Australian Experiences Industry Toolkit

VOLUME 2

Boosting your bottomline
## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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<td>Kingfisher Bay Resort</td>
<td>Explore Mornington's Mornington</td>
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Produced by Tourism Australia.
For more information about this publication please contact australianexperiences@tourism.australia.com.
Let the journey continue...
AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCES INDUSTRY TOOLKIT VOLUME II: BOOSTING YOUR BOTTOMLINE IS A FOLLOW-UP TO TOURISM AUSTRALIA'S FIRST HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL AND VERY POPULAR AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCES INDUSTRY TOOLKIT: ADDING VALUE TO YOUR BUSINESS. WE WERE OVERWHELMED BY THE POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM ACROSS THE TOURISM INDUSTRY FOR THE FIRST TOOLKIT AND ARE DELIGHTED THAT SO MANY TOURISM BUSINESSES HAVE FOUND IT USEFUL.

This new toolkit aims to build upon the practical tips and handy hints from the first version, to help you make the shift towards selling Australian Experiences, so that you can put your business in the best possible position to boost its bottomline. The content of this toolkit assumes that you have already read the first one, so if you haven’t, download a copy from www.tourism.australia.com before you sink your teeth into Volume II.

This toolkit - a practical resource for all Australian tourism businesses – provides important information on:

> Tourism Australia’s target consumer – the Experience Seeker;
> Successful business case studies featuring Australian tourism businesses that have made the shift to selling experiences;
> How to position your product as an experience through ‘bundling’;
> How to promote your product as an experience through public relations and digital marketing;
> How to get the most out of australia.com and the ATDW; and
> How to create a green experience to assist in giving you a competitive edge.

Inside you will find a number of hints, tips, tools and techniques to provide you with a framework to personalise your business offerings, stage compelling experiences, connect with Experience Seekers and hopefully help boost your business’ bottomline.

Like the first toolkit, this new one is a useful resource to help you and your business. Turn the page and let the Australian Experiences journey continue!
Welcome to our backyard:
SECTION 1: HITTING THE TARGET:
THE EXPERIENCE SEEKER

THIS SECTION PROVIDES INFORMATION AND USEFUL TIPS ON:

- Australia’s global target consumer the Experience Seekers 6
- The First Time Global Experience Seeker 7
- Characteristics of;
  - Global Experience Seekers; 6
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  - New Zealand Experience Seekers 10
  - Australian Experience Seekers 12
OUR TARGET CONSUMERS

In the first Australian Experiences Industry Toolkit, you were introduced to Tourism Australia’s three main target consumer groups for marketing campaigns, which include:

- The First Time Global Experience Seeker who has yet to visit Australia (in all markets apart from Australia and New Zealand). In the first toolkit, we referred simply to the Global Experience Seeker. Tourism Australia has now further defined this segment to target first time visitors. The following section provides a further explanation for this;
- The New Zealand Experience Seeker, in New Zealand; and
- The Australian Experience Seeker for the domestic market.

These travellers are best suited to what Australia has to offer. Consumer marketing campaigns can be directed at the ‘mass audience’ with no particular target or to a specific segment of the population. However, for many National Tourism Organisations (NTO) factors such as limited budgets and destination offers, matched with particular consumer motivations, have prompted most to adopt a segmented approach to marketing. Tourism Australia’s marketing approach to target three specific consumer groups helps to ensure the organisation gets the most out of its promotional dollars.

The Global Experience Seeker and, more specifically the First Time Global Experience Seeker, are defined below.

DEFINING OUR TARGET CONSUMERS - GLOBAL EXPERIENCE SEEKERS

Tourism Australia has identified common segments across different cultures to classify who would be receptive to the Australian experience. They are defined as the Global Experience Seeker.

Global Experience Seekers are long haul travellers who are less affected by the traditional barriers to travel of distance, time and cost. Research shows these findings to be globally consistent. What is different about this approach is the use of psychographic studies, which study how the traveller thinks and feels, to determine the personal factors that influence them to travel.

The First Time Global Experience Seeker; Tourism Australia has further refined the Global Experience Seeker segment to target a more specific group of travellers - the First Time Global Experience Seeker. This group represents about a fifth of all visitors to Australia and are made up of Global Experience Seekers who are yet to visit Australia.

The Global Experience Seeker is likely to return to destinations that meet their needs of unique, authentic experiences. However, repeat visitors, particularly Global Experience Seekers, are far more aware of what a destination has to offer, and as such, are less receptive to NTO promotions. To a degree, it is the experiences they have learnt about that brings repeat travellers back to a destination, not a marketing campaign.

First Time Global Experience Seekers share the attitudes and behaviours of other Experience Seekers, however, are less aware of the range of Australian experiences on offer, having not yet visited Australia. As such, any experiences-led campaign will have a greater effect on First Time Global Experience Seekers.
So why target the First Time Global Experience Seeker? Primarily because they are lucrative travellers for the Australian tourism industry. They tend to spend more and stay longer than other visitors, including Global Experience Seekers who have visited Australia before (Refer to Appendix A). Importantly for regional businesses, First Time Global Experience Seekers are more likely to travel beyond capital cities. Once they've experienced Australia once, they're more likely to come back and try it again.

For the Australian tourism industry, First Time Global Experience Seekers help deliver increased spend, nights and dispersal.

**WHAT OUR CONSUMERS ‘LOOK’ LIKE**

Global Experience Seekers, whether first time visitors or repeat visitors, share a unique set of values, attitudes and motivations that stretch beyond holiday behaviour and well beyond the category of travel.

Global Experience Seekers can be found among all age groups, income levels, and geographic locations. Within this segment there are commonalities in attitude to travel, personal development and everyday life that exist across countries including:

- **Global Experience Seekers** are experienced travellers: travelling is a big part of their lives,
- Compared to the average long haul traveller, **Global Experience Seekers** want to get off the beaten track and interact with local people to make friends, develop personal relationships and engage in the lifestyle;
- **Global Experience Seekers** long for self-discovery and education when travelling. As well as observing they also want to personally experience cultures and lifestyles different from their own. Exposure to such experiences results in a deep sense of personal fulfilment, meeting their desire to grow as an individual. This accounts for their interest in Australia’s Indigenous culture;
- **Global Experience Seekers** look to challenge themselves physically, emotionally and/or mentally. By learning about different cultures and challenging themselves, the opportunity for self discovery is enhanced; and
- **Global Experience Seekers** are drawn to destinations that are ‘yet to be discovered’ or are away from the standard tourist trail. To be able to experience the true natural and cultural surroundings they have a preference for locations that are un-touched and ‘un-explored’.

**TYPICALLY FIRST TIME GLOBAL EXPERIENCE SEEKERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO:**

- Be experienced international travellers;
- Be opinion leaders – early adopters and influencers;
- Be open minded;
- Be selective about their media consumption – they prefer media that is personally relevant and motivational;
- Consider travel to be 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; and
- Be well educated and informed on a range of subjects.
What the First Time Global Experience Seeker wants

The First Time Global Experience Seeker has a number of ‘wants’ to satisfy their travel experience. These include:

> Experiencing something different from their normal day-to-day life;
> Understanding and learning about different lifestyles and cultures;
> Participating in the lifestyle and experiencing, rather than observing it;
> Social interactions – making friends and developing personal relationships;
> Meeting and interacting with the locals;
> Challenging themselves – physically, emotionally and/or mentally;
> Visiting authentic destinations that are not necessarily part of the tourist route;
> Exposure to unique and personally compelling experiences; and
> Having authentic personal experiences.

Connecting with Global Experience Seekers

Global Experience Seekers, whether they are first-time or repeat visitors, are selective in their consumption of media. They prefer:

> Internet;
> Cable television;
> Lifestyle channels and programs/documentaries;
> Digital media;
> Cinema;
> Ambient media (such as billboards, bus stops, etc.).

Importance of targeting Global Experience Seekers

While Australia is considered a dream destination for many international travellers, it is currently capturing only a small portion of the potential market. As an industry, we need to reassess the manner in which we communicate our products and ensure the experiences we offer appeal to the Global Experience Seeker.

To stimulate even greater interest, and in turn ensure the success of the tourism industry, it is vital to understand the characteristics and ‘needs’ of the First Time Global Experience Seeker. They are more informed, interested and curious about potential travel destinations. When we ‘connect’ with them they will hunger for more of our offerings.

You can use Tourism Australia’s research and insights into Experience Seekers to adapt your tourism offerings more specifically to the needs of the First Time Global Experience Seeker to increase the profitability and visibility of your business.

What Experience Seekers mean for tourism promotion

The reference to different types of Experience Seekers may sound like marketing jargon. But this type of consumer segmentation is essential to help you generate sustainable and high yield business. The classification of Global Experience Seekers is essential to help:

> you and your business assess your offer and your unique selling points and ensure it’s appealing to big-spending visitors; and
> Tourism Australia get the most out of its marketing dollar by targeting consumers who have the ability and desire to travel to Australia, spend up big while they’re here and travel beyond cities.

As an industry, we need to assess the products and services we offer and ensure they are what our three target consumer groups are looking for in a holiday experience.
Global Experience Seekers are long haul travellers who are less affected by the traditional barriers to travel of distance, time and cost.

To capture this lucrative market we need to reassess the way we market and deliver our products to appeal to their emotions and needs.

Travel plays an important role in the life of Global Experience Seekers. They have a broad range of destinations they consider when deciding where to holiday.

There is a high potential to attract and connect with Global Experience Seekers if we target their preferred media e.g. the Internet, lifestyle channels, documentaries etc.

Any communications targeted at Global Experience Seekers will also touch other prospective travellers.

As an industry, we know Australian experiences are among the world’s best. But general awareness among Experience Seekers (be they Australian, New Zealand or Global) of the quality and diversity of Australian experiences on offer is surprisingly low.

We need to create greater awareness of the range, quality and diversity of experiences we have to offer. At the same time we need to enhance and promote the ‘badge value’ of Australian experiences to compete more effectively with other destinations and win the tourist dollar.

More information

Need some help working out if your product is appealing to the Global Experience Seeker, either first time or repeat visitors?

Email Tourism Australia’s Consumer and Market Insights Team on consumerandmarketinsights@tourism.australia.com for Experience Seeker research assistance.

www.tourism.australia.com/research
NEW ZEALAND EXPERIENCE SEEKERS

NEW ZEALAND IS AUSTRALIA’S LARGEST INTERNATIONAL SOURCE MARKET, ACCOUNTING FOR 20 PER CENT OF ALL INTERNATIONAL VISITORS TO AUSTRALIA.

THE CHALLENGE

In 2007 the number of New Zealanders travelling to Australia increased, which led to a slight rise in visitor nights and a strong increase in spend.

Many New Zealanders believe they know a lot about Australia and the experiences on offer. However, this is not necessarily the case. Australia needs to educate New Zealanders about the broad array of enticing experiences available to attract more New Zealanders to spend more, stay longer and travel more widely within Australia.

PROFILE OF THE NEW ZEALAND EXPERIENCE SEEKER

The New Zealand Experience Seeker is different from the Global Experience Seeker. The New Zealand Experience Seeker is defined as a traveller that has a preference for Australia as a travel destination and spent more than NZ$200 per night or NZ$2,000 in total on their last trip, three times more than the average New Zealand traveller.

What they look like

Typically they:
  > Spend money to ‘experience’ life’s offerings;
  > Look for a variety of experiences;
  > Have a high net worth;
  > Will spend more;
  > Are well educated; and
  > Are prolific Internet users.

The New Zealand Experience Seeker is split into three main socio-demographic groups: Affluent Young Couples; Affluent Families; and Affluent Older Couples. Each group has key motivations (what drives them to take a holiday) and gratifications (what they want to take home from a holiday).
AFFLUENT YOUNG COUPLES | AFFLUENT FAMILIES | AFFLUENT OLDER COUPLES
---|---|---
**Motivations**
(what drives them to take a holiday)
> Break from work life;
> Broaden experiences;
> Share with partner; and
> Now is the time, commitments pending.
> Break shackles of busy daily routine; and
> Kids’ safety and happiness is critical
> Kids are gone, work not primary focus, so now indulge travel dreams; and
> More time and money.

**Gratifications**
(what they want to take home from a holiday)
> Personal freedom;
> Control in life;
> Challenges to test and define personality; and
> Consolidate and create friendships.
> Chance to re-engage with kids;
> Reinforce family bonds, shared activities; and
> Opportunities for kids to learn and develop.
> Personal enrichment;
> Expression of self;
> Cerebral interests, immerse in authentic experiences; and
> Renew bonds with partner.

**How New Zealand Experience Seekers plan trips**

New Zealand Experience Seekers chose their last holiday destination based on:
> Information on the Internet;
> Travel agents’ advice;
> Past experience;
> Word of mouth; and
> Brochures.

Forty two per cent of all New Zealand Experience Seekers booked a component of their last trip through a travel agent, while 35 per cent booked their accommodation directly and 35 per cent booked directly with an airline.

This target group actively pursues experiences they feel are value for money but, at the same time, they want to make their travel plans easy, even if they have to pay for it. Feedback indicates the best of what Australia has to offer can compete head to head with other overseas options.

New Zealand Experience Seekers are motivated by holidays that provide stimulation and relaxation as well as the gratifications of personal growth and strengthened relationships.

**More information**

Need more information on how to adapt your product to entice the New Zealand Experience Seeker?

Email the Consumer and Market Insights Team on consumerandmarketinsights@tourism.australia.com.

www.tourism.australia.com/research
SECTION 1: HITTING THE TARGET: THE EXPERIENCE SEEKER

AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE SEEKERS

THE DOMESTIC TRAVEL MARKET PROVIDES THE GREATEST CONTRIBUTION TO THE AUSTRALIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY, INJECTING $58 BILLION INTO THE ECONOMY IN 2007 AND ACCOUNTING FOR 79 PER CENT OF TOTAL TOURISM SPEND IN AUSTRALIA.

THE CHALLENGE

Despite recent increases in the number of trips taken and the amount spent on domestic holidays, overall the domestic tourism market has been in decline over the last nine years.

In recent years, Australian households’ expenditure on holidays has increased in line with continued growth in consumer spending. However, Australians are stockpiling their annual leave entitlements with the current balance of full time employees estimated to be 120 million days.

The biggest challenge is Australians perceive Australian holidays as being safe, predictable and known, with experiences that lack the challenge and diversity of overseas destinations. Australia is also seen as being expensive compared to many overseas destinations.

These factors, combined with a strong Australian dollar and low cost carriers expanding their international flights, continue to influence the travel preferences and intentions of Australians, and lead to many opting for overseas holidays.

PROFILE OF THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE SEEKER

Tourism Australia has identified the Australian Experience Seeker as our primary target group of Australian travellers. These are travellers who have a preference for both interstate and overseas travel and who spent more than $2,000 on their last holiday. Looking at the average trip cost per person, Australian Experience Seekers spent $3,505 on their last holiday, three and a half times more than the average Australian.
Within the *Australian Experience Seeker* target group there are three separate life stages. The key characteristics for each group include:

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<td>&gt; 25-35 years;</td>
<td>&gt; Children’s needs form their life’s agenda;</td>
<td>&gt; Free from children;</td>
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<td>&gt; Without children;</td>
<td>&gt; Holidays provide a much needed break from routine;</td>
<td>&gt; Free from responsibilities and able to indulge in travel dreams;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt; Experience the world before having a family;</td>
<td>&gt; Relaxation;</td>
<td>&gt; Seeking personal reward for a lifetime of hard work;</td>
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<td>&gt; Seeking controlled challenges;</td>
<td>&gt; Time to re-charge; and</td>
<td>&gt; Self indulgence and luxury;</td>
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<td>&gt; Personal development; and</td>
<td>&gt; Reconnect with the family/partner.</td>
<td>&gt; Desire to learn new things and personal enrichment; and</td>
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<td>&gt; Leave time is precious.</td>
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<td>&gt; Gather stories to share.</td>
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**WHAT TO DO**

Research suggests that to effectively engage *Australian Experience Seekers*, we need to reassess our ‘holiday products’ and the experiences on offer. Feedback indicates that with the right offering, the best of Australia can compete with overseas options.

Tourism Australia research shows that some of the most isolated and expensive destinations presented to *Australian Experience Seekers* provide a compelling appeal and diverse range of experiences. Therefore, remote experiences don’t always equate to ‘too hard’.

When travelling, *Australian Experience Seekers* often want to visit more than one destination, so the most popular holidays include a variety of experiences rather than a stand-alone destination.

**More information**

Need more information about how to make your product more appealing to your fellow Australian travellers?

Email the Consumer and Market Insights Team on consumerandmarketinsights@tourism.australia.com.

[www.tourism.australia.com/research](http://www.tourism.australia.com/research)
You can’t experience life through a
THIS SECTION PROVIDES GUIDANCE AND USEFUL TIPS ON:

- Tourism Australia’s focus on promoting Australian Experiences. 16
- The seven key Australian Experiences, which include: 17
  - Aboriginal Australia;
  - Nature in Australia;
  - Outback Australia;
  - Aussie Coastal Lifestyle;
  - Food and Wine;
  - Australian Major Cities; and
  - Australian Journeys.
- Business success stories – case studies featuring tourism businesses that have made the shift from promoting products to selling experiences. 18
MOVING TOWARDS EXPERIENCES

In the first Australian Experiences Industry Toolkit, you were introduced to the concept of Australian Experiences and Tourism Australia’s focus on promoting seven key experiences globally. This section recaps the definition of Australian Experiences and the importance of shifting towards promoting experiences rather than merely ‘products’.

Gone are the days of ‘happy snap’ tourism. Visitors from around the world are looking for more than just a photograph of a tourism icon: they want a truly engaging experience. It’s not just about where you’ve been and what you saw, but also about what you felt, thought, remembered, tasted and heard while you were there.

Tourism is the most traded commodity around the world. Australia is competing with every other country for the tourism dollar: every country has a tourism product offering. For Australia to be ahead of the pack and entice the Experience Seeker, it needs to offer and promote authentic, engaging, unique and personal holiday experiences. We need to create a desire for compelling Australian experiences to enhance the value of our destination.

Experiences are the drivers and motivators of our target audience – Experience Seekers. Promoting experiences that meet these motivations will help differentiate Australia from its competitors and expand Australia’s experience palette. This will in turn help Australia attract big spending tourists who travel widely throughout the country and increase the tourism industry’s revenue (and ultimately, boost your bottomline!).

Experience Seekers are, by definition, looking for unique, involving and personal experiences from their holidays.

Piquing their interest in an Australian holiday by promoting Australia’s compelling experiences, will enhance the value of our destination in the competitive decision-making process. From a seller and supplier perspective, the additional value created in the eyes of this consumer group provides opportunity for premium pricing and higher margins.

Tourism Australia has been working with the State Tourism Organisations and the tourism industry to deliver an Australian Experiences Framework, based on Australia’s core strengths, which are the experiences that give us a competitive advantage. This framework features seven key Australian Experiences that underpin Brand Australia and all our marketing globally. These experiences have been identified based on research that shows the needs and wants of the Experience Seeker.

The seven key Australian Experiences are:

> Aboriginal Australia;
> Nature in Australia;
> Outback Australia;
> Aussie Coastal Lifestyle;
> Food and Wine;
> Australian Major Cities; and
> Australian Journeys.

Promotions and communication around these key experiences will assist in increasing the level of knowledge of Australia as a destination and motivate Experience Seekers to actually book a holiday to Australia. Australia needs to move to the

“Anyone can build a hotel or resort, but it’s how you engage with the environment in which you operate, and the variety of experiences your guests can have, which makes it an attractive proposition.”  
Kerry Brough, Kingfisher Bay Resort
top of our global consumer’s mental checklist. To do this, Tourism Australia and its industry partners must put a greater emphasis on selling the world’s best Australian Experiences.

These seven experiences are defined as follows:

**AUSTRALIA’S KEY EXPERIENCES**

1. **Aboriginal Australia** – is all about sharing the world’s most ancient, living culture, best expressed through art, storytelling, dance music and the land itself. For the Experience Seeker, it means learning about traditional Aboriginal practices as well as contemporary interpretations.

2. **Nature in Australia** – Australia’s vast wilderness, ancient landscapes and natural beauty are best described by their colours: the red sandy deserts, the green rainforests, the white untouched beaches and the rich blue oceans. The Experience Seeker can easily access and learn about distinctive plants and intriguing wildlife that cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

3. **Outback Australia** – Australia’s heartland is characterised not only by the spectacular colours and dramatic landscapes, but also by the spirit and resilience of its people, their communities and lifestyle. The Experience Seeker can enjoy the vast open spaces, the sky, the stars, the pubs, the cattle stations and meet the people that make this uniquely Australian landscape what it is.

4. **Aussie Coastal Lifestyle** – is more than just the beach, surfing and the strip of sand – it is a way of living. The coast is a place where families and friends meet: a place where you can watch a movie, play a game of cricket or volleyball, throw a frisbee or have a picnic. With nine coastal World Heritage Areas, Australia offers the Experience Seeker one of the most diverse, least-crowded and unspoilt coastal experiences in the world.

5. **Food and Wine** – inspired by fresh, natural produce experienced in stunning locations. Experience Seekers can enjoy Australia’s fabulous food and wine served by friendly Aussies in great locations. They can choose from casual cafes, alfresco or fine dining, or simply have a picnic or BBQ on a beach. Experience Seekers can also explore some of our renowned wine regions and visit cellar doors to sample and learn about the wines.

6. **Australian Major Cities** – Australia’s major cities show off the Australian way of life and culture. Experience Seekers can enjoy our cities and their contemporary, outdoor lifestyle. They can see Australia in our architecture; experience it in our multicultural precincts, shops, theatres, and bars; watch it in the people; taste it in our food or smell it in the oceans or bushland. Australia has a young, free-spirited and uninhibited culture.

7. **Australian Journeys** – from the outback to the coasts, Australian journeys are more than just getting from one place to another: they’re about discovering the diversity, the wonders, the vibrant towns, the people and their unique way of life. Experience Seekers can take weeks meandering through rolling countryside, red desert, sparkling waterholes and our spiritual heritage or a few days exploring wilderness coast, island clusters or reefs.

“All of our experiences are underpinned by authenticity, uniqueness and high levels of customer service. We always look to incorporate elements that cannot be replicated by our competitors.”

Brian Hall, Pure Tasmania

*The term ‘Indigenous’ refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the tourism businesses that showcase these cultures. Tourism Australia uses the term ‘Indigenous’ when referring to cultural experiences across Australia. However, for consumer-targeted media, Tourism Australia usually refers to ‘Aboriginal Australia’ or ‘Aboriginal experiences’ as these are the terms recognised by consumers globally.*
HANDY HINT: TIPS FOR ENTICING THE EXPERIENCE SEEKER

1. Maximise your location. Think about the experiences you have in your backyard and promote them in your brochures and marketing materials e.g. spectacular views and scenery, historic buildings, heritage trails, World Heritage listed areas, bushwalks, regional produce markets, wineries, restaurants etc.

2. Think of your ‘competitors’ as your allies. Provide your customers with tips on other attractions and things to do in your local area. E.g. if you’re an accommodation provider, give your customers details about local tours, attractions, cafes and restaurants, wineries, Aboriginal art galleries, walks etc in your local areas.

3. Keep your product offering fresh and always highlight new aspects and unique experiences in your promotional materials.

4. Provide visitors with the opportunity to become involved in various aspects of your business or advise them of activities that are available near you. E.g. For a farm stay, you could offer customers the opportunity to shear a sheep or muster cattle; for a winery, you could give customers a chance to mix their own blends; a bed and breakfast owner could offer customers the chance to learn how to make home-made food from local produce such as jams and breads.

5. Remember, the key is to offer immersive, interactive, active and adventurous experiences.

6. Provide an opportunity for your customers to meet and engage with the locals.

7. Create a ‘braggability’ factor to generate word-of-mouth business.

8. Provide customers with easy access to activities that will allow them to engage with the people and immerse themselves in the lifestyle and the environment.

9. Highlight the unique selling point of your product. Perhaps there’s something so unique about your product that it cannot be experienced anywhere else in the world. If so, promote it!

10. Make sure the language you use in your promotional materials such as brochures, websites and media materials reflect and sell the overall experiences, not just a product.

MAKING THE SHIFT TO EXPERIENCES – SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS CASE STUDIES

Making the shift away from selling a product to promoting an engaging experience might sound like a difficult job. But there are many tourism businesses across Australia who have made the shift and are reaping the rewards. The following provides some examples of Australian tourism businesses who, after reading Tourism Australia’s first Australian Experiences Industry Toolkit, have re-assessed the way they promote their product offerings to focus on selling experiences:

EXPERIENCES CASE STUDY: KOOLJAMAN AT CAPE LEVEQUE

Kooljaman at Cape Leveque is a multi-award winning Aboriginal-owned wilderness camp, 220 kilometres north of Broome on the Dampier Peninsula. It is a beautiful remote paradise offering a range of unique accommodation, tours and self guided activities.

Kooljaman offers a unique wilderness camp surrounded by diverse natural wonders and an opportunity to experience Aboriginal culture.

Unique selling points

Kooljaman is set up to accommodate visitors who wish to stay among a traditional Aboriginal community. Being community-owned, guests are welcomed by the whole community and can enjoy the warmth and hospitality of the Bardi people. Guests also have a chance to participate in authentic Aboriginal tours and interact with local people.
Experiences

The primary experience on offer is ‘Aboriginal Australia’. The area also has a significant focus on ‘Nature in Australia’ and ‘Aussie Coastal Lifestyle’.

Product and marketing developments

The Kooljaman team is continually developing their products and tours in response to customer feedback. They have ‘bundled’ accommodation products with a range of tour and transport options to make it easier for visitors to plan and enjoy their holiday at Cape Leveque.

The team has recently introduced fact sheets in German and Italian, which can be downloaded from their website. This was done in response to a request from international buyers who they met on the 2007 Indigenous Tourism Australia European Road Show.

Marketing as an experience

The team has ensured the Kooljaman’s stunning image library captures the imagination of the discerning local, interstate and international traveller and provides an accurate means of communicating exactly what they can expect to experience at Kooljaman.

Every year, the team spends a significant portion of its marketing budget personally meeting with travel agents and wholesalers to ensure they receive an accurate impression of Kooljaman. This is followed up with agent familiarisations to allow them to communicate the Kooljaman experience first hand.

Tracking the marketing

The team reviews its product and marketing each year during the wet season, and again at the end of the financial year. Yield, occupancy and guest feedback tracking enables the team to constantly improve their products and marketing to meet their customers’ expectations.

By focusing on key international markets, the team has successfully increased the proportion of international visitors to the area, which has had a significant positive impact on yield per visitor, and has also increased the uptake of cultural tours, supporting the micro businesses in the area.

Feedback from visiting journalists, trade and media articles that have been printed have reinforced the amazing experiences offered at Kooljaman.

“Using the Australian Experiences Industry Toolkit we have changed our focus to be more experienced based. Before we marketed the Black Queen as a place made out of bottles. Using the toolkit allowed us to make the Black Queen more interactive. We now focus on incorporating all the senses and the history and importance of this place. The response from our customers has been fantastic.”

Gale Collins, The Black Queen, Lightning Ridge
EXPERIENCE CASE STUDY: LIFE’S A DISH (BENDIGO)

Life’s a Dish is an ongoing collaborative marketing campaign between the City of Greater Bendigo and 12 of Bendigo’s premier dining establishments.

The project, which began in 2006, was inspired by the remarkable Buon Ricordo concept that began in Northern Italy in 1964, where visitors to the region could collect restaurant signature plates as a souvenir of a memorable, regional dining experience.

Bendigo Pottery, Australia’s oldest working pottery, embraced this idea and joined with 12 Bendigo restaurants to create a unique hand-painted plate for each venue. Speciality dishes, distinguishing architectural features and nearby landmarks, have inspired the lively artwork on the ceramic plates, which are available for purchase at participating restaurants.

Unique selling points

› The restaurants have bundled with the Bendigo Pottery, Australia’s oldest working pottery, to produce quality hand-painted plates, so it’s a uniquely Bendigo product.
› Each restaurant inspires visitors to experience another Bendigo restaurant and collect another plateful of stories and memories.
› Restaurants have been hand selected because they offer a unique dining experience, whether it be in a heritage building, an underground cellar or near a lake with a view.
› The plate acts as a vehicle for visitors to dine at the participating restaurants to enjoy the local wine and food.
› Rich soils, a heritage steeped in prosperity and the healthy legacy of Bendigo’s gold rush pioneers, have together stirred a recent resurgence of restaurants catering to refined tastes in Bendigo.

Experiences - ‘Food and Wine’

Product and marketing developments

The collaborating restaurants have used Tourism Australia’s Australian Experiences Industry Toolkit: Adding Value to your Business to assess their unique visitor offerings.

They have also aimed to enhance the visitor experience by asking all restaurants to nominate a restaurant signature dish, which is served on a larger version of the souvenir plate when ordered. The signature dish is also packaged with the souvenir plate for guests to take home (i.e. at each restaurant, guests can enjoy a glass of local wine, the signature dish and souvenir plate to keep).

All restaurants also work together to offer a series of Life’s a Dish events throughout the winter months, which include progressive dinners, a ’longest lunch’ and working with local winegrowers to deliver food and wine shows.

Marketing as an experience

Before Life’s a Dish was devised, restaurants would market individually in visitor guides and through other local tourism promotions. Few restaurants could afford to market outside of Bendigo on their own and most wouldn’t market collectively with other restaurants due to competition.

Since Life’s a Dish started, the following marketing initiatives have been undertaken:

› Life’s a Dish brochures, booklets and cards have been created, which include stories on all the participating restaurants and what inspired their plate design. Plate photos and head chef photos are incorporated into the stories.
› Life’s a Dish branding and stickers have been created.
› Local media launch, which included local advertising and editorial.
A media launch in Melbourne via a stand at the Good Food and Wine Show, which showcased chefs and local winegrowers from the region.

Full collection of plates displayed at each restaurant.

Chefs giving their time to do interviews on radio and TV.

Smart advertising campaign into the regional and Melbourne markets.

Life’s a Dish featured on www.bendigotourism.com

A cookbook was developed, which includes recipes from all participating restaurants.

By pooling time, money and resources, the participating restaurants have been able to get better value for their collective marketing dollar and have created a stronger product offering for visitors to Bendigo.

Marketing Life’s a Dish as an experience has allowed the area to:

- Highlight the growing food and wine industry by offering something unique that stands out (product strength with numbers);
- Strengthen the food and wine industry by working together to brand Bendigo as a food and wine destination.

Tracking the marketing

The results speak for themselves. Since devising the concept, the group has achieved:

- Editorial articles written in Epicure, Herald Sun, Rex Airline, Qantas and Postcards magazine and a segment on the Morning Show on Channel 9, to name a few.
- Several thousand plates have been sold since inception.
- A number of other restaurants have expressed interest in joining the program.

More information

Want more information about how Tourism Australia is promoting Australian Experiences to the rest of the world and how you can get on board and sell experiences?

toolkit

- Get the latest copy of Experience the Opportunities: Industry’s Guide to working with Tourism Australia, which provides information on the range of services and programs available to assist the Australian tourism industry in getting better returns for their businesses.

Contact Tourism Australia’s Industry Development Team on marketing@tourism.australia.com.

www.tourism.australia.com/industrydevelopment
Bring your mates and road test the experiences in our backyard
SECTION 3: POSITIONING YOUR PRODUCT TO PROMOTE EXPERIENCES

THIS SECTION PROVIDES GUIDANCE AND USEFUL TIPS ON:

> How to make the shift towards selling experiences by ‘bundling’ your product; 24
> The difference between ‘bundling’ and packaging your product; 24
> How to ‘bundle’ your product; 25
> ‘Bundling’ best practice 25
> Business case studies including ‘destination bundling’ and ‘touring route bundling’; 26
SECTION 3: POSITIONING YOUR PRODUCT TO PROMOTE EXPERIENCES

IN THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCES INDUSTRY TOOLKIT, YOU WERE GIVEN SOME TIPS ABOUT HOW YOU COULD BRING EXPERIENCES TO LIFE THROUGH YOUR BUSINESS AND PRODUCT OFFERING. THE FIRST TOOLKIT ALSO INTRODUCED THE CONCEPT OF ‘BUNDLING’. THIS SECTION RECAPS THE CONCEPT OF ‘BUNDLING’, INTRODUCES DIFFERENT TYPES OF ‘BUNDLING’ AND PROVIDES EXAMPLES OF HOW TOURISM BUSINESSES HAVE MAXIMISED ‘BUNDLING’ TO BOOST THEIR BUSINESS.

‘BUNDLING’ YOUR PRODUCT

‘Bundling’ refers to aligning and marketing products together to present a rich and diverse palette of experiences that greatly enhance the competitive offering. It is all about bringing together complementary activities to form compelling and unique Australian Experiences. It helps to improve visitation through regions and increase tourist revenue through multiple suppliers offering complementary products, or via single suppliers providing services that complement their core offering.

‘Bundling’ by individual suppliers or destinations can in effect present a smorgasbord of potential activities/experiences that greatly enhances the competitive nature of what we offer the First Time Global Experience Seeker.

Here’s how it would look in reality:

> Consider a bed and breakfast (B&B) operator operating in a wine region. The B&B operator can only offer a single product (accommodation), but by working together with other attractions, such as wineries, restaurants and delicatessens specialising in local produce, the combined attractions could offer the ultimate food and wine holiday experience. Adopting a collaborative approach and promoting a multi-layered experience means visitors are more likely to visit the destination, stay longer and spend more money. Any additional visitors brought into the region will indirectly benefit the B&B operator and the entire region.

‘Bundling’ versus packaging your product

Many operators provide their product as part of a package deal, however, ‘bundling’ is quite different.

In many cases, packaging will include flights, transfers, basic meals and activities. This provides the consumer with a relatively stress-free way of seeing and experiencing a destination. However, this method of marketing is not as effective at reaching some travellers, including First Time Global Experience Seekers. ‘Bundling’ is the ideal way to attract First Time Global Experience Seekers.

Product ‘bundling’ is about providing complementary products to like-minded travellers. It is not about dictating the experiences that a visitor will have, but rather making them aware of what your business AND your region have to offer.

As in the bed and breakfast example above, ‘bundling’ will assist in making a visit to your area more appealing by enhancing the perceived value of the overall experience. This means that more of the revenue from these experiences will stay in your region.

‘Bundling’ can be done in many ways. It could be as simple as having links to other organisation’s websites on your website. Or it could involve joining forces with other businesses in your region to create more substantial marketing activity and promotions. Most importantly, the key to effectively ‘bundling’ your experience is to cross-promote like-minded experiences that enhance the overall visitor experience in your region.

Attracting the First Time Global Experience Seeker through ‘bundling’

The concept of dynamic packaging and ‘bundling’ is far more attractive to the First Time Global Experience Seeker. These travellers are interested in having a unique, authentic experience that meets their needs and desires. As such, they are far more likely to partake in experiences that can be tailored to their needs. By ‘bundling’ your product, you are providing the consumer with a range of viable alternatives to enhance their experience and more effectively meet their needs.
Getting into the business of ‘bundling’

‘Bundling’ is an important way to maximise yield. In reality, tourism operators attempting to drive consumer appeal exclusively through their individual offering are less likely to attract as many tourists as they would by working with other operators. Presenting or developing a ‘bundle’ of experiences enables them to offer a more diverse and compelling experience.

Against the backdrop of the seven Australian Experiences listed in section 3, you need to start by working out and writing down:

> The experiences your business offers;
> The experiences your region offers;
> What’s unique to your business, your local area or your region;
> What your local area or region can promote as a unique selling point;
> What experience category you and your region can ‘own’ and promote;
> What visitors really want to get out of your experience.

Once you’ve considered this, you should contact your local Regional Tourism Organisation or Destination/Product Development team at your State/Territory Tourism Organisation to assist you in assembling unique experiences at both a business and regional level to better target Experience Seekers.

And don’t forget to have a look at the first Australian Experiences Industry Toolkit, available from www.tourism.australia.com/australianexperiencetoolkit, for information about how Tourism Australia’s Decision Support Tool can provide you with an immediate appraisal of the features most likely to interest Experience Seekers.

HANDY HINT: ‘BENEFITS TO YOUR BUSINESS WITH ‘BUNDLING’

‘Bundling’ can help your business by:

> Assisting you to more clearly tailor your marketing to the Experience Seeker by highlighting the most appealing activities and experiences;
> Assisting you to tailor your products more closely to the needs of the Experience Seeker and align yourself with products that complement your offering;
> Improving the profile and visibility of your business;
> Helping you to leverage Tourism Australia’s and the State Tourism Organisations’ activities, as well as other operators in your area, to grow visitor arrivals, length of stay and spend;
> Keeping your product fresh and keeping people interested, which are both important for repeat visitation; and
> Helping to generate ‘word of mouth’.

‘Bundling’ best practise

Getting into ‘bundling’ may sound complex but there are many tourism businesses around Australia who have successfully bundled their products with complementary products to enhance their offering.

The following provides some success stories to give you some ideas about how you can get into the business of ‘bundling’.
DESTINATION ‘BUNDLING’ CASE STUDY: 
EXPLORE MELBOURNE’S MORNINGTON PENINSULA

Ashcombe Maze & Lavender Gardens is home to Australia’s oldest and most famous hedge maze, a beautiful circular rose maze, and the year round flowering Lavender Labyrinth - all set among 25 acres of world acclaimed gardens. The business is located in Victoria’s spectacular Mornington Peninsula, just over an hours’ drive south of Melbourne. The region is renowned for its wineries, rugged coastline, waterfront restaurants and lush green hinterland.

About six years ago, the Ashcombe Maze & Lavender Gardens joined forces with one accommodation operator and five other attractions in the Mornington Peninsula region including:
- Best Western One Four Nelson;
- Cape Schanck Lighthouse;
- Moonlit Sanctuary Wildlife Park;
- Point Nepean National Park;
- Peninsula Hot Springs; and
- Sunny Ridge Strawberry Farm.

The six businesses collaborated and ‘bundled’ their products to create a more compelling experience for overseas visitors. Here’s how it all began...

How it came about

Ashcombe Maze & Lavender Gardens’ Business Development Manager, Katherine Cooper, wanted to be able to compete with the marketing budgets of larger tourism businesses and find a way to be noticed. Katherine knew Ashcombe Maze & Lavender Gardens couldn’t afford to do it alone. She and Arthur Ross decided to get a few local tour operators together to create a group brochure.

The brochure’s aim is to showcase the area’s key attractions; to create awareness of the region; and break into the international market place.

Many of the operators were just starting to establish relationships with international buyers and needed an affordable way to reach them. By ‘bundling’ with other local operators, they were able to afford to reach more international buyers and travellers.

Unique selling points

Although the Mornington Peninsula is recognised by locals as having a beautiful coastline, the local operators wanted to overcome the ‘summer destination’ label and let potential visitors know about the hinterland attractions, food and wine and other things to do in the region.

The local operators also wanted people to know you can get there in just over an hour from Melbourne, and that it is a relatively compact destination with many attractions in relatively close proximity to each other.

The group of local operators decided they were able to offer visitors:
- A chance to explore, indulge and enjoy the Mornington Peninsula;
- The picturesque peninsula of green rolling hills;
- A memorable experience within Melbourne’s playground;
- An unforgettable stop on the acclaimed touring route;
- An ideal itinerary for self drive and group travel.
Experiences
The bundled operators decided that the primary experience they could offer visitors was a Food and Wine experience. The Mornington Peninsula is also grouped in with Melbourne as part of an Australian Major City. The region also fits well into the Aussie Coastal Lifestyle and Australian Journeys experience categories.

Working together
With a combined marketing budget, the bundled operators have been able to produce a domestic brochure for the region and an international trade brochure, which has been translated into several languages including Korean, Japanese, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, German and English.

The bundled operators have also produced an information CD with an image gallery, fact sheets, brochures and a slide show. The CD includes voiceovers in several languages and can be used as a training tool. The group is currently building a website.

By working together, the bundled operators were able to make sure they were well represented at domestic and international trade shows. Usually one of the operators is able to attend trade shows in Asia, Europe or elsewhere to represent the region. The bundled operators split the costs to participate in trade events, which keeps it affordable.

The bundled operators have been doing sales calls together with two or three operators doing the rounds and meeting with buyers, tourism organisations and agents. This is also a great way to ensure the audiences presented to get better value for their time, and a better idea of the range of visitor experiences available in the area.

Visitors to attractions or accommodation in the region are given a copy of Explore Melbourne’s Mornington Peninsula brochure and told about all the great things to see and do in the region, which works well for both the visitors and the participating operators.

‘Bundling’ helps the operators close any product gaps and provide a wider range of experiences for tourists.

“It all started when a few of the operators exhibited at ATE five or six years ago and we were absolutely blown away with the marketing budgets and capacity of larger businesses and wanted to find a way to compete and be noticed. We knew we couldn’t afford to do it alone, and decided to get a few operators to put a group brochure together.” Katherine Cooper, Business Development Manager, Ashcombe Maze & Lavender Gardens.
ADDITIONS OF BUNDLING

KATHERINE COOPER, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, ASHCOMBE MAZE & LAVENDER GARDENS PROVIDES HER INSIGHTS INTO THE ADVANTAGES OF BUNDLING FOR HER BUSINESS:

“It is a way of getting more bang for our buck. On our own we can’t compete with the huge hotel chains as we are just individual privately owned businesses: by working together we can stand out.

It raises awareness of our region, as we can reach markets that we wouldn’t be able to reach by ourselves.

We create a combined product that is worthy of consideration by agents, either as a standalone destination or an itinerary they can add onto other destinations.

By sharing ideas and brainstorming at our marketing meetings, we encourage each other to think outside the box. Our meetings bring all sorts of ideas out of the woodwork and we all share our individual experiences and expertise: it makes everyone more inspired and active in their own individual marketing.

As a team building activity for our region’s operators it is really good. We are far more likely to seek support from each other when we need it, and share ideas for solving problems because we have built a good relationship with each other.

Because we are more active in the industry, we have built stronger relationships with other organisations such as Tourism Australia and Tourism Victoria. This provides opportunities to support each other which wouldn’t always know about otherwise.”

“People aren’t going to come to the area unless we can collectively make the region desirable and create itinerary options for them, each individual operator can’t do this on their own.”

Katherine Cooper, Business Development Manager, Ashcombe Maze & Lavender Gardens

Making it work

The bundled operators don’t have a formal structure or organisation to coordinate the collaboration. Instead, all the operators hold a strategic meeting in May of each year to plan the next 12 months of marketing and prepare a budget. The operators all agree on the core initiatives and budget, and also agree to a contingency budget for opportunities that come up that are not planned for.

The operators hold their strategic meetings at different locations each time, providing an opportunity to learn about each other’s products.

When it comes to decision making, the bundled operators use email to float ideas with all the businesses involved and work through opportunities together. This method works as it ensures all operators stay in regular contact and are responsive.

Ultimately, it is often left to one or two people to keep driving the collaboration, and as long as each business is happy to keep putting in the time and effort, everyone is able to contribute with their own strengths to get things done.

Different people take responsibility for different actions. Someone who is good at presenting at trade shows might do more of the trade shows than others, while someone who is good at organising banners might take the lead on that.

Whoever organises each marketing activity generally pays for it, and then invoices the other operators to ensure costs are split evenly. For these operators, this ensures the process doesn’t get complicated and doesn’t require special bank accounts.
Representation at trade events
The bundled operators all take it in turns to attend trade events. Representatives from each of the operators have different experiences and background in presenting to the international market, so they share it around to get the best outcome. Each of the operators has a particular strength with individual international markets. Whoever has the experience will take the lead on that specific international market and share information with the rest of the group.

“Buyers are more interested in us as a group of activities rather than an individual product offering. The bundled products get a better result by attending together than just representing their own individual product. When we are at trade shows, we get so used to doing the sales spiel for the other operators in the group we get to know their products really well, which helps us to cross promote to visitors to the area.”

Katherine Cooper, Business Development Manager, Ashcombe Maze & Lavender Gardens

Key learnings
Katherine says she and the other bundled operators have a number of key learnings that might help other tourism businesses who are contemplating entering into a ‘bundling’ collaboration. Her tips for other businesses are:

> Regions and local areas need to see themselves as offering complementary products, not competing products. Visitors are coming to the region because there are a range of products to experience.

> It is a very rewarding experience to be involved in a group like this because you can achieve so much that you couldn’t otherwise.

> Friendship, respect, understanding and an appreciation for what each other is doing for the region is the key to a successful ‘bundling’ collaboration.

> The destination is bigger than any one product.

> You have got to look at the big picture from the visitor’s point of view. You have to really listen to what they are looking for and tailor your combined offering to suit that.

> Brainstorming as a group and drawing on each other’s expertise can enable you to become internationally savvy.

> It is important to have a really good relationship with your Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO). With this case study, the bundled operators sit down with their RTO, go through their plan for the year and discuss opportunities. It is important for the RTO to understand what you are doing and take advantage of opportunities to work together.
THE GREAT TROPICAL DRIVE

The Great Tropical Drive is a joint initiative between Tourism Tropical North Queensland and Townsville Enterprise Ltd. It is a 12-day 2,079 kilometre self-drive touring route that winds its way between Cairns and Townsville through palm-fringed beaches, ancient rainforests and the golden outback of North Queensland. Along the way it takes in some of Australia’s best-known attractions including the Great Barrier Reef, Daintree Rainforest, Hinchinbrook Island and Undara Lava Tubes.

There are also 13 Discovery Trails – each one has a unique itinerary that gives a taste of Tropical Australia, including overnight drives into the Tablelands, and week-long 4WD and campervan adventures into the goldfields. Attractions and operators in the Cairns and Townsville are promoted as part of the Great Tropical Drive.

Experiences on offer:

- Wildlife
- Adventure
- Food and Wine
- Indigenous
- Nature
- Heritage

How it came about

Townsville Enterprise Limited (TEL) and Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) held discussions with the former Federal Tourism Minister, Joe Hockey, who shared their belief that Northern Queensland offered significant growth opportunities that could be achieved by the two organisations working with the support of the Federal Government. Funding was committed and the project was planned.

Unique selling points

The Great Tropical Drive is Australia’s only tropical drive touring route, offering diverse experiences through its natural world heritage experiences, wet tropics, outback, coastal areas (including the Great Barrier Reef), vibrant regional city life and rich history of indigenous culture.

The region has a diverse range of natural assets that have iconic status on a global scale including Hinchinbrook Island, the world’s largest national park island.

Experiences

The Great Tropical Drive encompasses all experience categories, in order of relevance these are:

- Nature in Australia (and adventure)
- Outback Australia
- Aboriginal Australia – including contemporary culture and heritage
- Australian Journeys
- Aussie Coastal Lifestyle – Townsville to Cairns Drive
- Australian Major Cities – Townsville is Australia’s largest city in northern Australia offering a unique regional city experience. Cairns is a hub for international flight access to the region and is the second largest city in northern Australia.

Working together

This project was officially launched in 2005 after funding was committed by the Federal Government. The project was unique in terms of involving two parties as co-signees for the funding.

A steering committee was established and comprised of Chair - John Grey, Chancellor of James Cook University; a representative from Tourism Queensland; an Indigenous representative and the Chairs of both Tourism Tropical North Queensland and Townsville Enterprise. The steering committee met approximately every six months during the active phase of the project, and was responsible for overseeing the project’s progress in reaching outcomes and financial reporting.

Since the recent formal close of the project, Townsville Enterprise and TTNQ are now responsible for maintaining the marketing and development of each of the individual regions, which are incorporated into the Great Tropical Drive.

Working together helped to establish a strategic long-term, big picture view and access funding on a larger scale. The Government was highly supportive of regions working together.

Making it work

The group appointed a Project Director (based in Cairns) to head up
the project and coordinate representation of both regions, along with two Project Officers.

The group allocated jobs across both organisations. Both Townsville Enterprise and TTNQ incorporated the Great Tropical Drive into their individual promotions at trade shows. The group devised detailed plans and budgets and clearly defined roles. There was always one person nominated to lead each activity and ensure it was implemented appropriately.

Challenges

With two separate organisations involved and equally responsible for the project deliverables, the group had to continually review its progress.

During the course of the project, both organisations needed to make allowance for differences in organisational culture and processes. This meant that mutual respect and patience were critical along with a good sense of humour!

One of the biggest challenges was being able to satisfy everyone in the region - ensuring that their product or experience had been included in the way they thought it should be.

Advantages of bundling

> It has enabled the region to really look at the experiences offered from a tourist’s point of view.
> Combining resources meant both organisations had more money to spend and more expertise on the project.
> Visitors are offered a greater range of experiences.

“Of course the consumer does not plan their holiday in terms of tourism organisation boundaries, and hence it was important that we could deliver a consumer focused product which spanned across our jurisdictional boundaries.”

“We have developed a new product and in the process we have been able to set an example to other tourism organisations on the opportunities that can be developed across RTO boundaries.” Glenys Schuntner, Townsville Enterprise Limited

Key learnings

It was important to establish upfront the outcomes that the organisations wanted to achieve and the structure and processes necessary to support that.

The appointment of key project staff was one of the most critical elements that affected the course of the project. Good communication between all staff and consultants was complex but critical given that everyone was working to tight deadlines and targeted outcomes that were being constantly reviewed by not only the Project Steering Committee but also the broader stakeholder base.

Managing expectations of local councils and tourism operators was more complex than originally perceived. Communications with such a large number of stakeholders was a challenge. Most were very supportive and contributed to the project and they will hence see substantial benefits as results continue to be achieved.

“Successful outcomes are definitely achieved by getting the planning right - and then the execution. I am sure the 80/20 rule applied in the Great Tropical Drive - that is, 80 per cent of credit for outcomes being achieved would go down to the extraordinary amount of work that went into all the detailed planning of every component of the project, followed by a lot of hard work to execute.”

Glenys Schuntner, Townsville Enterprise Limited

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Glenys Schuntner, Townsville Enterprise Limited
TOURING ROUTE ‘BUNDLING’ CASE STUDY: POACHERS TRAIL

The Poachers Trail promotes 25 of NSW and ACT’s regional operators who offer a diverse range of boutique food, wine, accommodation and attractions. In November 2007 they were awarded a significant grant to grow and formalise their collaborative marketing efforts.

The trail is a collaboration of the following businesses:

➢ Tempting Tastes
  - Cork Street Gallery Café
  - Lynwood Café
  - Pod Food

➢ Rural Retreats
  - Country Guesthouse Schönegg
  - The Globe Inn
  - Redbrow Garden

➢ Wicked Wines
  - Brindabella Hills Winery
  - Jeir Creek Wines Pty Ltd
  - Lerida Estate
  - Shaw Vineyard Estate

➢ Rural Riches
  - Beaver Galleries
  - Burnelee Riding Pty Ltd
  - Geranium House
  - Bungendore Wood Works Gallery

How it came about
The collaboration came together in 2000 and started as a way to promote the smaller owner-operated businesses in the region, such as bed and breakfasts and artists.

The businesses have grouped together a range of experiences acknowledging that the customer doesn’t want to just come out to a wine region: they want a variety of things to see and do.

“We wanted to offer a choice of wineries, restaurants, artists, bed and breakfasts and experiences which all go together to make a great short break.

In our region there used to be quite a few wineries who were promoting their individual offerings, and many of their promotions were only mentioning non wineries as ancillary services, which wasn’t giving fair recognition of the value and diversity of other experiences.”

Susan Bruce, Poachers Pantry
Unique selling points
- Close to the nation’s capital;
- Range of accommodation options on the doorstep;
- World Class wineries, artists and experiences;
- One of the region’s wineries is well known as one of only 10 Shiraz wineries in the country.
- Meet artists and producers where they go about their work.

Experiences
The Poachers Trail offers food and wine experiences with an emphasis on arts, including:
- Country cafés and an opportunity to be seduced by tempting tastes.
- A chance to visit farms where cool climate wines are grown then bottled and traditional wood smoked meats are made.
- A chance to taste the fruits of country labour with a table laden with delicious food and toast it with last year’s vintage.
- Visit the galleries and studios.

“We see ourselves as a community, and operators who wish to participate need to be prepared to be a part of the community. They have to share their leads and contribute to making it all work. They have to maintain the quality standards we have set so we are confident when we refer on our customers they won’t be disappointed.”

Susan Bruce, Poachers Pantry

Working together
The group has been very selective about who can participate in promotions, and has ensured only quality products are promoted. All participants have to meet a certain criteria to participate.
Making it work
Originally, the collaborative arrangement was informal. The trail has since obtained a significant grant and has created a formal association, coordinated by a committee of seven. The committee meets monthly and the whole membership meets at least quarterly. A Marketing Manager and an Administrator have recently been appointed.

The group has a long-term strategy in place to ensure it remains sustainable after the grant funds have been expended, and that will involve creating a sales portal on the internet.

Challenges
One of the biggest challenges is ensuring all participants are like-minded and willing to contribute and share ideas, customers, experience and their time.

All participating operators have different levels of awareness of the value of marketing and varying degree of understanding as to how it all works. But the group brings everyone up to speed to ensure they are working off the same page.

“Two plus two equals far more than four. By promoting all of our products together we as a region have far more appeal. By bundling we get more bang for our buck!” Susan Bruce, Poachers Pantry

Advantages of bundling

- Increased publicity by working as a group for example it is easier to get a journalist interested in visiting when there is more than one story to pick up.
- The combined resources and assistance of grant funding gives the group significantly more budget to promote the region far more effectively.

Key learnings
Consumers want to access a range of experiences, so the group ensures it represents a wide range of operators, not 80 per cent wineries and 20 per cent other attractions. The broad range of experiences promoted has also been important to attracting visitors.
More information

Need some help working out how you can ‘bundle’ your product?


> Work with your local tourism businesses in your region, your local Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) or State/Territory Tourism Organisation (STO) to create opportunities to ‘bundle’ your product and promote a broader experience offering.

> Contact a member of Tourism Australia’s Industry Development Team at www.tourism.australia.com/industrydevelopment.

> Contact Tourism Australia’s Consumer and Market Insights team for details about the Decision Support System (DSS) – a model to provide users with an immediate appraisal of the features most likely to interest Experience Seekers when visiting Australia. Email consumerandmarketinsights@tourism.australia.com
Make a splash in our backyard
SECTION 4: PROMOTING YOUR PRODUCT AS AN EXPERIENCE

THIS SECTION PROVIDES GUIDANCE AND USEFUL TIPS ON:

› Promoting your product offering and experience through public relations including:

- Better imagery and the voice, tone, tense and style of the writing in your promotional materials;
- A media conference or event;
- Hosting a media familiarisation visit; and
- Through getting involved with Tourism Australia’s publicity programs.

› Promoting your product offering and experience through digital marketing including:

- Online advertising;
- Search Engine Optimisation;
- Social Networking Sites and user-generated content eg blogging;
- Podcasting and vidcasting;
- Mobile phones;
- Geo search maps; and

› The Australian Tourism Data Warehouse and australia.com
THE MARKETING MIX
Marketing is the very broad term that refers to how organisations promote their products and services. There are many different aspects of the marketing mix that businesses can tap into including advertising, direct mail, viral campaigns, public relations and digital communications. An organisation’s marketing approach usually depends on available budget and their business objectives.

In the first volume of the Australian Experiences Industry Toolkit, you were given some helpful hints about how to write about Australian experiences through voice, tone, tense, and style; how to ensure images in your promotional materials reflect Australian Experiences; how to write your company’s biography to capture the experiences in your backyard and how to generate publicity about your experience through media relations including media releases, newsletters and online news centres.

This volume aims to build upon this and provide tips on other cost effective and essential ways to promote your experience through public relations (with a focus on holding media events, hosting media familiarisations and how to get involved in Tourism Australia’s publicity programs) and digital marketing.

International publicity opportunities are available in all of Tourism Australia’s key international markets. From a journalist visit or a take up from a media release, your product could be exposed to a wide and varied audience of millions or maybe to a more targeted, select audience who have a direct interest in your product. One of the most cost effective ways of promoting your product or experience is by generating publicity through media. Publicity is when the public, often through the media, notices you. Media relations is the work you do to be noticed and get editorial coverage in the media. It is different from advertising where you pay for space to promote your business, media relations is not bought or controlled by you, but by the journalist and their editors. The most expensive part of media relations is the time and effort you put in to making it work for you.

Editorial is perceived to be more credible than advertising, as it relies on an independent source to write about and review your business. It also has the advantage of being able to communicate a greater depth of information than can be included in an advertisement.

Publicity and media relations are important tools in leveraging your overall marketing strategy. There are several ways to generate publicity. In this toolkit, we will focus on how you can host a successful event or media familiarisation visit.

PROMOTING YOUR EXPERIENCE THROUGH PUBLIC RELATIONS
Establishing a good reputation is one of the many important aspects of running a profitable business. How your business is perceived can greatly affect your bottom line. Generating positive publicity is a vital component in establishing and maintaining your reputation.

Publicity can generate a powerful media endorsement - which acts effectively as a word-of-mouth recommendation. It delivers audiences that are most likely to be interested in Australia, have the available income to travel and are motivated by the type of experience being showcased.
HANDY HINT: CREATING BETTER IMAGES

Remember, a picture tells a thousand words. When you’re selecting images for your brochure, websites, media kits and other promotional materials:

> Think carefully about your target market for your photographs.
> Show off your best assets, such as scenic views.
> Maximise your location and include images beyond your actual product.
> Include people in your photography naturally enjoying themselves to bring images to life. Show people engaging in activities e.g. bushwalking, cooking, surfing - it’s all about the ‘ING’ experience.
> Demonstrate a variety of experiences in one shot if possible.
> Don’t shoot lonely landscapes and don’t have just one person on their own in an image. Instead, show a number of people interacting or engaging in an experience e.g. laughing and having fun.
> Ensure that images cannot be misinterpreted, for example, don’t use an image of something that you cannot offer, you will only disappoint a potential customer and open yourself up to negative publicity in future.
> Photos for media kits and journalists need to be high resolution to ensure they maintain their quality when reproduced in magazines and newspapers.

HANDY HINT: WRITING ABOUT YOUR PRODUCT AS AN EXPERIENCE

When you’re writing text for your brochures, website, media kits and other promotional materials, don’t forget to use language that sells the experiences, not just the product. The following style guidelines might help:

> **Voice** – Copy should be conversational in tone and create a one-on-one conversation with the reader. Use first person references where possible, addressing the reader directly as you would in conversation. Where possible, use a local voice to relate the story and provide insights.
> **Tone** – The tone should be informal, relaxed and not too polished. The tone must seem genuine and authentically Australian.
> **Tense** – Use present tense in your copy, particularly editorial, to maintain a sense of currency.
> **Style** – Keep copy active using emotive verbs and sensory adjectives where possible to help give readers a feel for what they will experience from your product or destination.
> **Showcase the experience** – Highlight the ‘Australian-ness’ of your product. Try and teach the reader something new about the product or destination and emphasise what makes it different – what makes it something you’d tell your friends when you get back from holidays.
SECTION 4: PROMOTING YOUR PRODUCT AS AN EXPERIENCE

I) HOLDING A MEDIA CONFERENCE OR EVENT

Holding a media conference or event is a good way to get noticed by the media and potential customers, as long as you have a major announcement to make. Media conferences are usually only used when there is a major announcement to make it appeal to a wide cross-section of the media including both print and broadcast.

It is often difficult to get media to attend these events these days, unless the announcement is significant. Significant announcements could include the introduction of new flights, a major financial undertaking or investment, or the opening of a new facility. The launch of a new website or hotel refurbishment is usually not significant enough to warrant a media conference.

Media conferences also take a lot of planning and time to make sure they are successful and it may be worth investing in a professional public relations specialist who is experienced in these types of events to advise you.

An alternative may be to host some targeted media to a function, such as a lunch or cocktail party, where you can meet and talk to journalists in a more relaxed fashion. Make sure that you send out your invitations well in advance and follow up just before the event to make sure they are still attending. Be creative about the venue of your event and try and make sure it relates to your product or what you’re trying to communicate.

It’s also important that you bring your event to life by showcasing your Australian Experiences. For example, if you are staging a media event to showcase a new hotel or attraction, you might collaborate with a restaurant in your area to provide catering for the event that uses local produce and wine and incorporate performances by local artists or performers.

II) HOLDING A MEDIA FAMILIARISATION VISIT

Offering journalists familiarisation (famil) trips (free of charge or heavily discounted to the journalist) to sample your property, product, service or event can be a very effective means of generating publicity.

Famil can be designed to highlight one particular accommodation property, a touring route, a campaign, tours, a key destination or product strengths like food and wine or adventure activities.

In return for participating in a famil trip, a journalist may produce a quality travel feature in magazines or newspapers or a travelogue for a TV program, both of which would often be cost-prohibitive in advertising dollar terms.

An invitation to attend a famil should be sent to a journalist along with background information explaining what it is you want them to experience. If a journalist does accept a famil, they will want to experience your product as an ordinary consumer does.

For example, if you are wanting them to experience your bed and breakfast, which you market as a romantic and secluded getaway, do not follow the journalist (and their partner) around like a shadow, but set aside an hour at the end or beginning of the visit where you can meet with them and answer any of their questions or provide them with further information.

Journalists taking part in a famil are under no obligation to write or televise a story resulting from a famil trip or to guarantee content.

HOSTING MEDIA - HOW TO MAXIMISE A VISIT

When you host journalists, it can be tempting to put them in the best room and provide them with extras that are not provided to other guests. This can lead to disappointment for other guests if they read about extras that are not available to them when they visit. Journalists will usually want to experience your product as everyone else does.

> Highlight your unique selling points – but avoid exaggeration, as this may only lead to disappointment and bad feeling if a journalist arrives and feels let down.

> Be friendly and helpful, but not over-eager. Journalists do not, for example, need to see every room in a hotel to get a feeling about its atmosphere. Give them space to enjoy it on their own.
Inviting a journalist to experience your product does not place them under any obligation to write about it. However, if it is worth writing about they most likely will. Sometimes articles can take some time to be published, and may not appear for up to six to twelve months after the visit.

Make sure you have the relevant media information available, such as background information, prices, website address and, if possible, high quality images they can use in their articles.

Notify the journalist of the types of experiences in your area. For example, heritage trails, walking or cycling tracks, World Heritage listed areas, wine tasting, art galleries, restaurants or delicatessens selling or cooking with local produce, Aboriginal art etc.

**AFTER A MEDIA VISIT**

Reading a positive article about your business, seeing pictures of your product in a publication and/or on television or hearing yourself on radio for the first time can be exciting and rewarding.

Once the story appears, it is easy to think phone calls for your business will come flooding in and for some it does generate a big boost in sales. But for how long?

One good burst of publicity does not make a business, it just adds to it. Never expect publicity to be the sole generator of your business. Be mindful that publicity is one element of an overall marketing plan and that it should complement your total mix of marketing/ business strategies.

Whatever you do, do not expect the world to come to you. It is important to continue to develop media contacts, hone your skills and try to develop stories that communicate fresh angles about your business. Some tips to keep in mind:

- Do seek paid help from a public relations consultant to tap into their specialist knowledge and network of suitable contacts.
- Do not expect all stories about your organisation to be 100 per cent favourable. Articles, radio and television presentations that are favourable on balance should be regarded as pluses for the organisation.
- Do keep a sense of perspective— a refurbished set of hotel bedrooms might not be news, however, building a spa on the roof or in an old dairy barn might be.
- Do not be offended if your story is not used. Most are not as there is a great deal of competition for media coverage.
- Think carefully about what story angles and products might interest different publications and submit information that communicates your message in clear and simple language.

**III) GETTING INVOLVED WITH TOURISM AUSTRALIA’S PUBLICITY PROGRAMS**

Developing and maintaining relationships with the editorial media is an integral part of Tourism Australia’s marketing activity. The coverage that is generated by journalists around the world about Australia and Australian tourism products helps to keep our country top of mind with potential visitors and inspires them to travel to our country.

Tourism Australia works with all levels of the Australian tourism industry to generate editorial coverage on Australia throughout the world’s print, broadcast and online media. These activities complement and add depth to global marketing programs by increasing the awareness and knowledge of Australia through various media channels globally.

The International Media Relations (IMR) unit operates two programs that annually deliver an estimated $1 billion worth of publicity to Australia and reach an audience of more than 2 billion potential travellers.

The Visiting Journalists Program (VJP) and the Global News Bureau focus on generating editorial coverage on Australia throughout the world’s print, broadcast and online media.

The success of these programs is only possible by working closely with the Australian tourism industry.
VISITING JOURNALIST PROGRAM

Based on the principle that journalists can produce more motivating and detailed coverage if they actually experience a destination or product, the Visiting Journalist Program (VJP) brings top-tier, accredited international journalists to Australia to experience our country and your product or service first-hand.

Each year up to 1,000 accredited print and broadcast journalists and film crews are selectively invited to visit Australia. Every journalist that visits is invited on the basis of their ability to deliver the right messages to the right target segment in their country of origin. They may travel individually, with a photographer, or as part of a larger media group. They are carefully chosen as part of an annual strategic media plan, according to the needs of each overseas market.

The VJP provides opportunities for the journalists to participate in the most compelling Australian experiences including: our Aboriginal culture; nature; outback; coastal lifestyle; food and wine; major cities; and journeys. Further, we try to ensure that they meet everyday Australians, that they immerse themselves in our lifestyle, and that they revel in our culture and environment.

Our goal, to generate positive media coverage, is fulfilled annually by the hundreds of articles, complete with stunning photography that are published each year in publications as diverse as the New York Times, Vogue and National Geographic through to niche journals such as fishing and golfing.

We also bring to Australia leading broadcast channels and production houses who create hours of coverage generated from “live” morning shows, competitions and reality travel programs through to in-depth documentaries.

The IMR team works closely with the State/Territory Tourist Organisations to provide coordination and support for media visits to Australia, and ensures their visit and resulting publicity is aligned to Brand Australia and conveys the messages and image we want to communicate to potential visitors.

International media organisations may also pay to send their own journalists if they want to cover a particular story or event in Australia, and Tourism Australia will often provide assistance, guidance and contacts in these cases.

GLOBAL NEWS BUREAU

The Global News Bureau is designed to keep the world’s media up-to-date with the latest developments in Australian tourism via the production and distribution of a range of media collateral including newsletters, media releases, fact sheets, trend reports, destination guides, feature articles, Q&As, images and video.

The bureau also supports consumer and trade events and promotions and the international Visiting Journalist Program (VJP).

The content produced is designed to initiate a deep and rich conversation, which creates excitement and buzz about Australia through media channels that have a credible voice.

New angles and stories to stimulate coverage are constantly being sought, researched and presented. The Australian industry can become involved in the program by providing Tourism Australia with updates on any new products or initiatives and providing electronic copies of media releases, press kits, brochures and photographs for distribution through our global public relations network, newsletters and media website.

We also manage hundreds of enquiries from journalists who want to know more about our country. For instance, the media love hearing about the latest trends and eagerly seek quirky and interesting facts to include in “did you know?” files. They also want to learn about activities and products that are different and that stand out from the crowd.

You can assist us in quenching the media’s thirst for new stories by forwarding to Tourism Australia your media releases and product information and, wherever possible, we will endeavour to distribute this to our network of agencies and representatives worldwide.
HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Global Publicity
If your tourism product or service delivers a quality travel experience, we’d like to hear from you, as we may be able to assist you in publicising your product internationally.

Email us your media releases, product updates, story ideas and photographs so that we can update the world’s media on the latest developments.

You can also send us 25 or your media kits or brochures which we will then forward, free of charge, to our global PR network. All hard copy material should be sent to:

Tourism Australia
International Media Relations
GPO Box 2721
Sydney NSW 1006
Ph: (02) 9360 1111

Media releases and photos can be emailed to: internationalmedia@tourism.australia.com

VJP Participation
If you would like to participate in the Visiting Journalists Program please contact your local State, Territory or Regional Tourist Office in the first instance. Tourism Australia works closely with the State/Territory Tourist Organisations to host the international media. National operators should contact the International Media Relations team directly.

HANDY HINT
Tourism Australia’s International Media Relations team has produced a guide called Making a Splash - Generating Publicity for Australia: A Practical Guide for Working with the Media. The guide provides useful information on how you can use public relations to maximise publicity and how you can tap into Tourism Australia’s international public relations programs. Download your copy from www.tourism.australia.com/makingasplash

More information
Need some help working out how to promote your product as an experience through public relations?

> Download a copy of Making a Splash - Generating Publicity for Australia: A Practical Guide For Working With The Media from www.tourism.australia.com/makingasplash

> Get the latest copy of Experience the Opportunities: Industry’s Guide to Working with Tourism Australia, which provides details about the range of services and programs available to assist the Australian tourism industry in getting better returns from their businesses. Contact Tourism Australia’s Industry Development Team at www.tourism.australia/industrydevelopment

> Download a copy of the first Australian Experiences Industry Toolkit: Adding Value to Your Business. The toolkit provides some useful information about how you can incorporate experiences into your media relations activities and promotional materials through language, tone, style and photography. Visit www.tourism.australia.com/australianexperienceskit
PROMOTING YOUR EXPERIENCE THROUGH DIGITAL MARKETING

So you’ve got a website, but how can you use it to get your products and services to the rest of the world, especially those First Time Global Experience Seekers? In this, the digital age, it’s not enough to just have a website. You now need to ensure your products, services and experiences are actually promoted out there in cyberspace.

DIGITAL MARKETING DEFINED

Digital marketing (otherwise known as eMarketing, online marketing or Internet marketing) is a type of marketing that focuses on the electronic environment. The Internet and digital communications have exploded in popularity in the last 10 years due to new technologies, which have changed the way consumers receive information and respond to marketing messages.

There is now no industry in Australia that does not use digital marketing; its popularity will continue to grow as fast as new technology is developed. Any business seeking to maximise its potential audience cannot ignore the exceptional benefits of promoting their products online including:

- Access to a huge global audience of potential new customers;
- Comparatively low cost of entry;
- Cost effectiveness compared to traditional forms of marketing, such as advertising;
- The ability to measure and analyse the effectiveness of activity in a timely manner;
- Automated processing of enquiries and bookings, reducing the need for ‘manpower’ and labour.

Digital marketing is often perceived to be merely about marketing through a website. And it’s true that this is a crucial aspect of marketing on the Internet, but there are many other forms to it. If you just rely on setting up a website and hoping for the best, then you may be waiting a long time to attract business. Digital marketing incorporates the following:

- Online advertising;
- Search Engine Marketing and Search Engine Optimisation;
- Social networking and user-generated content e.g. blogging;
- Videos, Podcasting and vidcasting;
- The use of mobile phones for searching the internet;
- Geo search maps;
- Website promotions within your site;
- Email and viral campaigns.

These tools are explained in the ‘Digital Marketing Tools for your Business’ section on page 45. To work out which tools you need to use for your business, you need to be clear about both your business and marketing objectives. Once you’re clear about your objectives, it’s advisable to enlist the help of a digital marketing professional to help work out the best approach.

GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR DIGITAL MARKETING

If you are starting out with digital marketing, or you’ve developed a website for your business but need guidance as to how to make your website deliver better results, the best thing to do is seek advice from a consultant who understands how digital marketing works and who can help you choose which of the many options are best suited to your business. Before you do this, you need to first be very clear about your marketing objectives and how you can achieve these through digital marketing. For example how you can:

1. Drive cost efficient sales;
2. Build brand and product awareness;
3. Differentiate your customers’ experience.
Once you’ve worked out your marketing objectives and before you get assistance from a digital marketing expert, you need to also consider:

> The purpose of your website e.g. is it purely an information source for potential customers or will it also be used for bookings;
> How to optimise the site so that Search Engines give it a high ranking;
> Whether or not you will use the site to create an e-newsletter to drive traffic and build an email list;
> Whether or not you should incorporate a blog;
> How and where you should use video, vidcasts/podcasts and images;
> Whether it’s worth investing in pay-per-click advertising and how to get the best results;
> How to set up and manage an effective email marketing campaign;
> How you can incorporate an analysis tool to measure performance/effectiveness.

These are just a few ideas to get you thinking; there are many other things to consider if you want to create successful and effective digital communications. The Internet is a completely different medium from the offline world and has its own rules. To be successful online you need to understand what works and what doesn’t, or get advice from someone who does. Otherwise you will learn the hard way by investing money and time to achieve minimal success. Get it right at the beginning with good planning and implementation, and online marketing could be the pathway to substantially increase your customer base and profitability.

**DIGITAL MARKETING TOOLS FOR YOUR BUSINESS**

The following provides a few tools that should be incorporated into a successful, integrated digital marketing approach:

1. **ONLINE ADVERTISING**

Online advertising has become the fastest growing advertising medium for businesses. Businesses are quickly recognising the importance of online advertising and incorporating it into their marketing mix. Zenith Optimedia predicts that between 2005 and 2008, online advertising in the Asia Pacific region will increase by 28 per cent, ahead of television (forecast to increase 10.3 per cent), magazines (forecast to increase 7.1 per cent) newspapers (forecast to increase 6.7 per cent) and radio (forecast to increase 6.4 per cent).

Consumers globally are now, more than ever, using the Internet to research products/services and increasingly, buy them online. Nowhere is this more prevalent than in the tourism industry.

Online advertising also offers something that traditional print and TV advertising cannot – detailed reporting. This leads to the benefit of being able to adjust your advertising on the fly to maximise exposure and target your advertising spend and return on investment.

Online advertising comes in many forms, such as banner ads, which are those flashing, moving, animated videos that pop up when you’re on your favourite websites. There are other types such as search advertising, which is where you pay to ensure your product is listed at the top of the list when consumers search for specific information on the Internet.

In setting up online advertising it’s important to incorporate tools and techniques that will give you targeted reach. You should make sure you write/produce ads that will appear only when users search on terms you specify as relevant to your products and services. The ads should be simple and uncluttered. There are many experts who can guide you in setting up effective online advertising campaigns. Contact the Australian Interactive Media Industry Association (www.aimia.com.au) or the Internet Industry Association (www.iia.net.au) for guidance about how you can find experts to assist you.

Online advertising can be cost effective. With search advertising for example, there’s usually no minimum spend and you only pay for the actual clicks on your ads, which means your advertising dollar will have a much higher return-on-investment. Importantly, you control your campaigns at all times and can modify, change or cancel it at any time.

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1. Zenith Optimedia, March 2006
II) SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING AND SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

Search Engine Marketing

Search engine marketing (SEM) refers to the short text advertisements that generally appear at the top or down the right hand side of search engine results. These are often labelled as “sponsored links” or “sponsored results”. These advertisements are generally purchased from Google™ (the Google Adwords™ product), or Yahoo! Search Marketing (YSM - formerly Overture)™ (YSMTM supplies the paid search advertisements to Yahoo!™ Search, and ninemsn Search, here in Australia).

The Search Engine Marketing process is often generically referred to as “pay per click” (PPC) advertising because you only pay when someone clicks on the advertising link, not when your advertisement is displayed.

Search Engine Marketing is effectively paid advertising in search engines, where you ‘Pay Per Click’ (PPC). It is text advertising delivered in response to ‘trigger’ words typed into the search box. The surfer types in a search phrase, the PPC advertisements which have bid on that phrase are displayed, and if the surfer clicks on a text advertisement they are taken to the advertiser’s website. At that point, the advertiser’s account is charged for the ‘click through’ by the search engine’s advertising partner.

Search Engine Optimisation

Search Engine Optimisation is all about how you can ensure your product or service is at the top of the list on the screen when a consumer uses a search engine such as Google, Yahoo or Sensis to look for a product or topic on the Internet. Search Engine Optimisation is about engaging consumers and grabbing their attention for what you have to offer, when they are searching the Internet.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is defined as the process of preparing a website to enhance its chances of being ranked in the top results of a search engine once a consumer types a subject into a search engine. A number of factors are important when optimising your website including the content and structure of your website’s copy and the page layout, among more technical aspects.

Do you ever wonder why certain websites turn up in the search engines well before your website? Or why yours turns up for some keyword phrases but not others? Well, it is achieved partly by science and is partly an art form.

A web page is made up of a range of components, some of which you can see on the page, others are behind the scenes written into the HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) code and other elements are completely off the page or site. Search engines are blind to images and ‘flash movies’. So you need to pay careful attention to your key words and website text.

Some of the things that can impact the Search Engine Optimisation and influence where your website appears on the natural (i.e. free) page results of search engines include:

- Page titles and phrasing;
- Page headlines;
- Page text;
- Bold, italic and underlines help search engines pick up key words;
- Anchor links and inbound links.

Search engines are now firmly ingrained into the travel purchase process. According to Travel Survey 1, 92 per cent of Australians use a search engine when researching or purchasing travel products/services online.

An overall digital marketing strategy should address both forms of search engine traffic. It’s advisable that you work with a digital marketing expert to ensure your website is designed so that it will rank highly when your product or experience is being searched for by consumers.

How does this work in practice? Take a hotel or accommodation provider as an example. No matter how visually stunning a hotel website is, if it can’t be found by the major search engines, then...
there’s no point in having it. Hotels often spend a lot of money on the “front end” of a website, without considering the “back end”, which drives visitors to your website, and from there encourages them to book, either on-line or via your call centre.

An accommodation provider that wants to target the meetings and conferences sector could start by using search engines to do an analysis of what products are listed when a consumer types in ‘corporate conferences accommodation’ or other relevant key words. You can then work out what is listed and the types of key words the search engine picks up. You can then revise your website copy to ensure your content is optimised for the identified key words.

You could then submit your website to the major search engines, directories and trusted partner sites relevant to your theme, to maximise natural visibility.

**HANDY HINT: GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS**

It’s not enough to just have a website. Here are five ideas for getting the most out of your digital communications:

1. Create a search engine friendly site so your customers can find you.
2. Use search advertising to target your consumer at the exact point of interest.
3. Use both paid and unpaid search options to promote your site.
4. Integrate your offline marketing and promotions with online search advertising.
5. Make your website interactive, interesting and user-friendly to encourage loyalty.

**III) SOCIAL NETWORKING AND USER-GENERATED CONTENT**

Social Networking Sites and user-generated content through blogs have become an essential information source for travellers planning their holiday. User-generated content is internet content that has been created by consumers. User-generated content is a powerful tool for generating word-of-mouth testimonials to a global audience. They are highly regarded by other consumers because they provide a personal voice from people who have actually experienced a product or holiday. But they also have the power to negatively impact business if the content is negative.

User-generated content takes several forms: blogs on websites such as nineMSN, where users can write their own blogs about various topics; chat rooms, where users are involved in ‘online conversations’ with others about specific topics; or Social Networking Sites (SNS), where users create their own content pages to share holiday ideas, games, music, profiles etc with fellow users. Social networking sites therefore provide the ability to tap into an interactive and engaged audience.

In the span of a year, the popularity of Social Networking Sites has boomed, particularly across Asia. Millions of users have SNS accounts with some of the largest players including Facebook, Myspace, Bebo, Hi5 and CyWorld. Take CyWorld as an example: CyWorld is the largest SNS in Korea. Over 25 per cent of the South Korean population (over 20 million daily users) have a CyWorld account, with up to 90 per cent if South Koreans in their 20s having an account.

**WHY ONLINE COMMUNITIES WORK**

- People have always had a need to join communities – sports clubs, social clubs, churches, business groups to name just a few.
- Individuals need to communicate their interests, hobbies, accomplishments, goals, and beliefs to others.
- We all have a deep subconscious urge to belong to something.
- Provides new opportunities to share pictures, videos, journals, email, chat, and more.
- They’re places where people gather to share their passion.
- People gather to find or offer assistance to and from others.

Setting up a Social Networking Site

Short of having a few hundred million dollars to throw around, how does a smaller business make the most out of this new trend? The opportunities to build communities are everywhere. This could include building a community around your own area of expertise or business niche.

If you have an existing business website and wish to add a community to it when you need to think carefully about how the community will benefit your company. There are many benefits available through online communities but the first step is to work out how exactly it will benefit your company. Then put a plan in place to build it to achieve your goals. It may be the single most successful marketing strategy you ever action, if you get it right.

> Do you want to have it known as the industry community and not directly promote your company? E.g. a community called the ‘Australian Accommodation’ rather than the ‘Bayside Bed & Breakfast community site’.
> Could it be a gathering place for your existing and potential customers?
> Do you want to run it as a revenue generating exercise?
> If you do, how are you going to generate the income – advertising, selling product, membership fees?
> How are you going to set the community up to encourage members through an engagement funnel.

When you establish an online community, you set yourself up as the facilitator for those interested in your niche to gather and share. This in itself is a powerful place to be if you are managing the environment where your market meets. The secret of success in this new era is to not abuse this power but to allow the users to determine the content as much as possible. This can make the community sites a double-edged sword in that it may mean users promote your competitors or criticise your products. You can post answers to criticisms or allow others to do it but don’t over-police the forums or your members will react to the lack of openness.

Social networks require you to register, set up your profile and then invite contacts to be linked to your profile. All your contacts have contacts of their own and you are linked to these with one degree of separation. The benefit of this is you can tap into new resources via the relationships your friends or colleagues have with others.

HANDY HINT: BENEFITS OF EMBRACING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Social Networking Sites:
> Provide personal and unbiased information for your customers to make informed decisions about your product/services.
> Involve your customers in shaping product offerings.
> Allow the travellers’ voice to promote your product offering, thus making it more credible.
> Allow you to quickly communicate information about your products and services and virally disseminate the information.
> Provide insights into how travellers perceive your product and service offerings.
> Allow you to promote your business to a broad network.

User-generated content:
> Eliminates the cost of creating information.
> Facilitates the opportunity to grow your mailing list.
> Can be a beacon for thousands of potential customers.
> Can be a direct source of income.
> Can provide a way to promote/sell related products/services.
> Can act as a vehicle for you to communicate with current and potential customers.
IV) PODCASTING AND VIDCASTING

The key to digital communications is that it is interactive: it’s not just about words on a page but it’s about bringing your products and experiences to life for consumers through audio visual communications. In this digital age, static websites (that is, websites that consist mainly of written content and images) are not always a powerful tool for generating interest in your products and services. It’s a good idea to ensure your website is as interactive as possible.

This is where the world’s obsession with MP3 players can assist you. MP3 devices such as Ipods, have become a popular way for consumers to download video and audio content from the Internet including music soundtracks, music video clips, information programs and increasingly television programs and films. This popular technology provides an important communication medium for businesses wanting to tap into savvy marketing techniques through podcasts and vidcasts.

Podcasts are audio grabs or programs, which can be downloaded from the Internet by consumers to their MP3 players. They’re a great way for sharing information. Vidcasts are similar but allow users to download video grabs or programs from the Internet to their MP3 players. The benefit of both these tools is that consumers can watch or listen while they’re on the move on the bus, on a plane, in a car on a train, in the bath or while exercising. For travellers, they provide a useful and compact way of listening to/watching travel information about their holiday destinations, and are much easier to carry than bulky written travel guides!

You should consider creating vidcasts or podcasts to help promote your business and put them on your website, so that they can be downloaded by potential customers. They are a relatively cost effective way of bringing your experiences to life and giving potential customers a taste for what they can do in your region. For example, you could create a series of podcasts about the top 10 experiences in your region. Perhaps you could get a happy customer to record a testimonial to highlight the types of experiences they discovered while they were in your region. Or you could record a local guide from your region (e.g. an Indigenous guide) talking about some of the unique treks in your local area. Or you might get a local chef talking about the local produce available in your region.

The other benefit of vidcasts and podcasts is that users tend to share them with their friends, so it’s a great way to tap into the concept of viral marketing and generate interest in your product.

There are a number of training courses available throughout Australia to teach you how to create podcasts and vidcasts. Search either the Yellow Pages or the Internet for potential training outlets.

If you don’t have the technology to create vidcasts or podcasts, you should investigate other ways to generate movement and incorporate audio visual elements into your website. You might consider shooting a brief DVD (e.g. three minutes) that gives a taste of what visitors can experience in your region. You could include filmed testimonials from satisfied customers and show visitors engaging in local experiences such as canoeing in the local river, shopping at local food markets or indulging in a facial. You could then transfer the DVD into an Mpeg or similar format and put it on your website so it can be downloaded by visitors to your site.

V) MOBILE PHONES

The humble mobile phone now does more than merely allow you to make phone calls: you can now use it to take photos and video, search the Internet, email, navigate your way to a new shop through in-built GPS and play games. Handheld devices are fast becoming a growing medium for Internet access, particularly in the Asian region. Google predicts that 27 per cent of Internet users in India go online through their mobile phones. In countries such as South Korea, texting with mobile phones is used to book travel and manage itineraries while on the move.

There has also been an explosion of mobile usage for internet search. Mobile phone searching is likely to be bigger than online searching within three to five years. Mobile search and map tools are now available and proving to be successful.
VI) GEO SEARCH MAPS

Geo searching, which is a way to find where a business is located using online maps, is becoming popular for marketers and consumers alike. Just think of that old cliché ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’. Where appropriate you should follow this rule within your website.

Providing information in a more intuitive way, for example, providing geographically accurate maps with relevant data, is crucial for getting your product offering in the face (and the hands) of consumers. Tools such as Google Maps can assist you. These tools allow you to incorporate maps and extensive and accurate geographical information (e.g. infrastructure, street level locations and detailed satellite information) into your website or help potential visitors make informed choices about your product.

Incorporating geo search maps into your website helps to drive consumer engagement. The biggest benefit to your business comes when you overlay your data to provide your customers with information they will find useful. This can help you reduce the number of words on your website and sum up your direction/location in an easy, interactive image.

For example, if you run a bed and breakfast, a geo search map will help consumers see what else is available in your area e.g. restaurants, cafes, hiking trails, produce markets, scenic lookouts etc.

VII) WEBSITE PROMOTIONS

As discussed throughout this section, a stand-alone website is no longer enough to drive customers to your business. Websites are supposed to be interactive and should include promotions that engage potential customers. Promotions on your website are also a great way to build up a database of people who are interested in your product.

For example, if you want to start an e-newsletter and want to create a database of e-newsletter recipients, you could start a promotion on your website. A bicycle trekking company for example, may want to start an e-newsletter to promote some of Australia’s best bike treks and some of its own products. They could start by kicking off a promotion on their homepage whereby customers who sign up for the e-newsletter are given a free map of the best Australian bike trails or a free water bottle. Customers would be required to click on a link to fill out a pro-forma (with email address, age group, details about what type of holiday they’re interested in etc) before they can register for their prize.

It’s important to ensure that any promotion on your website use key words that could be picked up by a search engine, to maximise Search Engine Optimisation functions.

VIII) EMAIL MARKETING AND VIRAL CAMPAIGNS

Email marketing

Email marketing is essentially promoting your product via email. Email is a versatile medium that comes in many formats (e.g. html, simple text, rich media). Email marketing allows you to make contact with both existing and prospective customers through e-newsletters, e-advertising etc.

But be careful! Email marketing is all about gaining the recipient’s express permission to email advertising materials and newsletters to them. Spamming - the practice of sending unsolicited email messages or newsletters to a recipient without permission - is illegal under privacy laws.

To get a recipient’s permission to email them advertising materials or newsletters, you may consider a promotion to encourage them to sign up.

Setting up an e-newsletter to promote your products and the upcoming festivals and activities in your region, is a great place to start. You can build your e-newsletter database by holding a promotion to get people to sign up.
Viral campaigns

Viral marketing is a method of advertising that encourages others to spread the message about your product – like a virus. This means more people will be exposed to your message, thereby increasing potential business. Viral marketing is more powerful than general advertising because it conveys an implied endorsement from a friend.

Successful viral campaigns generally incorporate the following:

> A simple, memorable and clear message that sticks;
> The ability to cultivate a positive reputation about your products and services. If you offer a sub-standard product, that viral marketing will fall flat before it begins;
> Incentives – you can get people talking about your business by offering incentives e.g. free books, free maps, free product to those who introduce new people to your product.
> Create a buzz by offering free stuff. Offer your customers something of low or no cost and invite them to tell others about it. They will feel great because they get to introduce something valuable to their networks – all at no cost. Now you have them on your contact list, you can begin the sales process on your other services.
> Use other people’s resources. The most creative viral campaigns use other people’s resources to get the word out e.g. get your website link on other business’ websites.

Always have a call to action in your emails. One of the simplest ways to create a viral campaign is to use your email signature. See if you can think of some interesting and original comments or offers you can incorporate into your email signature.

For example, consider including something like this in your email signature:

Jane Citizen
Manager, Hideaway Hollow, Hunter Valley

The Hunter Valley is home to some of Australia’s award winning wines. Want to find out for yourself? Then email this, along with your booking request for a minimum of two nights’ accommodation at the Hideaway Hollow, and we’ll give you a free bottle of the Hunter Valley’s finest wine. For more details, visit www.hideawayhollow.com.au

More information

Need more information about how you can incorporate some of these digital communication tools into your business? Contact Tourism Australia’s Digital Communications team on digital@tourism.australia.com
HANDY HINT: TOP TIPS FOR DIGITAL MARKETING

1. Make your website the centre of your marketing activity
   › Integrate your online and offline marketing activities.
   › Be consistent across the outward face of your business to the world, both online and offline.
   › Ensure your website has a consistent quality and theme with your other promotions i.e. integration.
   › Ensure your marketing campaigns dovetail with your website.
   › Ensure your web address is on your letterhead, business cards, advertisements, media materials brochures etc.
   › Consider integrating a Content Management System to manage your follow up to all leads.

2. Measure your results and manage your outcomes
   › Make sure you know the exact purpose of your website and ensure this is reflected in its design.
   › Develop methods of analysis to measure success e.g. number of downloads on particular pages etc.

3. Clearly define your target segment
   › Define your target customer e.g. their age, gender, locality, income bracket.
   › Are there multiple customer types?
   › Define your marketing strategy against the desires, wishes and needs of your target customer
   › If there are multiple targets then use different strategies for each.

4. Use email and viral marketing
   › Consider creating a free offer on your website to build an opt-in email list.
   › Write dynamic copy to promote action and highlight experiences.
   › Always have “calls-to-action” in your emails.
   › Don’t be a spammer. Only mail to those who have opted-in to have a relationship with your company, only mail relevant content and have an opt-out link in every email.

5. Design smart landing or home pages
   › You only have about eight seconds to capture your visitors’ attention.
   › Use clear and simple copy.
   › Design the page so that it directs the user towards your call-to-action.

6. Think outside the square
   › Social Networking Sites have created a whole new range of creative marketing options.
   › Set up links for Social Networking Sites such as Digg, LinkedIn, Delicious, Facebook, Stumbleupon and Reddit on your page.
   › Explore the multiple opportunities for building traffic using social networking.

7. Become a blogaholic!
   › Use a blog as a means for developing a two-way rapport with your customers and prospective customers.
   › Develop an informal writing style.
   › Allow comments on your posts.
   › Don’t over-police the comments. Don’t delete something just because it is critical: you will gain respect by dealing with criticism openly.
   › Tag all your posts with relevant keywords: this promotes access to them across the net.

8. Be universal search-friendly
   › Use content rich web pages to rank higher on search engines or investigate opportunities to invest in search advertising.
   › Include video, vidcasts/podcasts and images wherever possible on your website.
   › Name your images with relevant keywords to improve searchability.
   › Use relevant keywords in your vidcasts’ and podcasts’ titles.
   › Change the content regularly to keep it fresh.

9. Start an e-newsletter
   › A free newsletter allows you to ask for email addresses and build a list.
   › It will keep your brand constantly in front of your prospective customers.
   › It enables you to offer new promotions each month.
   › Newsletters build and strengthen relationships.
   › Be generous - include a stack of valuable free content.
   › Don’t make it too ‘salesy’.
   › Make sure the language reflects a tone that promotes engaging in experiences.

10. Incorporate new technologies
    › Bring your experiences to life with podcasts and vidcasts, which can be downloaded from your website.
    › Give your potential customers a clear idea about where you’re located, using geo search maps.
    › Make sure your digital marketing strategy incorporates new technology and approaches such as Social Networking Sites, mobile phone searching, Search Engine Optimisation etc
TAPPING INTO THE AUSTRALIAN TOURISM DATA WAREHOUSE

If you want to further expand your digital communication capabilities, then you should also look at ways to get involved in Tourism Australia’s global digital communications programs and the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW). Tourism Australia’s digital communications programs, including australia.com, and the ATDW, both incorporate some of the digital marketing tools listed in the previous section, such as Search Engine Optimisation and geo maps. So by getting involved in these programs, your business can benefit from some cutting-edge digital tools.

The ATDW is a joint initiative of the government tourism organisations across Australia and produces the only Australia-wide tourism database of its kind in the world, including more than 25,000 listings of destinations and products, and 80,000 images.

All ATDW content is quality assured and updated daily by State/Territory Tourism Organisations. It submits to high standards that are defined on a national level.

ATDW distributors enjoy a cost-effective method of sourcing and updating tourism content, including accommodation, attractions and destination information, through one central source and with complete integration to their sites. With an average of 360 daily updates, distributors can ensure their information is always cutting edge.

Millions of dollars are spent every year by tourism suppliers to achieve a broad, multi-level digital marketing strategy. The ATDW eliminates unnecessary costs and processes by gathering, organising and delivering a comprehensive, high quality tourism database, empowering tourism marketers and operators who are listed on the database to meet global consumer demands and secure sales.

Benefits for your business:

> Simple listing submission through your State/Territory Tourism Organisation.
> One listing submission is delivered to hundreds of tourism websites and other digital channels.
> International exposure.
> Keeps marketing costs down.
> Tourism Australia and the State/Territory Organisations ensure quality data standards.
> Millions of page impressions generated per month of ATDW supplier listings.
> ATDW tourism content attracts over 4.6 million page impressions per month.

The ATDW’s cost-effective, quality source of tourism information increases international and domestic presence for your tourism product. While Tourism Australia and the State/Territory Organisations’ websites have been publishing ATDW information since 2001, the number of new licensed ATDW distributors continues to grow and diversify as it integrates with innovative new channels. Distributors include Yahoo!, Roamfree, Google Maps, Webjet and PleaseTakeMeTo.com, who brand the content according to their marketing strategies.

Getting your product listed on the ATDW

If you want your product or business listed on the ATDW, simply contact your State/Territory Tourism Organisation.

Digital tourism marketers who wish to take advantage of the ATDW can become distributors. To become a distributor of ATDW simply contact ATDW’s Business Development Manager:

Catherine Wolstenholme
ATDW Business Development Manager
Ph: 07 3112 1760
Fax: 07 3112 1766
Email: cwolstenholme@atdw.com.au
Getting the most out of the ATDW and australia.com

The ATDW is Australia’s most comprehensive tourism database and the most bankable form of online marketing for you as a tourism operator.

By listing with your relevant State/Territory Tourism Organisation through the ATDW, you can ensure that your product information is visible on consumer websites, Tourism Australia’s australia.com and other digital channels, giving the Global Experience Seeker easy access to your product and experience.

In addition, ATDW listings are supplied to a growing number of other website distributors, including travel information and booking engine sites.

When visitors search for travel products on australia.com, the Google search platform looks across more than 25,000 ATDW listings. Google then evaluates and ranks the results using hundreds of relevancy factors.

This is why writing a great listing is so important. The world’s biggest search engine is looking for your business and millions of marketing dollars are pushing it out to the world. Now all you have to do is sell it.

Creating a listing with the wow-factor

A good ATDW listing will motivate consumers to use your services. It should have a friendly, direct tone, integrate keywords and highlight your company’s key points of difference or unique selling point. Here are some simple rules for writing a listing that gets results:

- **Editorial voice and tone**
  - Encourage consumers in an informative and motivating manner.
  - Highlight the features that make your product or service unique.
  - Highlight the state/territory locations you cover.
  - Mention if you have a specific target market.
  - Communicate your company from a national perspective.
  - Showcase the experiences.

- **Grammar and usage**
  - Refer to the consumer in the second person (you, your) and your company in the third person (they, them). Do not use first person (I, us, our).
  - Avoid the use of abbreviations or slang but ensure the tone is conversational and friendly.

- **Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)**
  - Choose the first 25 words of your description carefully as search engines weigh these more heavily.
  - Always include the name of your company in the first sentence.
  - Include keyword phrases that relate to your company’s services throughout the entire description.
  - Avoid using your company name too often - this will have a reverse effect on the SEO and may make your description difficult to read.
  - Refer only to your Australian operations (no foreign countries should be mentioned).
**HANDY HINT:**

With these tips, you can turn an average listing like this:

All our resorts are located close to the beach and offer day spas. Our pampering treatments include mud wraps and massages. Honeymoon and romantic weekend packages are also available at Beautiful Resorts. Ask about our mid-week rates.

Into a great listing like this:

Beautiful Resorts offer indulgent and romantic escapes in stunning coastal locations around Australia. Renowned for their impeccable quality, Beautiful Resorts make ideal destinations for honeymoons or romantic getaways.

All properties are beachfront and have sublime day spas where you can escape the stresses of modern life. Enjoy mud-wraps and massages while listening to the gentle sound of waves crashing on the beach.

Slip into blissful beach relaxation with a Beautiful Resorts holiday. You’ll want to come back time and time again.

Getting the most out of ATDW is simple. By improving your company’s listings, you can improve your web exposure and reach more interstate and international tourists, which will help to boost your bottomline in the long run.

**More information:**

Need more information on how to get your business listed on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse?

- Call the ATDW on 07 3112 1789 or
- Email atdwadministration@atdw.com.au or
- Contact your local State/Territory Tourism Organisation.
Tread lightly in our backyard
SECTION 5: CREATING A ‘GREEN’ EXPERIENCE

THIS SECTION PROVIDES GUIDANCE AND USEFUL TIPS ON:

> The benefits of greening your business; 58
> The global trend towards environmentally-friendly and responsible travel; 58
> The difference between eco-tourism and responsible tourism; 58
> The tourism industry and the climate change phenomena; 59
> Green accreditation. 60
> How to adopt greener business practices; 62
Increasingly, communities and organisations, both large and small, are recognising the need to operate in a more socially and environmentally sustainable way. Adopting environmentally-friendly operations and practices can pay dividends for your business. Some of the benefits include:

- The ability to attract new customers, enhance your reputation among Experience Seekers and improve your market share and position;
- An improved ability to attract Experience Seekers who are looking at ways to travel responsibly and reduce their impact on the environment;
- Reducing overheads and operational costs by decreasing your energy and water consumption and a more effective use of resources;
- Minimising your greenhouse gas emissions and improving your environmental outcomes;
- Leading the way with your staff and customers towards a sustainable business and natural environment.

Importantly, Experience Seekers are willing to pay for a green tourism experience. If your business can demonstrate its green credentials and ability to offer a true eco-tourism experience, then your green practices could boost your business’ bottomline.

Eco-tourist destinations now attract about 15 per cent of the global tourist market. TripAdvisor, one of the world’s largest travel community websites, polled 1,000 travellers worldwide and discovered one-quarter are considering going on an ecotourism trip. The results also revealed:

- 38 per cent of respondents said that environmentally-friendly tourism is a consideration when travelling;
- 9 per cent specifically seek out environmentally-friendly hotels.

34 per cent are willing to pay more to stay at an environmentally-friendly hotel with 25 per cent willing to pay a 5-10 per cent premium and 2 per cent would pay a 10-20 per cent premium.

The impacts of climate change now high on the global political and media agendas, an environmental consciousness is sweeping the world’s travellers. For the tourism industry, this is creating a number of trends and opportunities including:

- Travellers have a greater desire for an eco-tourism experience;
- Travellers are more conscious of environmental issues and are looking for ways to travel responsibly, with minimal impact on the environment;
- Travellers are looking for opportunities to give back to local communities and engage in experiences that make a difference eg through “voluntourism” projects.
- Tourism businesses are under increasing pressure to demonstrate their commitment to a long-term and sustainable tourism industry by incorporating environmentally-friendly practices into their business operations.

The stream of environmental consciousness has brought with it a veritable dictionary of new terms, phrases and concepts. So to make it easier, let’s start by clarifying what we mean by ‘eco-tourism’, ‘responsible’ tourism and ‘green’ or ‘sustainable’ tourism.

**i) Eco-tourism**

‘Eco-tourism’ is described by the International Ecotourism Society as ‘responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people’.

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5. Eco Tourism Australia – www.ecotourism.org.au
Eco-tourism experiences are gaining new momentum with an increasing number of travellers looking for ‘green’ holidays. A lot of people have the misconception that eco-tourism or green tourism is all about having a nature-based experience. While environmentally-friendly, nature-based tourism is a big part of eco-tourism and is obviously one of the seven Australian Experiences, tourists don’t necessarily have to get up close and personal with nature to have an eco-experience.

Whether it be choosing Eco Certified tourism products that focus on fostering environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation; ‘zero impact’ packages; carbon neutral itineraries; hiring hybrid cars or checking green ratings of hotels and airlines, the environmentally conscious traveller is increasingly choosing Australia’s eco-friendly tourism experiences.

ii) Responsible tourism

The term ‘responsible tourism’ has emerged in recognition of the fact that eco-tourism should apply to all tourism, not just in natural areas or with nature-based experiences. According to Lonely Planet7, ‘responsible tourism’ is travel that takes into consideration three ‘triple bottom line’ issues including:

> Environment – travel that minimises negative environmental impacts and makes positive contributions to conservation and preservation eg money from the cost of the tourism experience is re-directed into conservation programs.
> Social/cultural – Travel that respects culture and traditions and involves respectful interactions with local communities, which builds greater understanding for the traveller and a sense of cultural pride and confidence for the community.
> Economic – Travel that has financial benefits for the host community and operates on the principles of fair trade. Money spent by travellers is injected into the local community.

For travellers, ‘responsible tourism’ is about accepting responsibility for their actions and impacts. Travellers can therefore minimise their impact and make a positive contribution to communities. Responsible tourism is all about making sure that tourism is a powerful tool for conservation, biodiversity and a sustainable industry.

iii) Green and sustainable tourism

Green tourism is a broad reference to tourism experiences that focus on protecting the environment and allow visitors to travel responsibly, with little impact.

Sustainable tourism is linked to responsible tourism and is all about tourism businesses and travellers minimising their impacts on the environment, ensuring money from tourism experiences are re-directed into conservation programs, respecting cultures and ensuring money is directed back into the community. Sustainable tourism aims to create a long-term approach to protecting the environment and ensuring the long-term profitability and longevity of the tourism industry.

TOURISM AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Australia is caught in a pincer movement between the impact of climate change on our natural tourism assets on one hand, and the impact on consumers’ travel behaviours on the other. Tourism Australia is currently working with the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism to develop the Australian Government’s Tourism Action Plan on Climate Change. The plan will provide a framework to which the tourism industry can work to address the challenges of climate change, reduce its impacts on the environment and dovetail with the Government’s broader, whole-of-government and whole-of-industry response to addressing the issue.

Australia’s tourism businesses – whether they are airlines, hotels, bed and breakfasts, tour operators, attractions, theme parks - have not just an economic incentive but an environmental imperative to adopt green business practices and reduce their carbon footprint.

A business’ carbon footprint is a calculation of the greenhouse gas emissions associated with a specific activity. Emission calculators are now available through a number of organisations’ websites including Climate Friendly (www.climatefriendly.com).

The best way to minimise the impacts of climate change is to reduce carbon emissions e.g. by turning off appliances, using less power etc.

A concept that you may have heard about is that of businesses that have become ‘carbon neutral’. Going carbon neutral is all about how you can offset your business’ carbon emissions beyond the gains made by energy efficiency or by using renewable energy. To do this, businesses get involved in carbon offsetting programs, which work by reducing emissions elsewhere by investing in projects that save energy, such as investment in technology that allows industry to be more efficient, increasing the generation of renewable energy or planting trees to absorb carbon dioxide. Carbon offsetting is the process of balancing your individual, home or business carbon dioxide production by activities that reduce carbon dioxide by the same amount.

Australia has a number of established carbon offset organisations such as Greenfleet, Green Globe, Climate Friendly, Easy Being Green, Elementree, Carbon Neutral and CO2 Australia that manage carbon offset schemes on behalf of organisations and individuals.

So, if a traveller wants to offset their emissions, they calculate their travel emissions using a website calculator provided by an offset organisation, then pay a sum of money which the offset organisation uses to invest in projects that directly compensate for the greenhouse gases they are likely to release on their travels.

Carbon neutral programs can, if well designed, promote efficiency and renewable energy by offsetting the emissions that we can’t personally reduce. Offset programmes should fund energy efficiency and renewable energy generation because they prevent greenhouse pollution being created in the first place. Carbon neutral, or carbon offsetting, programs are a way of recognising the environmental cost of our businesses and households and reducing our impact on the environment.

But carbon offsetting is not enough. The problem in modern industrial times is that we are producing an enormous amount of CO2 (carbon dioxide which creates carbon emissions) through the burning of fossil fuels like coal and oil, which is beyond the capacity of plants to recycle in the normal way. Therefore, for the collective population of the planet to properly address global warming, we need more than carbon offsetting. We have to reduce our emissions and change to renewable energy sources. Many tourism businesses depend on high energy consumption to operate. Therefore, every tourism business has a role to play in looking at ways to make their business operations more environmentally-friendly.

ADOPTING GREENER BUSINESS PRACTICES

Incorporating greener practices into your business is one of the most powerful ways to make a difference, not just to your own bottomline (although it certainly helps!), but also to the environment – both now and for the future. Every little thing you do makes a difference, whether it’s purchasing a new photocopier that uses less energy, or just turning your old one off when it’s not needed.

Experience Seekers are responsible travellers who look for ways to minimise the impacts of their travel on the environment. So it’s important that Australian tourism businesses can demonstrate their commitment to maintaining environmentally-friendly business practices, as it will become an important selling point.

GETTING GREEN ACCREDITED

If you’re really serious turning your business around, introducing greener business practices and promoting your green credentials, then you may want to investigate the possibility of getting your business green-accredited through a high quality, recognised green accreditation scheme. There are an increasing number of green-accreditation schemes popping up, so make sure you do your research and select one that is credible.

Accreditation is essentially an endorsement from an independent authority. If you join a scheme, your business would be required to incorporate a number of environmentally-friendly practices into its operations, it will be audited and monitored and if you meet the requirements, you get to promote the relevant accreditation brandmark on your communications.
From a customer’s perspective, a label or brandmark from an accredited green program demonstrates at a glance that a business is supporting the best possible business practices for protecting the environment.

Green accreditation programs*, such as the Green Globe Program and Eco Tourism Australia’s Eco Certification Program, provide a stringent framework with which businesses can green their business operations and promote their green credentials to consumers.

Most green accreditation programs aim to deliver best practice travel and tourism benchmarking and certification products and services, to help facilitate sustainable travel and tourism for companies, communities, ecotourism operations and precincts. Some address the need for consumers to be able to clearly identify genuine, high-quality eco-tourism operators and experiences.

Participation in these programs can help your business improve its environmental credentials, enhance your business’ reputation and improve your marketshare.

Each program has different requirements and will vary in cost. In general though, you can expect that before you become accredited, you will have to demonstrate how your business operations adhere to some stringent criteria. Eligibility for accreditation programs can be based on some of the following principles:

> Greenhouse gas emissions;
> Energy efficiency, conservation and management;
> Management of freshwater resources;
> Ecosystem conservation and management;
> Management of social and cultural issues;
> Land use planning and management;
> Air quality protection and noise control;
> Waste water management;
> Solid waste management;
> Storage of environmentally harmful substances;
> Economic sustainability including business management, business ethics, responsible marketing and customer satisfaction;
> Environmental sustainability including contribution to conservation and education;
> Social sustainability including working with local communities, cultural respect and sensitivity.

Accreditation can provide a number of benefits to your business including:

> Criteria to assist with developing ecotourism product;
> A guide to assist implementing principles of ecologically sustainable development;
> An opportunity to continually improve performance to a standard recognised as best practice;
> A recognised logo to use in your marketing material;
> A way for travellers to identify your business as a genuine ecotourism and environmentally-friendly experience;
> Assistance to help you and your local community ‘bundle’ tourism activities and experiences that maximise benefits to the community and minimise negative environmental impacts.

**HANDY HINT: BE GREEN BUT DON’T BE A ‘GREENWASHER’**

When promoting the ‘green’ virtues of your product, you need to be very careful to avoid making misleading and deceptive claims. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is paying close attention to companies that make ‘green’ claims about their products. To ensure your products or green marketing do not put you on the wrong side of the ACCC, make sure you:

> Only make claims that are truthful and not misleading;
> Make sure any environmental claim you make is accurate and can be proven with evidence;
> Avoid vague claims such as ‘green’, ‘environmentally friendly’, ‘energy efficient’ or ‘organic’;
> Substantiate all claims and leave no room for misinterpretation;
> Align your marketing practices with the guidelines suggested by the ACCC;
> Seek legal advice if you’re unsure about whether a particular claim potentially contravenes the Trade Practices Act;

*Note: Tourism Australia does not endorse specific companies and takes no responsibility for advice provided by these companies.*
SECTION 5: CREATING A ‘GREEN’ EXPERIENCE

HOW TO TURN YOUR BUSINESS GREEN

No matter how big or small your business, you can take steps to reduce your energy emissions. There are many things you can do to run a more environmentally-sustainable business. Here are a few ideas:

- **Do an energy and/or environmental audit** - Understand the impact your company is having on the environment by auditing your energy use, emissions, waste and other environmental impacts. Once you know, develop a strategy to reduce these impacts over time.

- **Buy renewable energy/GreenPower** - Choose 100 per cent Green Power or have solar panels or other renewable energy devices installed. This makes your electricity use carbon neutral. The advantage of Green Power is that it is a government-accredited and administered scheme that ensures your dollar is invested in new renewable energy projects beyond those created through government targets. Australian energy companies offer renewable energy options such as solar, wind and geothermal energy. If you have the opportunity, make the switch and you can save an average of seven tonnes of emissions a year. Ask your energy retailer for details or visit www.greenpower.com.au.

- **Green your event** - When holding conferences and other large events do what you can to reduce its environmental impact buying locally, choosing energy-efficient and environmentally aware venues, purchasing renewable energy/GreenPower and offsetting remaining emissions.

- **Open the windows, turn off the air con** - Air conditioning is one of the biggest users of electricity in the summer and a great contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. When appropriate, turn off the air conditioning and open the windows for some fresh air. For enclosed spaces, switch your air conditioner to economy cycle, which lowers energy use and makes the most of the fresh air. Use an air conditioning and heating system that can be controlled from each room, so you can switch it off in rooms that are not in use.

- **Shade your buildings** - Install awnings or shading over windows and walls exposed to the sun. This will help keep the heat out, the air conditioners off and the power bill low.

- **Change your light bulbs** - A switch from conventional light bulbs to energy efficient compact fluorescents can be one of the most effective things your business can do to reduce emissions and stop global warming and it saves you money.

- **Turn off lights** - It sounds simple but turning off the lights when not in use can make a big difference to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Timers are an effective way of ensuring lights are not left on after hours and motion sensors can be installed so lights are on only when needed.

- **Switch to solar hot water or gas heating** - This can save as much as two to three tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year and greatly reduce energy costs.

- **Encourage or financially support your employees to use public transport** - Cars contribute 41.7 million tonnes of Australia’s overall carbon dioxide emissions and similar amounts in other countries. Encourage your employees to use public transport or financially support them by using a voucher or annual train, bus or ferry scheme.

*Note: Tourism Australia does not endorse specific companies and takes no responsibility for advice provided by these companies.*
Buy efficiency - When buying high energy using equipment such as computers, copy machines, fleet cars, etc. look for or ask for the energy ratings and choose the best energy-saving option accordingly - saves you money and helps reduce carbon emissions.

Look at laptops - Next time you’re replacing office computers, remember that laptops and notebooks use up to 90 per cent less energy. If LCD screens are too small when connected to an energy efficient monitor, they still only use around half the energy of a normal desktop computer.

Maintain your equipment - Regularly check air conditioning vents, pipes and filters and maintain equipment to ensure it is operating efficiently. Regular maintenance prevents leaks and wasted energy and ensures you get the best out of expensive equipment.

Buy recycled – Using recycled materials such as paper, means less energy use, emissions and pollution.

Manage your waste - Recycle as much of your waste and unwanted goods as possible including vegetable matter and compost, which can be used to fertilise gardens.

Switch off standby and turn off monitors - Leaving computers, printers and photocopiers on stand-by can account for much of your office’s energy use, and therefore emissions and costs. Turn off computers, monitors, printers and other equipment off at source at the end of the day and when not in use. Install timers on monitors and other equipment to ensure they are off when not in use. So simple, so effective.

Go carbon neutral - Carbon neutral programs can offset your business and transport emissions beyond the gains made by energy efficiency or by using renewable energy. Carbon neutral programs are still a developing product and there is currently a lack of regulation and government backed standards to ensure consistent quality of the programs. So if you want your business to be associated with a carbon offsetting program, contact the Australian Government’s Department of Climate Change so you can work out the good guys from the ‘greenwashers’!

Save water – In recent years, Australia has learnt how precious water is as a resource. So make sure you install water saving nozzles and devices on all taps. For hotels particularly, this can save a huge amount of water. Ensure all toilets in your business have a half-flush function. Install rain tanks to enhance your water supply. Investigate systems for recycling brown and waste water. For example, if you’re running a resort, you may look at a system that allows you to use recycled shower/bath water to water your gardens. Encourage your guests to re-use their towels and bedding. Ensure that all bedding is washed using biodegradable liquids.

Drive green – If your business depends on vehicles, investigate the possibility of investing in cars that use renewable fuels e.g. hybrid cars.

Take action – Make sure your business participates in energy-saving initiatives such as Earth Hour to demonstrate your business’ commitment to environmental protection initiatives.

Support your community - Work with the local community and ensure any additional revenue from your business is redirected into environmental initiatives.
HOW TO TURN YOUR BUSINESS GREEN (CONTINUED)

> **Buy green** - Commit to a ‘green’ purchasing policy and ensure supplies you buy for your business have:
  - Recycled content;
  - Water saving devices (e.g., water saving shower heads);
  - A high energy efficiency;
  - Low toxicity;
  - Minimum waste and packaging;
  - Minimum habitat and soil degradation/destruction.

> **Educate your customers** - Provide your customers and guests with tips for responsible travel in your region including:
  - Tips on conserving resources such as water, food and energy.
  - Suggesting they re-use their towels and bedding, rather than having it washed everyday.
  - Encouraging them to buy locally made crafts to ensure the money goes directly to the community.
  - Encouraging them to stay on existing trails and paths to avoid soil erosion and destruction of habitat, particularly in natural areas.
  - Ideas for disposing rubbish appropriately. If there are no rubbish bins in the area your visitors are travelling in, encourage them to take their rubbish with them.
More information

Want more information on eco tourism, responsible tourism and climate change? Here are some websites that might assist:

> Tourism Australia’s position on sustainability, including case studies and checklists
  www.tourism.australia.com

> Tourism Action Plan on Climate Change
  www.ret.gov.au

> Climate Change
  www.greenhouse.gov.au
  www.climateinstitute.org.au
  www.acfonline.org.au

> Responsible tourism
  www.lonelyplanet.com.au

> Green accreditation
  www.ec3global.com (Green Globe)
  www.ecotourism.org.au (EcoTourism Australia’s Eco Certification Program)

> Green marketing claims
  www.accc.gov.au/greenmarketing

> Renewable energy
  www.greenpower.gov.au

> Carbon offsetting
  www.carbonoffsetguide.com.au
  www.climatefriendly.com
  www.climaterevolution.com.au
  www.cleanerclimate.com
  www.greenfleet.com.au
  www.easybeinggreen.com
  www.elementree.com.au
  www.carbonneutral.com.au
  www.co2australia.com.au
Enjoy the journey ahead......
SO YOU’VE READ THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCES INDUSTRY TOOLKIT: BOOSTING YOUR BOTTOMLINE BUT YOU’RE NOT SURE WHAT TO DO NEXT? HERE’S A CHECKLIST TO HELP YOU CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY TOWARDS BOOSTING YOUR BOTTOMLINE THROUGH AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCES:

☐ If there are some concepts in this toolkit that you don’t understand, or require further information, download a copy of the first Australian Experiences Industry Toolkit: Adding value to your business from www.tourism.australia.com/australianexperiencesToolkit.

☐ Familiarise yourself with the seven key Australian Experiences and some of the successful business case studies. Think about how you can start incorporating experiences into your product offering.

☐ Think about the concept of ‘bundling’. Start by working out:
  - The experiences your business offers;
  - The experiences your region offers;
  - What’s unique to your business, your local area or your region;
  - What your local area or region can promote as a unique selling point;
  - What experience category you and your region can ‘own’ and promote;
  - What visitors really want to get out of your experience.

☐ Look at ways your can work with other businesses in your region to ‘bundle’. Contact your Regional or State/Territory Tourism Organisations if you need assistance.

☐ Review your promotional materials and ensure the tone, style, content and images reflect the experiences. Think about your marketing activities and look at ways to promote your experience through public relations by hosting media conferences/events and media familiarisations visits. Have you got an exciting experience you want to share with the rest of the world? Contact Tourism Australia’s International Media Relations team to find out how you can get involved in existing programs.

☐ So you’ve got a website but want some creative ways to get your product offerings to the rest of the world. Review your marketing communications and look at opportunities to incorporate online advertising, Search Engine Optimisation, Social Networking Sites and user-generated content, mobile phones and geo search maps into your digital communications. Make sure you get your product listed on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse.

☐ Look at ways to green your business operations so that you can help to protect our environment and create a long-term profitable and sustainable tourism industry. And don’t forget, Experience Seekers are responsible travellers so they’re looking for green tourism experiences.

☐ Tourism Australia has a range of new toolkits and materials to help your business. Make sure you get a copy of the following:
  - Australian Experiences Industry Toolkit: Adding Value to your business (available to download from www.tourism.australia.com/australianexperiencesToolkit);
  - Australian Tourism Industry Toolkit Volume II: Boosting your bottomline hard copies are available from Tourism Australia’s Industry Development Team. You can also download a copy from www.tourism.australia.com/australianexperiencesToolkit;
  - Experience the Opportunities: Industry’s guide to working with Tourism Australia (contact Tourism Australia’s Industry Development Team to get your copy);
  - Planning for Inbound Success (available to download from www.tourism.australia.com/planning);

☐ If you’re really stuck, contact Tourism Australia’s Industry Development Team at www.tourism.australia.com/industrydevelopment.
Appendix A - Size of the First Time Global Experience Seeker Segment

First Time Global Experience Seekers represent nearly one fifth (19 per cent) of total visitors to Australia (overall, Experience Seekers represent 46 per cent of visitors).

However, the First Time Global Experience Seeker spends more and stays longer than other visitors. They represent 23 per cent of spend and 26 per cent of visitor nights in Australia. At an individual level they are spending more and staying longer than Experience Seekers who have visited Australia before.

There is also evidence that First Time Global Experience Seekers are more likely to go outside of capital cities. Sixty two per cent go outside capital cities compared with 51 per cent of repeat visit Experience Seekers and 46 per cent of other repeat visitors.

Thirty nine per cent of First Time Experience Seeker nights are spent outside capital cities compared with 36 per cent of repeat visit Experience Seekers and 31 per cent of other repeat visitors.

This target consumer is of considerable value to the Australian tourism industry and helps to deliver increased spend, nights and dispersal.

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<tr>
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<th>EXPERIENCE SEEKERS</th>
<th>NON-EXPERIENCE SEEKERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FIRST TIME VISITORS</td>
<td>REPEAT VISITORS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Visitors</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proportion of spend</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proportion of visitor nights</td>
<td>26%</td>
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Australian Experiences Industry Toolkit

VOLUME 2

Boosting your bottomline