



CAPRICORN
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Industry **TOOLKIT**

Tourism Marketing



Table of Contents

Develop an Effective Marketing Plan	1
Online Marketing and Distribution	2
ATDW Tourism eKit.....	2
Product Packaging.....	2
Prices for packages	2
Promotion.....	3
Working with the Media.....	3
Promotions Resources.....	6
Useful Acronyms.....	7



Tourism Marketing

Develop an Effective Marketing Plan

As with any business venture, your entry into international markets should be well planned. A detailed marketing plan should be developed to provide a blueprint for your marketing activities. This section covers some of the key principles of a marketing plan and specific considerations for the tourism industry, however there are numerous resources available to assist you further with your plan, these will be listed at the end of this section.

Whether you are a small family run attraction or an international airline, the principles for a marketing plan are the same. The purpose of marketing is to match the right product to the right market, providing an optimum return on investment. It is more than just advertising. Essentially there are four elements (the four P's) of marketing: product, price, place and promotion. A good marketing plan incorporates a combination of these elements, whilst setting clear, realistic and measurable objectives.

Writing a marketing plan is one of the most important steps that you can take to improve your business's effectiveness and efficiency. The plan will guide your marketing decisions and assist in allocating your resources.

It should incorporate:

- Overall business objectives - what is it that your organisation wants to accomplish?
- Assessment of the market environment - what are the factors, internally and externally, that will affect your business and servicing of identified markets?
- Market Identification - what are the specific markets and segments that are most likely to use your product?
- Marketing Objectives - are the objectives for each target market measurable, achievable, time-specific, non-ambiguous and flexible?
- Marketing Strategies - what is the best combination of the four P's for each of your target markets?
- The action plan. What are the actions needed to make the plan work, who will do it and when?
- The Marketing Budget - how much do you have to spend and how will you allocate the resources? And,
- Monitoring and evaluation - how will you measure the performance of your marketing efforts?

The challenge with tourism marketing is that the principal products are services, experiences and hospitality. These are intangibles and much more difficult to market than tangible items such as household appliances. The consumer also needs to travel to the product in order to experience it. Your tourism marketing message should focus on the consumer experience.

For the consumer the travel experience is made up of a number of components including: transportation, accommodation, food, shopping, entertainment, touring and events. It is important to consider this when developing your marketing plan.

As with your business plan, the development of your marketing plan should remain an ongoing process throughout the life of your business, allowing you to react to seasonal trends, climate and global impacts, as well as assisting your business to grow.

Online Marketing and Distribution

ATDW Tourism eKit

The Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) is the national platform for digital tourism information in Australia and have developed an online tourism education e-kit as part of their services. The ATDW Tourism e-kit is an initiative of the National Online Strategy Committee and is funded by all Australian State and Territory tourism offices.

This online marketing e-kit covers everything from the basics of developing a good web site to advanced topics like search engine marketing and online product distribution.

Product Packaging

Packaging involves combining a number of component products to form a package, which can then be on-sold through the distribution system to consumers. Before you develop a package, it is important to determine the target market(s) for the package, what may appeal to them, and the distribution system you plan on using.

A package normally involves compatible products, such as accommodation, transport, entry to attractions, meals and touring. Packages may include discounts, or value adding components such as complimentary meals or services. They are usually developed in co-operation with other operators, and are an effective way to encourage visitors to take longer stays within region. For example, you may be an accommodation operator, who wishes to encourage visitors to extend their intended stay. You may put together a package including a local tour, a meal at a local restaurant and entrance to a local attraction.

Packages can make it more appealing for travel agents and tour wholesalers to take up your product, especially if you are a single attraction or accommodation operator with a small number of rooms. Packages may also assist in driving business during low seasons or off peak times.

When developing a package, you will need to factor in administration costs if you are looking after the administration of the entire package. This will include those elements not provided by you, for example entrance to attractions, meals, tours etc.

A central booking number for the package makes it attractive for the travel industry, as it only takes one call to secure all elements of the package. For assistance with product packaging, or to be included in packages put together by Capricorn Holidays, call a Membership staff member at Capricorn Tourism on +61 7 4927 2055.

Prices for packages

The following pricing methods are applied to packages and the most appropriate method depends on the type of product being sold.

Disguised pricing

Generally, discounted package components (eg accommodation, meals, entry fees, transport) are presented as one upfront cost. This method disguises the exact cost of individual components and also the extent of discount provided by individual operators.

Visible pricing

Offering a range of activities, attractions and options, with each component costed at their full price, can result in a final package cost that is too expensive to be appealing.

This can be overcome by offering a flexible package with each component priced separately and purchased individually. The customer is then able to select their preferred package components according to the travel preferences and budget.

Promotion

Promoting your product to consumers and the travel trade requires an understanding of your target market and the most cost effective way to reach them.

The promotional mix usually comprises a combination of the following:

- Advertising – print, broadcast, direct mail and the internet;
- Public Relations – media release, media kits, press conferences, media familiarisations, interviews and speeches;
- Personal Selling – trade and consumer events, sales calls, sales missions and staff training; and
- Sales Promotions– competitions and sales incentives.

Each option has its strengths and weaknesses. A good promotional strategy should include a mixture of promotional activities that you can refine as your business experience grows. Don't be afraid to experiment with new strategies but make sure you can measure their effectiveness.

Rather than go direct, many operators choose to promote their product cooperatively through marketing opportunities offered by Tourism Australia, Tourism Queensland and Capricorn Tourism. Many of these opportunities are cost-effective and offer greater exposure and impact than activities undertaken by individual businesses, especially in the international market place. For details on cooperative marketing opportunities with Capricorn Tourism, contact our Destination Marketing staff on +61 7 4927 2055.

No matter what promotion activities you choose, tracking the impact of your advertising spend is paramount. It will help you decide which campaigns to continue and which ones need refinement.

Tracking tips

- Are you able to set up a unique phone number or website address which allows you to track the response to your advertising?
- Can you set up a special tour code or package deal which is only promoted through your advertising?
- Or simply ask customers how they found out about your product

Working with the Media

One of the most cost effective ways of promoting your product/experience is by generating publicity. This allows you to spread the word about your organisation, product or service through non-advertising channels. Whether you use media campaigns, media familiarisation visits (famils), or simply distribute a media release, you are engaged in generating publicity.

Media coverage reaches a wider audience than limited advertising budgets, and consumers are more likely to be engaged by a first-hand account of a destination than they are by paid advertising. Editorial publicity is acknowledged as more valuable than advertising because the consumer knows that editorial has not been paid for, which makes it more credible. On certain occasions editorial will also provide far more detailed information and more visuals than an advertisement.

Although a significant amount of positive free publicity is generated for the region by Capricorn Tourism, it is impossible for the unit to highlight every operator, event or place. It is important therefore, for individual operators to understand how to generate their own media publicity.

You can generate media coverage by sending product information to media contacts at a targeted publication or by inviting a journalist from that publication to experience your product first-hand. Capricorn Tourism can help streamline this process for you through our Visiting Journalist Program (or VJP). This program hosts visiting journalists from a variety of media networks/pub on themed famils throughout the region, focusing on Capricorn Tourism members. For more information or to get involved with the VJP, contact Capricorn Tourism on +61 7 4927 2055.

Catch Their Attention

The media is interested in what appeals to their readers/listeners/audience. Generally, in relation to tourism information, the media is interested in tourism news and feature stories about properties, events or particular services.

Examples of tourism news items include: new visitation figures, the opening of a new tourism facility or information about a major event. While not always the case, tourism news can also involve controversy: for example, arguments over the location of a large new tourism development.

Plan your publicity campaign - don't leave it to chance, accident or the last minute! Do your homework and your publicity campaign will be far more effective. Putting in the leg-work by mapping out key messages, objectives, creating the appropriate materials and having realistic expectations will greatly contribute to your campaign's success.

Work out what it is you want to publicise, how you want to publicise it and where you want to publicise it. Gather together all your information and think about the best ways to promote your property, service or event.

Mostly, the type of publicity that tourism operators get is a feature story/article on their service, product or event, which in most cases appear in the travel sections of newspapers. Although somewhat less common, feature stories in magazines like *Vogue Entertaining & Travel* or on travel programs like *The Great Outdoors* are also achievable.

Whether you have news for the media or want a feature story written, you have to make your information relevant to the audience of each media organisation you are targeting and, if possible, put an interesting angle on the story. The best way of letting any media organisation know about your product is to send them a media release.

Media Release

A media release conveys the most important details of your news/story to the media and is designed to entice them to cover the news/story. Before you start writing a media release consider the following questions and make sure you know the answers:

1. What is the main point of your story?
2. Is your story interesting and if so, why?
3. Is your story suited to a regional, state or national audience?
4. Have you considered different angles to the story? The more unusual or more interesting the angle of your story, the more likely it is that the media will be interested.
5. Who is the best person to act as a spokesperson for your news/story? Remember, it should be somebody who is readily available for interview, knows all the facts and is articulate - you don't want someone who will get tongue tied, particularly if they are doing television or radio interviews.
6. What media organisations are you targeting? Think carefully about what your message is and who is most likely to be interested in it.

Media Release tips:

- The first paragraph of the release is the most important and should contain the strongest points. Many editors/journalists will skim through, so get their interest right away!
- Every release should answer the questions: 'who, what, when, where, why and how?'
- Be concise; where possible keep your release to one page.
- Keep information simple, to the point and avoid jargon. Do not assume the reader has prior knowledge of subjects you may take for granted.
- Highlight 'new' angles, be original and try to avoid clichés or fancy phrases
- Keep your target audience in mind and vary the content and style accordingly
- Include relevant dates, prices, locations, telephone numbers or websites relevant to the consumer

- Finish your release with contact details for the person responsible for media in your organisation
- Do your preparation, build up and maintain your contact lists
- Include any strong, clear pictures that convey an interesting angle or aspect to the story

Media Kit

While the media release is an ideal way to announce news items or promote specific products, there are occasions when you need to have something more elaborate to present to the media.

A media kit is often prepared when an organisation announces a new product, or sponsors a major event. Media kits provide members of the press with a thorough background and information in various formats.

The basic kit format generally consists of a large folder cover containing media releases, fact sheets, background information on the project/event, company materials and collateral, digital images (on cd or usb drive) and article reprints. This is a great branding opportunity, so make your folder visually attractive, incorporating the name of the company and any logo/graphic designs you use in your collateral.

A media kit should contain:

- Facts and figures about your business
- Details of what you are offering the consumer
- Your unique selling points
- Recent awards or achievements
- What you are planning in the coming year (or longer term)
- Your up-to-date brochure/guidebooks/other collateral
- Product biography
- CD of high-resolution images

Familiarisation Visits

Based on the principle that media can provide more motivating and detailed coverage if they actually experience a destination or tourism product first hand, Capricorn Tourism works closely with Tourism Queensland and a variety of media organisations to host the Visiting Journalist Program or (VJP). This program has been successful in region for the past 5 years, hosting visiting journalists from a variety of media networks/publications on themed familiarisation tours throughout Capricorn, focusing on Capricorn Tourism members. Resulting stories have the potential to appear in State, National and International Publications. In 2008, this program generated over \$17 million worth of positive media coverage.

Familiarisation tours (famils) improve the product knowledge visiting journalists by providing them with the opportunity to experience your product first hand.

Generally support for famils is requested free of charge (FOC) in return for the benefits for your business via the exposure. However, if you are uncertain of the benefits of a famil opportunity, for example if they are not from one of your primary target markets, or due to costs you are unable to offer complimentary services you may consider extending a reduced rate. Discuss options with the famil organiser to try and create a 'win-win' situation.

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.

Famil/Media Visit Top Tips

- Talk to the journalist on the phone before they arrive to ensure you know what they want so you can have the information ready for them when they arrive.
- Provide a media kit with relevant background information on the products and services
- Make sure you and whatever it is you are trying to promote looks at its best - this is particularly crucial when television film crews or photographers are coming. Brief your staff accordingly.
- Listen carefully to the journalist's questions and make sure your answers are to the point and that you know what you are talking about.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, don't make it up or guess. Explain to the journalist that you will have to call them back later with that information as you don't currently have it.
- Don't speak "off the record" and start sharing about local politics or gossip – it will immediately attract the journalist's attention and could result in a front-page story instead!

Try to avoid:

- Providing journalists with extras not provided to consumers - they will write about those extras as if they were included in the price and consumers will rightly get upset if they too don't receive the same level of product/service for that price.
- Being a pest on the phone. Don't hassle journalists with multiple phone calls.
- Don't get a junior to call who has no idea about the story pitch. Be polite and call the journalist yourself.
- Large unsolicited email messages, use the blind cc (bcc) function, don't let the journalist know who else the release is going to.
- Complaints about cutting or editing a story – if there's a factual error let them know politely.
- Missing promised deadlines

Promotions Resources

Tourism Queensland Image Gallery

Search through Tourism Queensland's ultimate collection of high resolution images. The Queensland Image Gallery showcases the diversity and splendour of this naturally beautiful State of Australia.

Images are available to travel and tourism industry professionals, media and anyone seeking professional images for use in the positive promotion of Queensland. Here you will find thousands of high resolution images which are easy to search and download, including our selection of FREE high resolution generic images.

<http://tq.lookat.me.com.au/>

Useful Acronyms

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Corporation
ATDW	Australian Tourism Data Warehouse
ATEC	Australian Tourism Export Council
CHRC	Central Highlands Regional Council
CTDO	Capricorn Tourism Development Organisation
DEEDI	Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation
DMC	Destination Management Company
FIT	Free Independent Traveller
ITO	Inbound Tour Operator
LGA	Local Government Authority
LTO	Local Tourism Organisation
MICE	Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions
NTO	National Tourism Organisation
QTIC	Queensland Tourism Industry Council
RDA	Regional Development Australia
RRC	Rockhampton Regional Council
RTO	Regional Tourism Organisation
STO	State Tourism Organisation
TA	Tourism Australia
TAD	Tourism Assistance Database
TQ	Tourism Queensland
VIC	Visitor Information Centre
VFR	Visiting Friends and/or Relatives
VJP	Visiting Journalist Program

The information outlined within this Toolkit has been sourced from:

Tourism Australia – www.tourism.australia.com

Tourism Queensland – www.tq.com.au

Tourism New South Wales – www.tourism.nsw.gov.au

Tourism Victoria – www.tourism.vic.gov.au

Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation – www.business.qld.gov.au and
www.deedi.qld.gov.au

Australian Tourism Data Warehouse – www.atdw.com.au

Queensland Tourism Industry Council – www.qtic.com.au

Capricorn Tourism – www.capricorntourism.com.au