Officer, Scenic Rim Regional Council
WORKING WITH EVENTS | HOW WORKING WITH EVENTS CAN BENEFIT YOUR BUSINESS

The way forward

It is important to consider the following steps when planning to work with events:

STEP 1 – MAKING THE DECISION TO BE INVOLVED
- Will the event provide the opportunity to create sales for my business?
- Are you willing to put in effort and are there any risks?
- Do you have the time, staff and finances to be involved?
- Are there other opportunities such as running a food stall or selling souvenirs or arts and crafts at the event?

STEP 2 – WHO CAN HELP ME PLAN FOR THE EVENT?
- In the first instance, contact your RTO as they may be able to provide you with contacts or offer existing opportunities around the event
- Check the event website and get in touch with the event organiser
- Can you attend a meeting to find out more about the event?
- What worked well with past events?
- How has the event worked with tourism operators in the past? Are there any operators that can share their experience?
- Develop good relationships and networks associated with the event. Work with your RTO.

STEP 3 – DEVELOP A PLAN TO PROMOTE MY BUSINESS
- Who are the event attendees? Where are they coming from? How are they travelling?
- Are they travelling as a group, family or single? How are they likely to book?
- When do tickets go on sale and when are event attendees likely to book? It may be months in advance
- How long is the average event attendee likely to stay in region?
- How can you reach the consumer to promote your business? Is it through a marketing campaign through your online partners?
- Can you offer a special rate? How can you promote this to your target audience?
- Ask yourself what products and services you can deliver prior and during the event (e.g. eye-catching window display posters, a special menu themed around the event, stock for sale at discounted prices)
- List promotional and advertising opportunities prior, during and on the day through local newspapers, vouchers and joint promotions
- Is there an opportunity to package with or work with other tourism operators?

STEP 4 – PLANNING FINANCES
- How much budget is required for promotional advertising?
- What is your financial target?
- How much do you need to generate to meet expenses and what do you need to sell to reach your target?
- Record planned turnover, consider how many additional staff are required during peak and off-peak times and what costs are associated with having more staff and whether any additional stock required
- Consider event sponsorship and look at cost-effective marketing opportunities

STEP 5 – BE ORGANISED
- Consider in detail what to prepare before, during and after the event (e.g. additional storage, preparing flyers, pre-cooking meals)
- Create a contingency plan if the event cancels, there is poor weather, or a problem with staff or stock
- Ensure you have adequate signage
- Train your staff about the event and what to expect while visitors are in the region
Operator insight

“We saw an opportunity to welcome cyclists as part of the Cycling Welcome Project. As a small business, we wanted to tap into this emerging market. We spent $12,000 on a wash-down bay, a cycling stand and a coffee machine for cyclists staying with us. Business has never been better.”

Patrice Fletcher, Owner, Woodlands Caravan Park

Operator insight

“I've been involved in both mountain biking and road riding on the Atherton Tablelands for the past 10 years. During that time, we have seen a huge increase in the number of locals and visitors who are riding on our roads and trails each week. The Cycling Welcome Project was developed to assist businesses to cater to this growing market, to meet specific needs for themselves and their equipment.

Our community has actively embraced this initiative. For example, local businesses have invested in the opportunity to welcome cyclists to their premises by:

- Sponsoring bike events (local, state, national and international)
- Providing wash-down facilities
- Installing bike racks outside their shop
- Investing in secure bike parking
- Providing directions and trail maps
- Networking with other bike-friendly businesses

Many businesses are already reporting great returns on this investment. Riders will return to bike-friendly regions like ours because they have great rides supported by friendly locals and businesses that look after them.”

Leasie Felderhof, owner BikeLinx Cairns, involved in the Cycling Welcome Project

Hot tip

Remember to ensure your Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) listing is up to date. Consumers who are searching for events in Queensland will be looking for accommodation options and things to see and do while they are in your region.

Visit: teq.queensland.com/atdw
Tips for accommodation providers:
- Provide visitor maps and if required directions to and from the event
- Let travellers know the other things to see and do while in your region – they may extend their stay or come back again for a holiday
- Consider whether the attendees have specific requirements around the event and if your business can arrange this, e.g. a cyclist may consider accommodation that has somewhere to store their bike and possibly clean it
- Think of your loyal customers and whether they are returning year on year
- Reward visitors with a gift or a kind gesture for choosing your business
- Find out if the event will require your guests to arrive or leave at odd times and ensure your accommodation supports this
- Ensure you allow for specific dietary requirements of guests
- Remember that events taking place in nearby regions also offer an opportunity for your business, as the bigger events may require accommodation outside of the host region
- Think of your customer in a professional sense. Ask questions as they could potentially bring more business to you in the future.
- Plan for when the event will be at its busiest. This may be an opportunity to extend your offering with transfers to and from the event
- Give discounted accommodation for VIPs, event sponsors, partners and clients and inform the event organiser
- Offer to make bookings for your guests to some of your region’s hidden gems
- Think of value adds to include in your accommodation package
- Put yourself in the visitor’s shoes and think about the little things they may require eg. as mosquito repellent, sunscreen and rain ponchos
- Consider signage to welcome event attendees
- Offer accommodation to the Event Organiser at a special rate
- Brief your staff about the event and the type of questions some of your guests are likely to ask

Tips for retail/restaurants:
- Think about what season the event will be held in, e.g. hot weather creates opportunities for operators to sell more cold items
- Ensure you have enough staff and stock for catering in busy times
- Theme your meal times in line with the event and dare to be creative
- Be flexible with opening and closing hours during the event
- Brief your staff about the event
- Offer great customer service – even if they are visitors they can become loyal customers and word of mouth can go a long way
- Embrace the theme of the event – dress your staff or business in a particular way to highlight the event
- Consider a special offer to event attendees, e.g. if they show their event ticket they receive a free muffin with the purchase of a coffee
General tips for tourism operators and businesses:

- If your business is not typically open when an event is on (e.g. Sundays or on a public holiday), then consider whether a special opening of your business would be worthwhile.
- Consider adapting or theming your product towards the event, e.g. offer a massage after an endurance event or a happy hour with a special tropical cocktail during a surfing event.
- Think about what you can do to promote return business, e.g. loyalty discounts.
- Promote your business through goodie bags, eNewsletters, websites and PA announcements during the event.
- Investigate sponsorship opportunities for greater exposure.
- Look at any specialised equipment you could loan to the event.
- Hire specialist staff such as interpreters for international events.
- Promote your entire destination in a positive light and recommend other businesses and tours.

Packaging:

- Talk to your RTO about opportunities to be involved in domestic marketing campaigns and event packaging.
- Consider creating appealing event packages inclusive of transport, tickets, meals and/or accommodation.
- Work with your RTO or the event organiser on discounted ticket prices to include in your package.
- Convert day trippers to overnight visitors by offering them a special accommodation deal they cannot resist and ideas on what to do in region the next day.
- Consider affordable advertising which will have the best return on investment.
- Work with your partners to share advertising costs.
- Promote your package to your customers via your e- newsletters, social media channels or your RTO.

More information on packaging can be found in the Domestic Marketing section of this guide.

It’s not just the event itself which is on display, but the entire destination and those who live and work there - from the warm welcome event visitors receive at check-in to the friendly service at the local café.
Event Sponsorship & Partnership

An effective way of leveraging tangible value from events in your region is to formally support an event by becoming an event partner or sponsor. Event sponsorship typically involves an entity agreeing to provide an event with some form of support in return for the provision of certain rights or benefits throughout the event. Support provided by the sponsor typically ranges from direct cash investment to the provision of products or services considered as ‘value-in-kind’ to the event (e.g. discounted or complimentary accommodation, venue hire or entry passes to your tour or attraction). For tourism operators, sponsorship provides a way for your business to be noticed above other similar businesses in the region which should result in event attendees selecting your business over others.

Tips to consider before sponsoring an event:

1. Make sure the event represents the values you want associated with your brand
   Know the event’s core audience, their interests, their opinions and what they care about. Do these align with your business?

2. Make sure you know how the event is run
   If the event is not run professionally the participants may associate and extend their disappointment with your brand.

3. Understand what you will receive for your investment
   All sponsorship, whether cash or value-in-kind, is an investment, so you must ensure you know what you will get in return. Different events will offer different levels of sponsorship. Speak to your event contacts and know exactly what you will receive and if you’re looking for exclusivity within your business category (e.g. accommodation) make sure you get it!

4. Decide if your brand adds something meaningful to the event and the event’s participants or attendees
   What is it that you can offer? Maybe it’s a product, experience or resource. For example, event attendees from outside the region will need accommodation during their stay. They will also need places to eat out and things to do in down times before, during and after the event. Does your business offer a service or product that event visitors will need during their stay?

5. Plan to engage
   While simply paying for your sponsorship should deliver a certain level of return, activating your sponsorship beyond the agreed cash or value-in-kind contribution will help you leverage far more value out of the event. Speak to event organisers about other opportunities to profile your business. For example, the event may be bringing in loads of staff interstate for weeks prior and during the event. If you’re an accommodation operator consider offering them a special rate.

6. Think about the community impact
   Events drive economic growth to your local community - accommodation can be sold out, restaurants busy and shops flat out. Your investment is helping to support the event and your local community.

Questions to consider before you decide upon an event sponsorship:

- Will you get access to the event audience to promote your brand? How will the event organiser promote your product or service to their database – via electronic direct mail (eDMs), on their website or via social media?
- Are there business-to-business opportunities available? Can you leverage unrelated business after the event through event contacts?
- Are there any other event sponsors that are competitors? Will you be an exclusive sponsor or simply one of many of the same type of businesses?
- What formal guarantees will be put in place to ensure your business receives the rights, benefits and value you are promised in return for your cash or value-in-kind support? e.g. event contracts, or agreements.
Set goals/action plan

Now that you have completed your planning, it is time to set your goals and develop your plan into actions.

**Goal** – this is what you want to do (e.g. seek out other businesses for shared advertising)

**Action** – to achieve this I will: (for each goal, write down the action – what you need to do to get there, who will do it, by when, and what they need to get the action done)

Use the template below as an example.

GOAL I: Seek out more information from businesses who have worked with the xyz event in the past.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>WHAT IS REQUIRED</th>
<th>COMPLETED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend RTO networking function, speak with local businesses to get their feedback regarding the event</td>
<td>Manager &amp; Sales Coordinator</td>
<td>x May 2015</td>
<td>RSVP to the function organiser, order business cards</td>
<td>Completed x May 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send follow up email to businesses involved with the event; request to meet with them in person for more information</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>x May 2015</td>
<td>Business cards</td>
<td>completed x May 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrange a meeting with the RTO to discuss their feedback on the event and existing opportunities</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>x June 2015</td>
<td>Business cards Notepad</td>
<td>Completed by June 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Operator insight

“Jumpers and Jazz is a platform for the arts and a celebration of all that is wonderful about winter. The festival’s success is due to the Warwick community embracing the chill and the opportunity to be inspired by vibrant music and art. The first festival was in 2004, since then, the growth and appeal of the festival has been remarkable. The number of trees ‘wrapped in art’ has more than doubled.

It is important that we work closely with local businesses and our community to ensure our event attendees have a wonderful experience while they are here. Last year, some of our local businesses embraced the event by:

- Dressing their shop-front windows in jumpers and jazz style
- Creating jumpers and jazz-themed menus
- Offering value adds to their existing products and services with jumpers and jazz theming
- Selling local produce and arts and craft so that visitors could take a little piece of Warwick home with them
- Displaying the official event program at their business
- Liking and sharing the Jumpers and Jazz Facebook posts and reposting to their own Facebook profile to promote the event to their customers
- Taking photos and using the festival hashtag to share on Instagram what was happening in and around the event
- Encouraging staff to be festival ambassadors by staying informed about the festival and where to direct those seeking more information
- Playing jazz music through their business sound system
- Inviting customers to escape the winter chill, which encouraged them to stay and spend”

Tracy Vellacott, Jumpers and Jazz in July
Low-Cost Marketing Ideas
Great promotional ideas on a budget

Takeaways
- How to deliver effective marketing activity at a low cost
- The power of networking and the benefits to your business
- Leverage from your networks and industry organisations
- Offering quality customer service
- and loads more…
LOW-COST MARKETING IDEAS

Introduction
We figure this might be the most popular section in the guide.

Good marketing isn’t necessarily expensive, but it does require effort, strategy, innovation and an investment in time. Here are just a few low cost marketing ideas:

Get involved and contribute to your local community
Consider supporting local causes, family events and sporting clubs with prizes/giveaways to experience your product. This will help to build local customer loyalty. Send a media release to travel writers and news journalists who might be interested in giving support to the community events you sponsor. Frame letters of appreciation and display them in a high-profile public area. Include a section on your website to promote your community support and link to the websites of the groups and organisations you sponsor. Offer locals a loyalty membership card with opportunities to gain discounts and rewards.

Destination first, product second
As we have noted in other sections of this guide, it is important to remember destination is king. While tourism product is a key element in the destination story, it is the destination itself that speaks first and foremost to the consumer. If you promote your awesome product within the context of your amazing destination, you are far more likely to capture the imagination of potential tourists than the other way around. Just as many travellers choose a destination followed by the airline on which to travel, so too do they choose a tourism product or operator.

Be responsive
Make sure you respond to email requests instantaneously and follow up to resolve the request within 24 hours. It’s amazing how impressed consumers will be when you get straight back to them. They’ll know you’re really on the ball when it comes to your customer service and that just might be the clincher for them. Remember to respond promptly to social media comments and questions on platforms including Facebook, Instagram.

Messages on hold
Use the time your telephone callers are on hold to tell them about your product and services with targeted messages. You can create and manage the messages yourself or work with a company that will manage everything for you. They will write your messages, do the voice recordings and chase you up on a regular basis to refresh your content. Of course, you can change the messages at any time and it’s a great way to spread the word about new or seasonal campaigns, as well as get messages across about your services and experiences.

Join networks, industry and community organisations
If you have time, energy and commitment, get involved with your local community and industry organisations. It’s a great way to meet people, contribute to the industry and network. Make the most of your relationships by turning up to meetings and functions; keep your community or local industry networks informed if you have a new product or experience, and remember to send a media release.
Nominate for industry or professional awards

There are lots of awards held each year. Speak to your Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) about which are the most prestigious and if you meet the criteria, make sure you enter. By entering and winning you can increase your exposure to new markets and industry groups. Issue a media release if you win and display your awards where customers can see them. Awards are usually sponsored by:

- government bodies
- industry and professional groups
- special-interest groups
- private enterprise

Participate in trade events, missions and roadshows

Check the Tourism and Events Queensland Industry Calendar and with your RTO on up-coming trade events, missions and road shows. Piggyback off other tourism promotions and leverage off their advertising. If possible, share exhibition space and displays with an operator you package with. Look for events that are planned for your region. The beauty about local events is they can save you time and money. While you may have some upfront costs, in the long run trade is coming to you in one place at one time.

Team up with other local operators

Work and package with operators in your region who target the same type of customer as you. Share the costs to develop online and printed guides or flyers that promote your offerings e.g. a day-trip experience. Make sure these guides are readily available through each participating business. Don’t forget to tell the local media, your social media audience, trade partners, and your contact database.

Network, network, network

One of the most powerful and rewarding low-cost marketing ideas is that of networking. Work with your peers and even your rivals and you will enjoy much more business success than if you work alone. The tourism industry is gloriously notorious for its networking, in fact, it’s one of the reasons which attracted many of us to the industry in the first place. Take advantage of networking events and meeting new people. Be generous with your knowledge and networks, and the benefits will be tenfold.

Referrals and recommendations

Refer your customers to other tourism network buddies. Both parties will appreciate it and be more than happy to return the favour.
Be professional and maintain a positive attitude

Your positive attitude and open approach are your most important business assets! Recruit the right people with the right personality who are customer focused. Ensure they have the right skills for the job and will fit into your organisational culture.

Good staff are a huge selling advantage to your business. Continue to train and reward your staff and keep them motivated by making the workplace a positive environment.

Use branding, signage and displays

Branding is how your business differentiates itself and builds a competitive advantage. Your brand should permeate all aspects of your business from your advertising to your reception, service and culture, everything should represent your brand values and promise.

Don’t miss an opportunity to put your name out there. Add your logo to your website, brochures, pens, clothing and merchandise. Pull-up banners should include images that best represent your brand and include your logo. Decals on your company vehicles are a great way to promote your business while running errands, attending events, travelling to and from work, or even when your vehicle is sitting idle in a car park. Include your logo on signage where possible and if allowed use an A-frame sandwich board on the footpath to promote your specials or other devices that are visually appealing and easily identify with your brand.

Think of others

Keep a birthday diary of your key business and customer contacts. Call, send them a card or email to wish them a great day and let them know you’re thinking of them. They’ll remember you because you remembered them. Ask new customers if they were referred and if so, by whom. Then follow with a brief but sincere email or card of thanks to the person/s who recommended you.

Visit competitors

It’s essential you know as much as possible about your competitors. Visit their product and experience it first hand; collect their brochures and pay special attention to how they operate. Also remember to visit your competitors’ websites and social media channels to see how they engage with their customers. You might be surprised by what you learn.
**Vouchers**

Encourage people to try your product and services by distributing vouchers or coupons through newspapers, brochures, coupon books, direct mail and email. Include an expiry date to create a sense of urgency and use a code to track the success of each campaign. Remember to value add rather than discount your product, e.g. include a late checkout or bottle of wine.

**Check your home page**

As simple as it sounds, make sure your product and services are clearly identified on your website home page. Consumers should be able to see in an instant what kind of tourism product you are and what services you offer. It can be effective to advertise your special offers on your home page as well.

**Google it!**

Check out Google and Google Local Business Centre for free business applications such as Google Maps, information and resources.

Google has a number of easy-to-use tools that are great for business. Create an account with Google My Business and use it to manage your Google Local Business Centre listing in order to:

- promote your business
- access tools such as Google AdWords to construct your pay-per-click (PPC)/search engine marketing (SEM) campaigns
- map your product with Google Maps
- track your site visitation with Google Analytics

Some services are free and are a great way to promote your business locally.

**Social media**

Social media is free to use and easy to set up. While it does take some time to manage and nurture an engaged audience, the benefits for the outlay are enormous. A blog article, photo or quick video can be created and edited quickly and shared on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram or Pinterest for free. It just takes some creativity and a little time.

PPC (Adwords) and Facebook advertising are low-cost and highly targeted. It is free to set up an account, and you can limit your campaign budget and daily spend to suit your budget. You can get started for $5 per day – compare this with the cost of a print or TV advertisement.

**Apply for grants and funding programs**

Regularly check the Queensland Tourism Industry Council Grants Gateway (QGG). This website provides information on available funding programs as well as sources of information and advice on grants available.

For more information visit: qtic.com.au

The Tourism and Events Queensland Grants Guide is a useful resource to equip you with the tools to successfully navigate the grants space and point you in the right direction with regards to information sourcing, applications, grant writing and other tips and pointers.

For more information visit: teq.queensland.com/grants
Link your product to domestic touring routes
Around 10 million visitors each year take drive holidays or short breaks in Queensland. Queensland has a number of drive routes that can be found via queensland.com/drive. Packaging for the drive markets can help keep visitors in your destination longer and spending more money. It’s worth checking with your RTO if and how they are promoting these touring routes, and if you like what you hear, look for ways to become involved.

Read industry newsletters
Industry newsletters from bodies such as Tourism and Events Queensland, Tourism Australia, Australian Tourism Export Council, or your RTO, local tourism organisation or council contain useful information to help you with your business. When you are busy it can be easy to scan and delete them quickly, however by taking the time to read through them, you’ll come across some great information as well as marketing and development opportunities which are often free or low cost for your business. If you haven’t already, subscribe to TEQ’s free eNewsletters they include:
- TEQ Industry News – weekly email eNewsletter covering high-line state-wide tourism and events news
- Research Updates – regular eNewsletter providing updates on tourism research in Queensland
- Media releases – keep up to date with the latest Tourism and Events Queensland news
- Queensland Stories – regular eNewsletter which is distributed to our media friends, featuring new tourism products, story ideas, copyright-free features and photo galleries
For more information visit: teq.queensland.com/eNewsletters
### Tourism Industry Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>A person or company that sells your product on your behalf, including inbound tour operators (ITOs), wholesalers and retail agents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotment</td>
<td>A pre-negotiated number of seats/rooms/vehicles held by a wholesaler/inbound operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business tourism</td>
<td>Incorporates visitors who travel for conventions, conferences, seminars, workshops, symposiums, incentives, exhibitions and special events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission</td>
<td>The fee paid to agents for them to market, distribute and sell your product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative advertising</td>
<td>Advertising placement costs are shared between advertising partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distressed inventory</td>
<td>Unsold product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>The channels through which a consumer may purchase your product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecotourism</td>
<td>Nature-based activities that foster visitor appreciation and understanding of natural and cultural heritage, and are ecologically, economically and socially sustainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarisation (famil)</td>
<td>Provides trade and media representatives with the opportunity to experience your product first hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free sell</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontline staff</td>
<td>The agents that deal directly with consumers including retail agents and reservation staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully independent travellers (FIT)</td>
<td>Travellers who plan their own travel arrangements. There are a number of types of FIT including visiting friends and relatives, backpacking, and partially-packaged travellers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross rate</td>
<td>Also known as rack or door rate – the amount consumers pay for your product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group inclusive travellers (GIT)</td>
<td>Travellers who purchase the bulk of their holiday arrangements before leaving home. Also referred to as package travellers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inbound</td>
<td>People from overseas travelling to Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inbound tour operator (ITO)</td>
<td>An Australian-based agent who specialises in developing programs and itineraries for distribution channels. Also known as ground operators and destination management companies (DMCs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentive travel</td>
<td>Incentive travel is a trip offered as a prize or reward, for top-performing employees or sales agents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nett rate</strong></td>
<td>Gross rate less the commission, which is the amount you receive from the agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online distribution</strong></td>
<td>Using the internet and web portals to distribute or promote your product to consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online travel agent (OTA)</strong></td>
<td>Allows consumers to check live availability and pricing, and then book travel products in real time through the OTA website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operator</strong></td>
<td>The owner and/or manager of the tourism product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outbound passengers/guests</strong></td>
<td>People travelling overseas from Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product manager</strong></td>
<td>Responsible for identifying and selecting the products and suppliers that an ITO or wholesaler will sell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Real-time inventory</strong></td>
<td>Details of rooms, vehicles, tour places or venues stored in the database of an online booking system. Details include the total places available and number of places sold for each day/date. The inventory is kept up to date automatically and inventory reports can be requested at any time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retail travel agent</strong></td>
<td>The link to the consumer. Retail agents book travel products for travellers either through a wholesaler, an ITO or direct with the supplier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sales calls</strong></td>
<td>Face-to-face meetings with agents. Purposes may include to update and educate them on your product; negotiate inclusion in their programs; or negotiate rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainable tourism</strong></td>
<td>Tourism that can be sustained in the long term because it results in a net benefit to the social, economic, natural and cultural environments of the area in which it takes place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travel trade</strong></td>
<td>A collective term for the agents that make up the distribution system including ITOs, wholesalers, retailers and online agents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visiting friends and relatives (VFR)</strong></td>
<td>Visitors whose main purpose is to visit with friends and relatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wholesaler</strong></td>
<td>Wholesalers located in overseas markets and are the link between international travel agents and ITOs or suppliers</td>
</tr>
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</table>
# Tourism Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFTA</td>
<td>Australian Federation of Travel Agents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASP</td>
<td>Aussie Specialist Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATDW</td>
<td>Australian Tourism Data Warehouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATE</td>
<td>Australian Tourism Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRS</td>
<td>Cooperative reservation system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIT</td>
<td>Fully independent traveller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOC</td>
<td>Free of charge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITO</td>
<td>Inbound tour operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVS</td>
<td>International Visitor Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVS</td>
<td>National Visitor Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTA</td>
<td>Online travel agent</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRA</td>
<td>Tourism Research Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TXA</td>
<td>Tourism Exchange Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFR</td>
<td>Visiting friends and relatives</td>
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# Regional Tourism Organisations in Queensland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BNB</td>
<td>Bundaberg North Burnett Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM</td>
<td>Brisbane Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>Capricorn Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCO</td>
<td>Fraser Coast Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAPDL</td>
<td>Gladstone Area Promotion &amp; Development Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCT</td>
<td>Gold Coast Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTL</td>
<td>Machay Tourism Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OQTA</td>
<td>Outback Queensland Tourism Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCDL</td>
<td>Sunshine Coast Destination Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SQCT</td>
<td>Southern Queensland Country Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEL</td>
<td>Townsville Enterprise Ltd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTNQ</td>
<td>Tourism Tropical North Queensland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMDL</td>
<td>Whitsundays Marketing and Development Ltd</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

# Tourism Organisations

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<th>Acronym</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATEC</td>
<td>Australian Tourism Export Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATRN</td>
<td>Australian Regional Tourism Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTO</td>
<td>Local tourist organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTO</td>
<td>National tourism office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PATA</td>
<td>Pacific Asia Travel Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QTIC</td>
<td>Queensland Tourism Industry Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTO</td>
<td>Regional Tourist Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STO</td>
<td>State tourism office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA</td>
<td>Tourism Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>Visitor information centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Tourism Organisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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