

ARIZONA OFFICE OF TOURISM  
REFERENCE GUIDE 2009 EDITION



ARIZONA  
**TOURISM**  
UNIVERSITY



## Letter from the Director

Dear Community Partner,

From the mountains to the desert, Arizona offers travel experiences like no other destination in the United States.

On behalf of the Arizona Office of Tourism, we are dedicated to helping communities leverage their resources to promote their unique products and destinations. To accomplish this, we strive to provide technical assistance through a variety of programs, such as our community grants, educational workshops...and this Reference Guide.

The information contained within this guide provides instruction and practical advice on developing a solid marketing program that allows you to promote unforgettable moments to travelers throughout your community.

The outline of this guide follows a natural progression of tourism development. Within these pages, you will find techniques for creating an effective plan that includes:

- Community Development
- Visitor Services
- Media Relations
- Travel Industry Marketing
- Tourism Research
- Advertising and Fulfillment

We are confident this information will give you innovative ideas on how to increase visitation and spending in your community.

Even more importantly, we hope you use these tools and techniques to leave a lasting impression on the minds and in the hearts of the millions of people who will visit Arizona this next year.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margie A. Emmermann".

Margie A. Emmermann  
Director  
Arizona Office of Tourism

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# I. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Communications & Community Development (CCD) division assists communities in the development, enhancement, and marketing of their destinations; provides education on AOT's grant programs; conducts topic-specific educational workshops through the Arizona Tourism University program; facilitates federal and state interagency cooperation for rural and tribal communities; helps to improve existing tourism products and encourages the development of new products; administers the operation of Arizona's Welcome Center; and assists communities and their Local Visitor Information Centers (LVICs) in providing quality customer service training, signage assistance, and collateral exchange.

In this section, you will learn the basics of writing a marketing plan as well as practical strategies to define your target markets and your objectives to make your marketing dollars as efficient and cost effective as possible. This section also provides information about grant and educational workshops, resource materials and tools offered by the CCD division to help communities with their tourism marketing, promotion and development.

## **Where do you begin?**

Once a community has decided it wants to proceed with tourism marketing and development, a marketing plan must be created. The marketing plan enables communities to see their ultimate marketing goal with organization and clarity. The plan provides direction for all marketing activities and helps to communicate the marketing vision to stakeholders, tourism partners, and visitors.

AOT requires that organizations seeking grant funding through the Teamwork for Effective Arizona Marketing (TEAM) submit a marketing plan with their application to demonstrate their efforts are strategic and the organization has set future goals and direction. For more information, please refer to the Grant section on page 6.

## **Product Development**

The tourism product consists of all elements – physical, experiential and emotional – that contribute to a destination's experience.

AOT's product development vision is to realize Arizona's potential as a great place to live and visit by ensuring that resources are enhanced, preserved, perpetuated and promoted in a manner that is environmentally sound, and culturally and socially sensitive.

While statewide product development tracking is important, local product databases is of equal value. Destination marketing organizations may find it helpful to have a list of all the tourism-related products that are available in their communities. A list of tourism products is important from a promotional perspective and can also help a community identify gaps or overloads in local tourism offerings.

An easy way to track local tourism products is to divide the products into sections using a spreadsheet or matrix format. Separating your product into categories is a good first step. Typical categories include attractions (festivals and events, shopping areas, museums, theaters, recreational areas, parks, etc.), services (accommodations, restaurants, guided tours, visitor information, etc.), and transportation (private vehicle, vans, motor coach, roads, airlines, jeep tours, trains, taxis, etc.). These categories can then be further segmented into private, public, and non-profit tourism products.

Communities and organizations are encouraged to utilize grant programs offered by AOT to help develop and implement new tourism products.

For example, the Teamwork for Effective Arizona Marketing (TEAM) program can be used for strategic planning, research, to identify new product development and to develop a marketing plan to incorporate new product offerings into the mix.

The Rural Tourism Development Grant Program (RTDGP) offers funding for infrastructure to build and implement tourism products such as new attractions, enhancement of amenities and services, etc.

Please refer to the Grants Section for more information on these funding opportunities.

## Writing a Marketing Plan Worksheet

Marketing plans do not need to be long or expensive. The main goal is to think about what you want to accomplish with your marketing strategy and how you are going to meet your objectives. A marketing plan should contain the following: Objectives; Situation Analysis; Target Markets; Strategies; and Evaluations. The following provides a step-by-step process for developing a marketing plan.

### Objectives

As with any strategic initiative, a marketing plan should start with objectives. Your marketing objectives will guide your entire marketing effort and will be used for evaluating the success of your marketing programs. Without objectives, you may get off track and will not know when you have reached your ultimate goal. Your objectives should focus on your specific target market(s). Objectives must be measurable in quantitative terms, such as number of visitors, and sales volume. By having quantitative objectives, you will have a clear target to strive toward and will know when the objective has been achieved. Objectives should also be framed within a specific time period. Finally, objectives should be outcome based. In other words, what is the end result you are looking for?

Examples of measurable objectives:

- Increase gross sales revenues by 10 percent.
- Increase visitor inquiries by 20 percent.
- Increase the total number of visitors by 2000.
- Increase hotel occupancy by 10 percent.

### Situation Analysis

A situation analysis details the context for your marketing efforts. In this section of your marketing plan, you take a close look at the internal and external factors that will influence your marketing strategy.

First, this section considers the rationale for your marketing efforts, the resources available within your organization, and how these might facilitate or inhibit your marketing strategies. A situation analysis should also contain a review of your past marketing efforts, with a focus on which activities were successful or not successful. This will help you make decisions regarding your current efforts. Second, this section may contain demographic, social, and economic trends and recent changes, regional, national or international, which may influence your marketing strategy. Third, this section should include a competition analysis that analyzes who your primary competitors, their target markets, and what they offer their visitors. Most importantly, a competition analysis should show how you are different from your competitors. Differentiation can be based on numerous factors such as price, product, quality of service, and location. In this section, you also want to identify your partners and allies, and how you can work with them to achieve your marketing objectives.

An example of situation analysis may include:

- Our organization has limited resources to effectively promote our destination.
- Our community has limited lodging and food establishments.
- Our region is perceived as a seasonal destination.

### Target Markets

Determining a target market is one of the most basic, and most important, aspects of a marketing plan. There is no such thing as the “general public” and it is unrealistic to think that you can attract everyone. Defining your target market helps you decide where to commit resources and what kinds of promotional methods and messages to use.

The first step is to define your target market specifically in terms of demographics (age, income, ethnicity, etc.). Next, determine their geographical residence, social group (young families, couples without children, girls getaway, etc.), preferred activities (sightseeing, visiting friends and family, cultural/historical activities, outdoor recreational activities, etc.), motives or benefits (what are people trying to get out of their trip), and whether you are targeting repeat or first-time visitors. The last step is determining your target market’s planning frame. Specifically, are people in your market planning their trips one week or one month in

advance, or are they spontaneous? Remember to focus on the target market that will most likely respond to your destination or attraction and will offer the greatest benefit for your community or business.

Please refer to the Advertising and Fulfillment section for additional information regarding Target Marketing.

## Strategies

In this section, you address the manner in which you will achieve your objectives. This section should incorporate your target markets, especially those that are primary, and take into consideration the “4 Ps” and the “3 Cs” for marketing your tourism product.

The “4 Ps” are as follows:

- **Product:** the commodity or service offered to the consumer
- **Place:** the specific location where the product will be offered, or the general area served
- **Price:** the importance of “correct” pricing
- **Promotion and Packaging:** strategies and tactics for building awareness and creating sales of the product; includes packaging, or how the product appears to the consumer

The “3 Cs” are as follows:

- **Customer:** The focus of customer analysis is to develop a strategy for market segmentation and ultimately target market selection. Marketers must develop profiles of each segment, focusing on variables such as demographics, psychographic characteristics, geography and needs.
- **Company:** In company analysis, marketers focus on understanding who they are. What is the product or service offered? What are the organization’s core competencies? What is the company’s cost structure and cost position relative to competitors?
- **Competition:** In Competitor analysis, marketers look at each competitor in the market, focusing especially on their relative competitive strengths and weaknesses using SWOT analysis. It is important to examine each competitor’s resources and competencies, competitive positioning, points of parity and points of differentiation.

An example of a strategy:

Our main target markets are reached through the following promotional efforts:

- Direct marketing campaign via regular and E-mail addressed to qualified consumers who meet our core target market profile.
- Web advertising through banner ads or links that promote ecotourism and adventure travel.
- FAM tours directed to regional and national travel writers.
- Participation in trade shows.
- Customer relationship marketing campaign directed at attracting repeat customers.

## Evaluation

This final section addresses the manner in which you will measure your success and in what ways your objectives have been met. Although often overlooked, this section is vitally important as it helps determine the success of your marketing efforts.

Methods for evaluating marketing efforts are different for each type of marketing project. For print placement, you can measure the number of leads generated by a magazine or newspaper ad. For a Web site, the number of page views or the number of Web-based requests for products or services can be measured. Public relations efforts can be measured by the number of articles written about your community or business in newspapers and magazines. The success of trade show attendance can be measured by the number of consumers who requested information from your booth, or the number of tour operators or travel agents who requested specific information on your destination or business. Additional evaluation techniques include attendance at an event from year-to-year, or a visitor research study to determine who is visiting and how they found out about you.

An example of evaluation may include the following:

- Leads generated through our direct marketing efforts
- Number of inquiries as a result of advertising efforts
- Number of leads generated by attendance at travel show
- Number of visitors, hotel occupancy rates, or hotel sales tax revenues

The most important questions that should be asked are: “Did we reach our goal?” and “Was the marketing campaign successful?”

## **Educational Workshops**

### **Arizona Tourism University (ATU)**

ATU has been created to assist the tourism industry and public further their education in the field of tourism. Each fiscal year (July through June) AOT offers topic-specific educational workshops. All workshops are complimentary and offered to the public. Each workshop topic is offered at different locations throughout the state. All past workshop tool kits and presentations are available online.

Past workshop topics include:

- Branding
- Geotourism
- How to Conduct a Visitor Survey
- How to Build an Itinerary
- The Economic Impact of the Tourism Industry in Arizona
- How to Work with Tour Operators & Travel Agents
- How to Create an Interactive Marketing Strategy
- How to Work with Tour Operators and Travel Agents
- Strategies for Successful Destination Marketing

For a full listing of current workshops, please visit AOT’s business-to-business Web site [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov) under Programs, Arizona Tourism University.

## **Grant Programs offered by the Arizona Office Tourism (AOT)**

From your marketing plan, you have probably determined that an appropriate amount of funding is needed to execute your strategy. Grants are an excellent resource to help Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs), non-profit tourism organizations, statewide associations, and tribal entities stretch marketing dollars. AOT two grant programs to assist tourism entities throughout the state: Teamwork for Effective Arizona Marketing (TEAM) and Rural Tourism Development Grant Program (RTDGP).

At the end of the Community Development section is a list of additional grants available from state and federal agencies that may help you meet your tourism needs.

For more information on the grants offered by AOT, please visit [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov) and select Grants, or contact the Community Development Manager at 602.364.3727.

### **Teamwork for Effective Arizona Marketing (TEAM)**

TEAM is a matching grant program offered to destination marketing organizations, statewide tourism based associations, and tribal entities.

This program provides participants with opportunities and guidelines designed to assist with the development of innovative and effective tourism promotion projects at the local and regional level. These local tourism promotion activities, in cooperation with the national and regional advertising efforts of AOT, are intended to maintain a strong tourism industry throughout Arizona.

Matching funds from AOT can be used for:

- Advertising
- Internet Web site development

- Printed material
- Media communications and public relations
- Strategic planning and research
- Product development
- And other tourism-related marketing activities within the program guidelines

Funding is also available through the grant's "EZ Advertising" program, which provides funding for 50 percent of all print advertising placements in selected publications. In state, nationwide, and international publications are available. An online advertising component is also available.

Funds are available annually based on AOT's fiscal year appropriation. New guidelines are tentatively available early-February, workshops are held in March, applications are due in April, and awards are announced by mid-June.

One representative from each community or organization applying for a grant must complete TEAM training conducted by AOT.

Please contact AOT for a listing of TEAM workshops or visit the agency's business-to-business Web site, [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov) for more information.

### **Rural Tourism Development Grant Program (RTDGP)**

RTDGP is a matching grant program to provide coordinated funding for tourism-related economic development projects in rural communities throughout Arizona with the goal of strengthening the regional and local economies and expanding tourism development. All projects must be tourism related designed to initiate economic growth and enhance future tourism development.

Funding is available for:

- The development of new tourism products
- The enhancement of the visitor experience
- The enhancement or renovation of existing tourism products
- "Bricks and mortar" tourism projects

Grant recipients have until the end of the following fiscal year to complete the project. A 25 percent match is required (up to 10 percent may be in-kind; at least 15 percent must be a cash match).

The Centennial will be a year-long, statewide celebration culminating on Arizona's 100th Statehood day February 14, 2012. Beginning with the FY09 RTDGP grant cycle, AOT will be incorporating new guidelines providing priority funding to projects that contain a Centennial component.

New guidelines are tentatively available mid-August and applications are due in September, and awards are announced by mid October.

### **Smart Growth Initiative**

Beginning January 1, 2009, the Smart Growth Scorecard, established by the Governor's Growth Cabinet, will be integrated into our program of work, including our grant programs. Any community or organization applying for government funding must have a scorecard completed and on file with the Arizona Department of Commerce. Smart Growth is a continuous planning process to guide the preservation, development, or redevelopment of a neighborhood, community, or region to promote the goals and ambitions of its residents. AOT encourages communities to learn more about Smart Growth, and how you can successfully integrate this process into your community.

For more information on the Smart Growth initiative, please visit [www.azcommerce.com/SmartGrowth](http://www.azcommerce.com/SmartGrowth).

### **Additional Funding Sources**

In addition to the grants offered directly through AOT, as a list of grants for a variety of tourism- and recreation-based projects. This list below describes some of the programs and how to obtain additional information, as well as some helpful grant-oriented Web sites.

Agency	Description/Purpose of Grant	Web site
Arizona Department of Commerce	To support REDI (Rural Economic Development Initiative) accredited communities with development programs.	<a href="http://www.azcommerce.com/CommAsst/RuralDev/REDI.htm">www.azcommerce.com/CommAsst/RuralDev/REDI.htm</a>
Arizona Department of Commerce	To assist certified Main Street communities in achieving marketing, training, and design initiatives in revitalizing the central business district.	<a href="http://www.azcommerce.com/CommAsst/MainStreet">www.azcommerce.com/CommAsst/MainStreet</a>
Arizona State Parks	The Arizona State Parks Grants Section administers eight grant programs: the State Lake Improvement Fund (SLIF); the Law Enforcement & Boating Safety Fund (LEBSF); the Recreational Trails Program (motorized portion); three components of the Arizona Heritage Fund (Historic Preservation; Trails; and Local Regional & State Parks); the Land and Water Conservation Fund; and the Growing Smarter State Trust Land Acquisition Program.	<a href="http://www.pr.state.az.us/grants">www.pr.state.az.us/grants</a>
Arizona Department of Transportation	The Transportation Enhancement (TE) program was developed to enhance surface transportation activities by developing projects that go above and beyond what transportation departments typically do.	<a href="http://www.azdot.gov/highways/SWProjMgmt/enhancement">www.azdot.gov/highways/SWProjMgmt/enhancement</a>
Arizona Commission on the Arts	A variety of grants to assist Arizona communities, organizations, and artists with the development of arts and culture	<a href="http://www.azarts.gov/organizations/programs.htm#">www.azarts.gov/organizations/programs.htm#</a>
Arizona Humanities Council	To support community-initiated projects that help Arizonans understand and appreciate the humanities	<a href="http://www.azhumanities.org/ggrant1.html">http://www.azhumanities.org/ggrant1.html</a>
National Scenic Byways Program	National Scenic Byways grants are available as discretionary funds to undertake eligible projects along highways designated as National Scenic Byways, All-American Roads, or as State-designated scenic byways.	<a href="http://www.bywayonline.org/grants/">www.bywayonline.org/grants/</a>
National Endowment for the Arts	Provides national recognition and support to significant projects of artistic excellence, thus preserving and enhancing our nation's diverse cultural heritage	<a href="http://www.nea.gov/about/index.html">http://www.nea.gov/about/index.html</a>
The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance	A comprehensive database of approximately 1,500 federal assistance programs, including a special section for rural tourism	<a href="http://www.cfda.gov">http://www.cfda.gov</a>
United States Department of Agriculture	Business Programs (BP). BP works in partnership with the private sector and the community-based organizations to provide financial assistance and business planning.	<a href="http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/bprograms.htm">www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/bprograms.htm</a>
United States Department of Agriculture	The mission of Cooperative Services Program is to promote understanding and use of the cooperative form of business as a viable organizational option for marketing and distributing agricultural products.	<a href="http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/fund.htm">www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/fund.htm</a>
National Rural Development Partnership	The Grant Seeker's Guide to the Galaxy A Compendium of Community Funding Resources from the Community Development Program in USDA	<a href="http://www.ezec.gov/Fundseekers%20Guide%20to%20the%20Galaxy/TheGrantSeeker.htm">www.ezec.gov/Fundseekers Guide to the Galaxy/TheGrantSeeker.htm</a>
Grants.gov	Grants.gov is your source to FIND and APPLY for federal government grants.	<a href="http://www.grants.gov">www.grants.gov</a>

## **Native American Marketing Programs**

AOT offers a number of programs to support American Indian tourism development. Cultural Heritage tourism, including the Native American experience, is an integral component of AOT's marketing efforts.

AOT is dedicated to integrating and promoting Native American tourism and activities throughout Arizona, as well as providing technical assistance and product development consultation to Tribes.

Through a variety of efforts, AOT continues to strengthen its relationship with the Tribes. Examples include the following:

- A Native American delegation has traveled to select trade shows and participated in media missions to highlight the various offerings and cultural uniqueness of Arizona's Tribal Lands.
- A Native American photo shoot project was implemented to provide professional quality photographs for use by Tribal tourism organizations and programs. In addition, AOT uses the photos in advertising and marketing efforts to accompany stories written about Tribal tourism.
- The Arizona Tourism University (ATU) provides free tourism education workshops to assist with tourism development and marketing. Tribal participation is strongly encouraged.
- Tribal entities are encouraged to apply for agency grants, such as the Teamwork for Effective Arizona Marketing (TEAM) or the Rural Tourism Development Grant (RTDG) program.
- AOT works closely with Tribal partners to provide information on current programs and services and to receive information about Tribal events, projects and tourism initiatives. Outreach to various Native American organizations is another avenue to further tourism to Indian Country.
- The Tribal Tourism Advisory Committee (T-TAC) serves in an advisory capacity to the Arizona Office of Tourism and the Native American Tourism Development Manager to enhance the marketing efforts and cultural experiences offered to Arizona's visitors. The committee provides an effective method of communicating with Tribal communities.

If you are interested in working with a Native American Tribe, please visit Native American Tourism Development at [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov), under Programs, for more resources.



## **II. VISITOR SERVICES**

### **What is Visitor Services?**

Visitor Services is an important component of tourism marketing and can be one of the most important aspects of promoting your organization or community. Word-of-mouth is one of the primary vehicles through which consumers hear about your destination. Even if you have a great marketing campaign, visitors who do not receive good customer service when they visit your community may not come back, and they may tell their friends and family about the poor service that they experienced. Conversely, good customer service promotes repeat visitation and positive word-of-mouth promotion.

AOT operates two state welcome centers and assists with the development of new state welcome centers. In addition, AOT offers several programs designed to assist local visitor centers statewide with customer service training, standardized operating procedures for visitor centers, collateral exchange programs, and highway signage. Below is a list of ways in which your community can benefit from AOT's visitor services program.

### **Welcome Center Program**

AOT's Painted Cliffs Welcome Center is located on Interstate 40 westbound near the Arizona/New Mexico border. The center phone number is 928.688.2448.

In January 2008, the Grand Canyon State Welcome Center, located at the AOT Washington street location, was merged with the Greater Phoenix Convention & Visitor Bureau's visitor center to create the Visitor Information Center at the Phoenix Convention Center. The Visitor Information Center is jointly operated by AOT and the Greater Phoenix CVB. The downtown Copper Square location has brought a greater visibility to the Visitor Information Center. This center operates Monday through Friday and during special events from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Besides a full-time AOT employee, the Phoenix CVB operates the center with one full-time employee and one part-time employee.

More than 100,000 annual visitors have access to a variety of brochures, maps, and additional information about Arizona. The Welcome and Visitor Centers distribute brochures and promote special events or festivals. Non-profit, city, county, state, and tribal government agencies are encouraged to distribute their tourism-related materials through this Welcome Center brochure distribution program. For more information, please visit AOT Welcome Centers at [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov) under Programs, Visitor Centers Services, or contact the Visitor Services Manager at 602.364.3694.

### **Local Visitor Information Center Program**

AOT works in cooperation with the Arizona Department of Transportation to provide the blue and white "Arizona Tourist Info" highway signs throughout Arizona. This highway signage is responsible for directing thousands of visitors to Local Visitor Information Centers (LVICs) across the state. Communities and tribes are required to meet statewide LVIC standards to obtain highway signage (see reference section of this workbook). New requests for signage for LVICs are reviewed annually in the spring by AOT's Visitor Services Committee. Tribal tourism offices who meet the standard requirements are encouraged to participate in this program. Information regarding locations, dates, and venues will be sent electronically.

As part of the LVIC program, The Tourism Education & Development division administers a Visitor Center Evaluation Program with the goal of maintaining the established standards for local visitor information centers statewide. The inspection program assists LVICs by providing recognition for outstanding service and suggestions for improvement when necessary. The program is supported by the Visitor Services Advisory Committee, which consists of representatives from regions throughout the state. The Visitor Services Advisory Committee meets twice a year to review the results of visitor center evaluations, review applications for ADOT visitor center signage, and provide comments and suggestions for the upcoming year's program.

### **Grand Impressions Customer Service Workshops**

In an effort to continually offer the best in visitor services to the traveling public, AOT conducts a complimentary certification program for Arizona's visitor center staff and front-line hospitality employees. The Grand Impressions program is designed to enhance customer service skills, present a unified message to visitors, and to increase knowledge of the state and its attractions. Front line employees within the tourism

industry and individuals in city, county, state, and tribal government agencies that deal directly with visitors are strongly encouraged to attend these workshops. Workshops are open to the public. They are held annually in late spring at locations throughout the state.

## **An Overview of the Hospitality Industry**

The hospitality industry is one of the largest industries in the world. Components include the following:

- Tourist destinations: Government promotion offices, regional promotion offices (chambers of commerce, convention and visitors bureaus), and resort areas, convention centers
- Transportation: Airlines and ground transportation
- Accommodations: Hotel/motels, resorts, bed and breakfasts, and guest/dude ranches
- Foodservice: Full service, specialty/themed, institutional, and fast food
- Attractions: Museums, attractions (natural or cultural), theme parks, casinos, and festivals, events, recreational activities
- Travel brokers: Travel agents, travel wholesalers, tour and charter operators, ground operators, and travel incentive companies
- Travel-related services: Financial (credit cards, traveler's checks, travel insurance), travel publications, guide books, and educational/training services

### **What is Hospitality?**

#### **Hospitality is:**

- Customer service delivered on the behalf of the entire community.
- Something everyone has the ability to extend.
- An attitude.
- Determines more than any other factor whether the visitor will return to your community
- The development of an intangible host/guest relationship that extends beyond the service provider to the pride, knowledge and politeness of the individual citizen and the appearance of your city.
- A commitment to making a visitor's stay as pleasant and enjoyable as that of an invited guest in your home.

Hospitality is a team effort because all components of the tourism industry are interrelated. While operators of hotels, restaurants, and recreational establishments may appear to work independently of each other, visitors combine and sum them up as one industry, one product, one experience, and one memory. The visitor's memory of the trip is what concerns the travel industry most. So, if one business has a poor performance, it will affect the tourism industry of the entire region.

### **The Need for Hospitality**

The tourism industry is unique in that hospitality is one of its most important marketing elements. It is also an important component of the "product" itself.

Repeat customers are vital to the success of Arizona tourism. Tourists who are satisfied will return to your region to experience the same or different events and seasons over many years. Regardless of when or why people return, they are motivated in part by past encounters with courteous, considerate and friendly hosts, residents, attractions, staff, retail clerks, hospitality and food and beverage service representatives.

Hospitality skills influence who returns and who does not return. It also affects what visitors will tell others about their visit. The effect of one visitor telling others about an experience can impact whether several dozen or several hundred people would want to visit your area or not.

The success of any business or community as a tourist destination depends on the attitudes of all individuals who come in contact with the visitor. Retail sales clerks and food and beverage staff are as important as the visitor information center receptionist and service station attendant. Tourism hospitality is not the responsibility of a few isolated businesses, but rather that of the entire community and its residents.

- Tourists travel to your region for many reasons and seek a wide variety of activities, so make sure you know what the region has to offer.
- Different opportunities will appeal to different tourists. You are of great service to tourists when you understand and help them find what they seek.
- Make it your responsibility to know about the opportunities in your area and inform the tourists. Be polite, attentive and helpful, but don't force information on them. If you don't know the answer to a question, refer them to someone who knows
- A visitor will respect your destination only as much as you appear to respect it. You are the symbol for your community to a visitor, and any time you denigrate it, you discredit yourself. Be proud of the positive events and situations, and work to improve those that are negative.

## **Tourist Hospitality Skills**

Greet people with enthusiasm and a smile. Courtesy is contagious.

Whatever greeting you use, it should be natural and easy for you to say with courtesy and sincerity. How you say something is often more important than what you say.

Asking questions of interest to a tourist or making a cheerful comment adds to the friendly atmosphere during an interaction. Learning someone's name and using it in a natural manner is a challenge to help you recognize the tourist and establish a more personal basis for interaction. Look directly at people to establish eye contact and to let them know that you acknowledge their presence.

A pleasant voice and manner combined with a well-groomed appearance suggests a professional atmosphere that visitors respond to in a positive manner. The ability to be diplomatic and show concern for a tourist when you have disappointing information is less difficult in such an atmosphere. Be courteous, helpful and optimistic, especially when dealing with angry or dissatisfied customers. Be cheerful, pleasant, and helpful. Remember, you are a representative of your community.

## **Effective Hospitality Habits**

### **1. Make a Good First Impression**

- Start with the right attitude and ask yourself: "How can I be of help to the visitor?"
- Greet visitors promptly within one minute of their arrival.
- Smile sincerely, not with a false, pasted smile.
- Act naturally, but professionally.
- Be courteous and friendly.
- Maintain eye contact. You will come across as confident, honest and knowledgeable.
- Smile with your voice. The tone of your voice or how you say something makes more of an impression than the words you use.
- Put visitors at ease and establish rapport with them.
- Always try to look your best; be well-groomed.

### **2. Know Your Job**

- Know the full name and correct spelling of your employer's business.
- Know the correct address, telephone number, E-mail address or Web site address, location and directions for finding the business.
- Know what products and services you have available.
- Be able to use all the equipment properly.
- Know the guest/customer relations' policies and practices.

### **3. Know Your Region**

- Know how to get around the community and how to give correct and easy-to-follow directions to other places.
- Be able to describe the main attractions in your region.
- Keep informed of main events, special and seasonal activities, when they occur, and whom to contact.
- Be able to use the visitor information resources.
- Know about other businesses in the community, what they offer, and their locations.

#### **4. Communicate Clearly**

- Listen carefully for clues as to what visitors want.
- Recognize customers' feelings and concerns.
- Ask questions. Find out what visitors are really looking for. Continue asking questions until you are sure of their needs and wants.
- Answer visitors' questions or concerns, providing clear information, explanations and/or directions. Avoid using slang or technical terms which might be confusing; take action to meet visitors' needs.
- Be reliable. Do what you say you are going to do. Do it when you say you are going to do it. Do it right the first time. Get it done on time.
- Ask visitors if all questions were answered clearly and completely.

#### **5. Handle Problems Effectively**

- Listen carefully to customers in order to identify problems.
- Use common sense to identify possible solutions.
- If you cannot solve the problem, connect visitors with someone who can; give customers his/her name, title and phone number. When possible, introduce visitors personally.
- Be responsive; show concern for visitors' problems and act quickly.
- Work cooperatively with others to solve the customers' problems.
- Go the extra mile. Deliver more than you promised to make sure visitors have been completely satisfied.

#### **6. Make a Good Last Impression**

- Ask how everything was.
- Ask if the visitors were taken care of and if they received everything they needed.
- Make them feel good about their choice to do business with you.
- Thank them for coming and invite them to come back.

### **Quality of Service**

Service is the most important part of the hospitality industry. Guests base their overall experiences on the service they received while visiting an area.

#### Elements of Quality

- **Tangibles**

Those physical aspects of the service that we can see and with which we interact: physical appearance of facilities, the equipment used, appearance of uniforms, signs, brochures, etc.

- **Reliability**

Refers to the ability of service personnel to perform the promised service accurately and consistently.

- **Responsiveness**

Involves employees' willingness to help customers and their promptness in providing service.

- **Assurance**

This is a catch-all quality dimension that involves the faith we have in the service personnel. Are they well-trained? Knowledgeable? Do they seem trustworthy?

- **Empathy**

This is the warm, fuzzy piece of service quality. It shows that service personnel care about you and understand your needs. It involves setting operating hours for the convenience of guests, not management or employees. It involves caring about waiting times and fairness in waiting line systems.

### **Guest Expectations and Satisfaction**

Guest expectations include cleanliness, courtesy, responsiveness, reliability, and friendliness. Guest expectations are formed through a variety of ways. They include word-of-mouth, personal desires, past experiences, and marketing communication. Many guests hear about a business from another person and base their expectations on what the other person tells them. Other visitors set their expectations on what

service they received in the past; they have visited the business before and expect the same service they had last time. Others base their expectations on what they want. Still others base their expectations on what they read in brochures or see on television.

Satisfaction may be described in the following ways:

- When actual Services are *less than* the visitor's expectations, you will have a *dissatisfied visitor*.
- When actual Services are *equal to* the visitor's expectations, you will have a *satisfied visitor*.
- When actual Services are *greater than* the visitor's expectations, you will have a *delighted visitor*.

The goal of a service-oriented business is to delight visitors. When visitors are delighted, they are more likely to become repeat visitors and to tell others about their experience.

## Communication

Communication plays a major role in the service encounter. It is the messages and thoughts being sent from the employees to the guests or vice versa. If the sender's idea is the same as what the receiver understands, then effective communication has taken place. If the ideas are different, then the message was not properly translated and problems could occur. Communication develops a relationship between the employee and the guest, which makes the guest feel more comfortable in an unfamiliar environment.

Some ways that you can communicate to make the guest's experience a happy one are by listening, remembering names, making conversation, and reaching out. When an employee listens and "reaches out," the guest feels that the employee cares about him or her and demonstrates empathy. Remembering names makes the guests feel special, and making conversation shows an interest in the guests.

### How Do We Communicate?

**Verbal:** 7 percent

**Vocal:** 38 percent

**Non-Verbal:** 55 percent

Tips for Effective Communication:

- Concentrate on Listening
- Use attentive body language.
  - Maintain eye contact.
  - Be aware of your body language.
  - Observe the speaker's non-verbal clues.
- Think while you listen.
  - Keep your mind from wandering.
  - Make mental notes.
- Listen with an open mind.
  - Avoid the tendency to resist ideas that are of no personal interest to you.
  - Don't exercise emotional censorship.
  - Don't blank out ideas you would rather not hear.
- Don't jump to conclusions.
  - Listen all the way through to ensure a complete understanding.
- Let the speaker know that you hear and understand.
  - Give encouraging responses.
  - Paraphrase the speaker's message to share your understanding.
  - Reflect the feelings of the speaker, not just the words.
- Be an active listener.
  - Clarify what you hear, and say "What I hear you saying is...Is that correct?"
  - Let the speaker know you understand.
  - Paraphrase.
  - Separate the problem from the person.
  - Be concerned with "what is right," not "who is right."

## Customer Service

### Dos and Don'ts of Customer Service

#### **Do:**

- Be observant.
- Notice visitors right away.
- Greet visitors right away and cheerfully.
- Use a pleasant tone of voice.
- Anticipate your guest's needs.
- Be available.
- Make the visitor feel important.
- Take pride in your work (service vs. servitude).
- Dress appropriately.
- Be empowered.
- Know as much as you can about your community and area.
- Invite the visitor back.

#### **Don't use the following responses when dealing with guests:**

- "No."
- "I don't know."
- "I have no idea."
- "That's not my job."
- "I agree, this stinks."
- "That's not my fault."
- "You need to talk to my manager."
- "You want it when?"
- "Calm down!"
- "I'm busy right now."
- "Come back later."

### Handling Difficult Guests

Here is an effective approach:

1. Give the guest your undivided attention while they explain their challenge.
2. Express empathy to the guest and apologize for the situation.
3. Repeat the guest's challenge to them to make sure that you understand what needs happen to satisfy the guest. Offer reasonable solutions that will satisfy the guest.
4. Mutually agree on the solution.
5. Follow up. Don't be afraid to offer something extra to really make an impression on the guest.

If these steps are followed, a bad situation can be turned around. Guests are often satisfied with the results of service recovery. If things are settled to their satisfaction, customers have shown to be very forgiving. Remember that most of the time, people just want someone to express their frustrations to, and that a good sincere smile can go a long way.

### Dos and Taboos of Serving International Visitors

#### **Do:**

- Be patient.
- Be observant.
- Be creative.
- Be empowered.
- Be diplomatic (compromise, satisfy, do what is best).
- Care (loyalty, rapport before money).
- Deliver quality/value (independent of price).
- Anticipate unfamiliar situations.
- Recognize the reality that values, customs and expectations will differ.
- Be aware of non-verbal clues and gestures.

#### **Taboo:**

- Do not talk about guests' peculiarities to colleagues.
- Do not touch guests.
- Never use first names.
- Do not chew gum.
- Do not walk and eat.
- Be cautious with hand gestures.
- Never pass things over someone's head.
- Stick to safe questions.
- Speak clearly. Do not raise your voice to emphasize.
- Avoid "popular" expressions (slang, idioms, jargon).
- Avoid backing out on promises

### Some Diet Eating Habits To Consider

- One fourth of the world does not eat beef or pork.
- No beef for Hindus, no pork for Muslims or Orthodox Jews.
- Consider chicken or fish when hosting internationally.
- Arabs do not serve with the left hand.
- Japanese place utensils on the opposite side of the eating area.

## **General Tips**

- Use multilingual signs and brochures at your establishment.
- Use flags in your facility to make visitors feel welcomed and at home in your business.
- Accept and give items (gifts, business cards) with both hands.

## **Persons with Disabilities**

Persons with disabilities have taken a proactive stance in the mainstream of life and are participating regularly in activities previously thought reserved for the “able-bodied” majority.

Some considerations for serving persons with disabilities include:

- Persons with disabilities should be informed of the accessibility of major tourist attractions and services.
- Wheelchairs or artificial limbs can break down. Information regarding emergency repair may need to be provided.
- People who are hearing impaired and rely on sign language for communication purposes may require information regarding interpretation services.
- Parents with severely disabled children may require an evening or day temporary respite care for their children to enjoy certain attractions, events, and activities.

## **Mature Travelers**

Mature adults, aged 55 or older, average the longest stay away from home (4.9 nights, excluding day trips), with 18 percent staying seven or more nights away. Conversely, this group also has a higher share of day trips (21 percent). Even when including day trips in the average, mature travelers continue to rank first over other age groups, averaging 3.9 nights in trip duration. Half (52 percent) of mature travelers stay in hotels or motels on their trips, and four in 10 stay at the homes of friends and relatives (43 percent). Mature travelers are the most likely of all groups to travel alone or with someone from outside their households (49 percent). They are also most likely of all age groups to have household travel party sizes of two members (41 percent). Their growing numbers, coupled with their financial power and availability of time, make them a very attractive market for the U.S. travel industry.

## **Etiquette on Tribal Lands**

Each Tribal reservation operates under its own unique governmental structure and establishes its own rules for visitors. One should not assume that what applies in one native community is the general rule for all native communities. Please observe all tribal laws and regulations. It is highly recommended that visitors contact the individual tribe(s) prior to their visit to obtain information specific to the particular Tribe. Below are some basic guidelines for visiting Tribal Lands:

- Taking photos, video, and audio recordings, as well as sketching is a particularly sensitive issue. Permits may be required, and fees and restrictions vary, particularly for professionals. Therefore, it is important to contact each individual Tribe regarding its policies. Do not attempt to engage in any of the mentioned activities without prior authorization. Failure to comply with tribal regulations could result in fines, confiscation of equipment, and expulsion from Tribal lands.
- Dances are sacred ceremonies. Observe them as you would any other religious function by dressing and acting appropriately. Actions such as pushing to the front of a group and blocking others' views are considered inappropriate. Be mindful of where you sit, stand, and walk. For example, at certain Hopi dances men and women sit apart; during pow wows it may not be appropriate to stand beside a drum; and it is inappropriate to walk across the pow wow arena during a dance. Never pick up any object that is dropped during a ceremony. Please refrain from talking to the ceremonial dancers. Applause after ceremonial dances is considered inappropriate.
- Some of the tribal buildings and structures may be several hundred years old and damage easily; do not climb on walls or other structures. Do not disturb or remove animals, plants, rocks or artifacts including pot shards, as tribal and federal law prohibits the removal of such items.
- Use caution when driving, especially at night. Much of the reservation land is open range, and small herds of sheep, goats, cattle and horses move freely along and across roads.
- Like any community, a reservation is home to those who live and work there and should be respected as such. Although most reservations are open to the public during daylight hours, the homes are private and should be entered only by invitation.
- Alcohol use is only permitted in designated locations, such as a casino. Drug use is not tolerated.

*Note: The Arizona Office of Tourism would like to thank Professor Jan H. van Harsseel, Ed.D, Niagara University, College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, for providing the information in this section. Special thanks also goes to Texas Hospitality Training, Texas A&M University, "A Hoosier Hospitality Training Seminar," Indianapolis CVB, and the Canadian Tourist Association for allowing usage of its materials.*

## **III. MEDIA RELATIONS**

### **What is Media Relations?**

Media Relations, or public relations, is often confused with advertising. While both are functions of marketing, that is where the similarities end. The Public Relations Society of America (PSRA) states that "Public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other." This simply means that practicing effective media relations helps develop an open line of communication with everyone that affects or is affected by an organization. From constituents and travel writers to potential visitors and lawmakers, communication is the basis for all public relations.

Whether it is the largest hotel chain in the world or a 10-room bed and breakfast in rural Arizona, an organization depends on people. Their attitudes, attention, understanding and motivation are critical to the success or failure of an organization or idea. Media relations is designed to help shape the attitudes, attention, understanding and motivation of your target markets, thereby creating a positive image of your business or destination.

### **The Basics**

#### **How is Media Relations different from Advertising?**

In its simplest form, media relations is unpaid advertising. It is receiving publicity in magazines, newspapers, television, Web sites, etc., without paying for it. Media relations allows an organization to receive coverage in a media outlet that it may not otherwise be able to afford via traditional advertising. For instance, while a half-page advertisement in Travel & Leisure may cost upwards of \$20,000, there is no cost associated with a half-page of editorial coverage and it has the potential to generate thousands of dollars in business for an organization. In addition, this third-party endorsement is considered so much more valuable than paid advertising that the Public Relations Society of America has set a standard for calculating publicity value by multiplying three to 10 times the advertising rate to determine the editorial value of the third-party endorsement of news coverage. For example, if a magazine is sitting in a doctor's office, it is likely that more than one person will read it. So, if the advertising rate for one page in the magazine is \$1,000, a one-page article in that publication has an advertising equivalency value of at least \$3,000 (note: AOT does not use multipliers).

Of course, the downside is that editorial coverage is relayed through the eyes of the writer. An organization has no control over the words the writer opts to use. An organization can control the information sent to the media, but it has no control over how they use it or what they say. On the other hand, advertising is completely controlled by the organization and will get across the exact message desired. Each marketing function has its benefits and drawbacks, but the key is to use them in tandem to get the most from your marketing dollars. Media relations and advertising often combine and overlap to maximize the publicity your organization receives. For instance, if an organization has an advertising buy with a certain publication, perhaps a sweepstakes or contest can be negotiated to provide added value and garner more publicity.

#### **Why should you do media relations?**

Media relations should be part of an overall marketing plan because it is much more effective to be proactive as opposed to reactive. It is more rewarding to proactively develop a media relations plan and direct efforts into securing positive publicity. Well-planned, effectively handled communication is essential to the success and existence of organizations in today's changing world. In the tourism industry, dealing with the media is inevitable. The key is to be prepared and know how to work with journalists.

## The Media Relations Plan

The ultimate goal of most tourism media relations efforts is a beautiful travel article in a key publication that draws visitors for years to come. Unfortunately, those articles don't just happen. They are usually the result of a very targeted and precise media relations campaign. But once an organization sets a goal, it can step back and develop a plan which will systematically accomplish that goal and achieve results.

The first step is to develop a written media relations plan – a blueprint for the year. If there is a limited budget, it is extremely important to get everything in writing to account for all of the dollars throughout the year, and to prioritize the programs to spend money most effectively.

A media relations plan should be a working document that can be updated from year to year. It should have objectives to keep an organization on track and measurable goals to chart progress. Writing the plan is simple if a few key questions are considered beforehand. Who are your target audiences (media, potential visitors, lawmakers, etc.)? What message do you want them to receive?

Where are your audiences located? When do you want to reach them?

A basic media relations plan should include the following elements:

- **Situation Analysis** – What is the current state of the industry and your particular business on a local, national and global scale? List the trends affecting your business and the industry as a whole. Look to the past and see where you've been, so that you can better determine where you want to be. The Travel Industry Association of America's (TIA) Web site is a great resource for industry trends – [www.tia.org](http://www.tia.org).
- **SWOT Analysis** – This element of the plan lists the internal Strengths and Weaknesses of your business as opposed to the external Opportunities and Threats.
- **Target Audience** – Describe your target customers using both demographics (geography, age, income, education level, etc.) and psychographics (what they like to do in their free time, travel patterns, etc.). Think about their life stage – are they young singles or baby boomers?
- **Key Messages** – Develop a short list of core messages which will be the basis of every communication you direct toward the media and your target audience. These messages should be based on the strengths and opportunities found in the SWOT analysis.
- **Media Relations Objectives** – All objectives should relate back to an organization's overall marketing goals. The objectives should be attainable through media relations, such as building awareness, enhancing image, or broadening the customer base. These objectives will be how you measure your success.
- **Strategy** – Once objectives are established, the next step is determining how to accomplish them. This is the real meat of the plan and will likely be the most detailed.
- **Tactics** – Identify the specific ways in which you intend to carry out the strategy. Typical media relations tactics are outlined in the following pages.

## The Media Relations Tools

Once the media relations plan is in place, the next step is to begin developing the tools that will put the plan into action. These tools are the cornerstone of any media relations operation, whether it is in the tourism industry or any other type of business.

### 1. The Media Contact List

There is no comprehensive list of every single travel writer in the world. Every organization needs a media list that is tailored to its specific needs. While there may be some overlap, a five-star resort wouldn't have the same list as a working cattle ranch.

There are many types of travel writers. Most daily newspapers and many consumer magazines have a full-time travel editor and sometimes have an entire travel staff. In addition, many publications will allow reporters from other departments to write travel articles so that business writers, food writers, arts and entertainment writers, and even political writers produce many travel articles.

It is difficult to get travel editors to visit a destination, since their primary responsibility is producing the travel section each week or month. Some travel editors do not travel at all. Instead, they will assign other reporters from the publication, or allow freelance writers to file the story. Therefore, it is imperative to keep travel editors up-to-date on your product or destination, but keep in mind that they may never see it firsthand.

Dealing with freelance writers presents unique challenges. A good freelance writer will draft a story then attempt to sell it to a variety of publications. The upside is that one writer might produce an article that appears in dozens of publications. The downside is that freelance writers cannot guarantee their work will be printed. Often a freelance writer takes a sponsored trip with the best intentions, writes an article about the trip, but is unable to find any publication to buy it. Working with freelance writers is a live-and-learn situation, but it is important to not let one bad experience affect your willingness to work with these writers in the future.

Developing a list of productive writers you trust and want to work with is the first and most important step in producing publicity. Here are some tips for developing a media list:

- **READ!** The more you read, the more familiar you will become with the world of travel writers. If a certain writer is writing a lot of stories about your area, add that writer to your media list. If you read a story in which you think you should have been included, make sure that writer is on the media list to receive future information. When a freelance writer authors a story, contact the publication for his or her address. If you cannot subscribe to certain publications, the public library is an excellent resource for magazines and city newspapers. Alternately, the Internet usually offers online versions of these publications.
- **Don't neglect the in-state media.** The current trend in travel is for people to stay closer to home. Therefore, travelers are more likely to explore their own state or travel within driving distances. Make sure the travel editors and writers from the major daily newspapers and local magazines are on the list. They are often searching for information on the state and have to work hard to find it because this information is not readily available.
- **The Society of American Travel Writers (SATW)** is the most respected group of travel writers in the world. The society sells its membership directory which lists more than 400 travel editors and freelance writers, all of whom are screened for productivity. In addition, the directory sorts the writers by their interests so you can easily pull out the writers who might be interested in your product. To purchase the guide, call (919) 861-5586 or log on to [www.satw.org](http://www.satw.org).
- **The Finder Binder** is Arizona's quick and easy reference guide to every media outlet in the state. This updated news media manual includes more than 500 pages, with a page or more dedicated to each publication or station. Finder Binder has recently added an online version, allowing users to quickly create a customized media list, print mailing labels or send an E-mail. To purchase the binder and/or the online guide, visit [www.finderbinderaz.com](http://www.finderbinderaz.com) or call (480) 967-8714.
- **The North American Travel Journalists Association (NATJA)** was formed in 1991 and is the American affiliate for the World Federation of Travel Writers and Journalists headquartered in Belgium, with affiliate organizations in 43 countries. Their membership requirements are not as stringent as the Society of American Travel Writers, but associate memberships are available. For more information: 310-836-8712 or [www.natja.org](http://www.natja.org).
- **Cision** is one of the most comprehensive media guides for national print and broadcast media. Cision offers its media guides in several formats, with the least expensive option being the print directories. The downside to the print directories is that much of the information becomes outdated before a new directory is printed. Cision also offers an online media database that is updated daily and allows the user to create specialized and targeted media lists. For more information, visit [www.bacons.com](http://www.bacons.com).
- **Divide the media list into groups.** Not every writer will want to receive every piece of information an organization distributes. For instance, not all publications cover events, so it is only necessary to send events announcements to those publications that will potentially cover it. Don't waste their time (or yours) with items they do not cover.
- **Keep the list updated.** In media relations, there is no tool more valuable than an accurate media list. Set aside some time every few months to place phone calls to make sure the list includes the correct editors, writers, and contact information.

## 2. Press releases

The press release is the most basic and widely used public relations technique. Press releases come in many forms, but no matter the message, make sure it has a “news angle.” A press release without news value will likely be dismissed or ignored. Travel writers need press releases, but make sure to give them information they need. They are inundated with releases from all over the world, so you have to make sure your release does not get lost in the shuffle.

The following are different types of press releases:

- **Standard Release:** This release follows the “journalism pyramid” of trying to get as much information in the first sentence and paragraph, with more detailed information following. The first paragraph should answer: Who, what, where, why, when, and how. The following paragraphs will fill in the details. When writing a standard release, assume that the journalist might only read the first few paragraphs, so anything that is at the bottom of the release should be of less importance in case it is never read. See SAMPLE A (page 33) for an example of a standard release.
- **Feature Release:** This release opens with a “grabber” – an attention-getting sentence designed to “hook” the reader into being interested in the rest of the story. The success or failure of the release depends on the first “hook” sentence, which must create questions and interest in the reader’s mind. All the same questions, “who, what, where, why, when, and how,” must still be answered in the release. See SAMPLE B (page 34) for an example of a feature release.
- **Media Advisory:** This release dispenses with any type of narrative and just presents the facts as cleanly as possible. This release is generally employed when announcing a press conference or some type of event. A media advisory is most useful when attempting to present information to broadcast media in a clear and concise manner. Usually, the release consists of a left column that has simply, “Who, What, Where, Why, and When,” with a brief paragraph for each category giving the facts. In addition to the above categories, you might also include “Photo Opportunities,” “Visuals” and “Interviews.” The entire point of this release is to provide detailed information about a complicated event in as simple a manner as possible. You want the media to attend this event, so include all the information you can to entice them, including who will be there that they can interview, what type of photos or video they will be able to get, etc. See SAMPLE C (page 35) for an example of a media advisory.
- **Backgrounder Release:** This release also dispenses with a flowing narrative and simply presents the facts in categories. It is designed to make it easy for the journalist to find simple facts without having to read and reread through a long release. Frequently, a feature release will be accompanied by a “backgrounder” release so that the feature hooks the reporter’s interest and the backgrounder makes it easy for him or her to write his story by presenting all the facts in a quick reference. The type of facts on this release might include: name of company, when founded, how much business is done, type of business done, how large the business is, why there is a news story, who works there, description of the business, etc.

The following items **MUST** be included on every press release:

1. The date on which the story was prepared.
2. A contact name for the media to receive more information.
3. A phone number for the general public to call, an E-mail and a physical address for more information.
4. All pages must be numbered and a marker (either -30- or ###) must indicate when the release ends. All pages should have the title of the release and the page number in the upper right hand corner because pages sometimes get separated.

Generating ideas for and writing press releases:

At the beginning of each calendar or fiscal year, create a press release schedule. Brainstorm about possible release topics that are appropriate for your tourism product– holiday values, fall colors, summer festivals, Tribal events, etc. Keep in mind that many magazines work at least three months in advance, so releases must be sent out in a timely manner.

Here are some additional ways to generate interesting story angles:

- **A Local Twist on National Events:** Tying into holidays and national observances is a great way to promote local attractions. For instance, if National Family Week is in May, create a roundup of special events and attractions in your community related to families.
- **Editorial Calendars:** When compiling the media list, be sure to ask the publications for their editorial calendars, which are outlines of the major stories and features planned in the upcoming year. If your product fits into a certain story they have planned, draft a press release and send it to the publication in a timely manner, keeping their deadlines in mind. Knowing the publication's editorial plans enhances the chances of being included in the story.
- **Numbers:** One of the easiest ways to grab an editor or producer's attention is to have a "Top 10" or "10 Ways to..." release. This gives the editor or producer a broad look at an organization, all neatly presented on one piece of paper.
- **Brag:** If your organization receives an award or an accolade, don't be afraid to toot your own horn. Writing a press release about a special recognition keeps your organization 'top of mind' for residents, visitors and decision-makers.
- **Write the Release for the Publication or News Station:** This tactic is particularly successful with the broadcast media. Write a media advisory that essentially outlines the segment as it should appear on the news station. Creating a visual image of how the segment will run for the producer decreases the amount of research he or she has to do, and also increases the chances the pitch will get picked up.
- Always think about how something can be turned into a press release. Don't stretch it to write about something that is not newsworthy, but be on the lookout for potential releases. Awards, new hires and interesting programs are all examples of good subjects for press releases.
- Make the lead (first sentence) direct and to the point. Editors often make judgments about the value of the release within the first two sentences. Make them want to keep reading.
- Use short sentences and paragraphs and keep everything brief and to the point. Don't try to show off vocabulary; use common language.
- Write the release assuming the reader has no prior knowledge of the topic.
- Make all quotes conversational. If you write how you would talk, the release will be much easier to read.
- Use the phrase "For Immediate Release," indicating that the editor can publish it immediately, or whenever they wish.
- Delay sending the release out if it cannot be published as soon as it is received.
- Double-check everything for accuracy. Check phone numbers, addresses, times -- it can be disastrous when incorrect information is published. Assume that editors will publish the release as written and not take the time to fact-check.
- Limit the release to two pages – it is possible to say everything in plenty of detail in less than two pages.
- Follow the Associated Press style of writing news releases. The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual is available at many bookstores and Web sites ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)), and is a great investment if you plan to write press releases.

### 3. Contacting the Media

From sending a press release or press kit to placing a phone call or asking for a personal meeting, there are a variety of ways to contact travel writers. There are no rules for what is the best approach, but here are some guidelines:

#### Sending a Press Release

- It is generally acceptable to E-mail a press release, unless the writer has specifically indicated that he or she prefers not to receive correspondence electronically – which is increasingly rare. Always paste the text of the release in the body of the E-mail – NEVER send it as an attachment. Freelance writers often work on their home computers and will not open attachments for fear of receiving a virus.

- Indicate that images are available upon request as opposed to sending them as attachments.
- If you are mailing the release, take the time to find the correct name of the travel editor, rather than just to the title, "Travel Editor." Almost all travel editors report that they divide their mail into two categories: those addressed to them personally, and those addressed to "travel editor." Obviously, they are more likely to pay attention to a release that is addressed to them personally. On the other hand, if the correct name is not available, it is safer to address it to "Travel Editor" as opposed to the wrong contact.
- Some travel writers appreciate a personal note and will be more receptive to a release if accompanied by a note or letter. This is particularly effective when suggesting a department in the publication where the information is relevant. This shows you did your homework and are familiar with the publication, thereby giving you credibility.
  - In most cases, do not fax the release to travel editors. It ties up their fax lines and runs the risk of it never getting delivered to the correct person. Unless the writer is on deadline and E-mail is not an option, it is best to mail the release.
  - Be mindful of deadlines. Newspapers work one to two months ahead of time and magazines work six to nine months ahead of time. If you are preparing a release for summer, have the materials ready before March or April to make many of the magazine sections. This is when a press release schedule comes in handy.

### **Sending Press Kits**

- Don't blindly send out press kits – it is a waste of time and money to send them unsolicited. If you have a new product, it is acceptable to send press kits to very targeted media that will definitely be interested in your business.
- Send a personal cover letter with the press kit, highlighting the story ideas that might be appropriate for that particular publication. In addition, provide a brief summary of the contents of the kit.
- Post the contents of the press kit online to cut down on costs.

### **Phoning Travel Writers**

- Always ask the writer if now is a good time or if you should call back later. Travel writers are busy and you never want to launch into a pitch when they are on deadline.
- Never ask if they have received your release, if they are going to run your release, if they have already run a release or if they will send a copy of the printed release. It is your job to monitor the publications, and you will put your reputation on the line by calling a publication asking these questions.
- Don't call writers by their first names, giving the perception that you know them. Start with your name and organization and ask for a moment of their time.
- If you have a hard news story that is so current a press release won't work, it is acceptable to phone a travel writer. It helps to almost write yourself a "script" to work off of so you remember everything and don't get sidetracked.
- It is acceptable to phone a travel writer to follow up on a press trip invitation. This gives the writer the opportunity to ask specific questions, so be prepared to answer them.
- Pitch one story at a time. Don't call a travel writer with a list of things to pitch. Be focused and concise and you will be more successful.

### **The Personal Call**

- Never "drop in" on a travel editor. Have the courtesy to call ahead and schedule an appointment.
- When scheduling an appointment, make sure you have news to share that cannot be relayed through a press release or phone call. There has to be a very distinctive reason to meet the editor in person.
- One-on-one appointments are a great way to get to know travel editors, but first impressions are everything. Be organized and maximize the short amount of time you will have in front of them.

#### **4. Press Kits**

A press kit is simply a collection of press releases and photography, put together in one neat shell. Its primary purpose is to break up your story into a series of short releases all detailing just one aspect of the community or destination, rather than having one long release that covers everything.

A good press kit should be timeless. The information can be changed and updated for accuracy, but the core of the press kit should really be basic information that does not change. Great amounts of money are spent on press kit design and printing, but some people use just a common plain-color shell. A great cost-saving way to make a press kit is to have stickers printed with your logo and place them on the front of a sturdy, high-quality folder.

Most travel writers state that more money is wasted on press kits and press kit shells than on any other aspect of the business. They complain about the weight, the waste of paper and the waste of money. This is further proof that simple is better when it comes to press kits. The content of the press kit is far more useful than the packaging.

##### **Tips for a successful press kit:**

- Include backgrounder releases that are updated and accurate.
- Include current and seasonal press releases, all with clear headlines so it is clear what type of information is in each release.
- Attach the business card of the primary contact.
- If budget permits, include photographs or slides. Spending money on photography is much more effective than spending money on fancy press kit shells.
- Make good reproductions of previous articles written about the organization – this validates what you are trying to tell the writer.
- Include some background brochures, but keep in mind that press materials are much more important than a marketing piece.

#### **5. Photography**

It is becoming more and more of a visual world, and today a press release is not enough to obtain good publicity for your business. Top quality, professional photographs can earn more publicity in better publications than any other single technique. A picture is worth a thousand words and it can also be worth thousands of dollars in publicity.

Professional photographs are not easy or inexpensive to shoot. If budget permits, hire a professional photographer and the cost can be paid back very quickly in publicity. Additional options are to use the services of a photography student or hobbyist who might be willing to offer photography services in exchange for the cost of supplies, the experience and a chance to get a published photo credit. Once a good original photo exists, it will make the cost of duplication much more worthwhile. When hiring a photographer, try to purchase all rights or all personal use rights to the photos. At any rate, be sure to understand the rights you are buying from the photographer so that this is not an issue at a later date.

##### **Color Photographs:**

- Only send photos via E-mail if they are specifically requested.
- The vast majority of publications accept digital photography. Any image that is E-mailed to a publication should have a resolution of at least 300 dpi (dots per inch). Anything less than 300 dpi is not suitable for most publications.
- Download digital images onto a CD-rom, creating a photo CD. This keeps all of your images in a central location and it is simple to “burn” a copy when the media is requesting images.
- Most publications also accept color slides or color transparencies. Transparencies are the same as slides, only larger, coming in sizes of two inch squares or 4x5 inches. They are the best because they provide better quality for reproduction, but slides generally work fine. Some publications can use color prints, but most still prefer slides.
- Original slides (that is, the slide which consists of the film that was actually in the camera) will reproduce the best of all, and for your own printing you should always use the original, if possible. However, never supply originals to a publication, as they are frequently lost or damaged and an original slide is irreplaceable.
- Make duplicates of the original slide at a quality custom photo processing shop. Be sure to make duplicates from an original to maintain the quality of the slide.

- Always label a slide with the name of the business, phone number, and description – write it directly on the slide mount. This prevents the slide from getting lost in the shuffle and becoming unidentifiable.
- Good duplicates are expensive, so it is not necessary to send slides with every release. Just put at the top of the release and again at the end, “Images available upon request.”

## **6. Video/B-roll:**

An increasing amount of consumers are receiving travel information from video, thanks to cable television. In addition to the Travel Channel, there are travel programs on TNN, CNN, Discovery and other networks. There are syndicated travel shows picked up by local news stations on all four major networks. The Phoenix and Tucson affiliates of the major networks also use destination videos for a variety of reasons. Many independent travel videos are being produced for travel agents, meeting planners, group tour planners and motor coach operators. Although some organizations might want to create a complete video of their business for other marketing needs, usually the broadcast media is looking for generic footage. Here are some tips:

- News and video crews always use 3/4 inch video or broadcast quality beta (b-roll). If the video needs to be used internationally, it will have to be converted to PAL format.
- The most practical video to have for publicity purposes would be:
  - Generic shots with pans in and out, sweeps and steady shots showing action, people, excitement.
  - Offer as many variations as possible: start in and pull out. Start out and zoom in. Pan left. Pan right. This gives the editor or producer the most possible choices and several shots to choose from.
  - Obtain all rights to the video so that it can be used for any purpose.
- Never give 2 1/4 inch or VHS video. It cannot be used and edited for broadcast purposes.
- Take advantage of film crews who are visiting your community, and see if it would be possible to use any of the leftover footage.
- The Arizona Office of Tourism has scenic b-roll of the entire state. If you receive a request for video footage and are unable to provide what they need, AOT's Trade and Media Relations Division can assist. For more contact the Trade and Media Relations Coordinator at 602.364.3725.

## **7. Online Press Rooms**

A well-designed and informative online press room is as useful to an organization as its consumer Web site. A press room is available to the media 24 hours a day, seven days a week, while the average media relations representative is only in the office eight hours a day. This resource also saves the media a great deal of time and energy, as most writers are more inclined to go to their computer instead of their telephone.

A press room can simply be an extension of an organization's consumer Web site. This keeps the branding consistent and provides writers with a comprehensive look at a company.

### **Here are some tips for creating a Press Room:**

- Try to find a company that can design a press room with a simple back end function. This gives the organization the power to change and update information with the click of a mouse. It is time consuming and expensive to have to call the Web site designer each time a change needs to be made.
- Make contact information easy to find. Sometimes all a writer is looking for is a phone number – be sure he doesn't have to dig too far.
- If an online image bank is included on the site, have the images available at high resolution. Low resolution images are of no use to the print media.
- Include contact information for other public relations professionals in your area. A press room is much more useful to the media when it is a broad resource, rather than just a snapshot of a particular company.
- Keep the information updated and timely. Archive old information and keep the home page fresh with new information.
- Date your press releases so the writer knows how current the information is and if it is still appropriate for a story.
- If you require the media to sign in to view your press room, make it a very simple process and a task they only have to do one time.
- Download the contents of a press kit onto the press room to save on printing and shipping costs.

## 8. Press Trips

Press trips, often referred to as media tours or FAM (familiarization) tours, are one of the most difficult and rewarding aspects of tourism media relations. Press trips fall into a variety of categories. The two that are most frequently encountered in the tourism industry are:

1. An organization sponsors the entire itinerary from beginning to end and oversees every aspect of the trip; or
2. An organization participates in a trip sponsored by someone else, and the organization is solely responsible for planning its part. The most successful press trips are usually about five days long and include no more than eight writers.

The single most important thing to remember when planning a press trip is that no writer can guarantee coverage of any kind. It is imperative that the hosts and everyone involved know that by offering complimentary services to the group, it does not guarantee they will receive coverage. Of course, that is the goal, but it is best that all participants in a press trip understand each other upfront. Some publications will give a writer a specific assignment, which essentially guarantees the story will be printed. Other times, a writer will participate in a press trip “on spec,” meaning that they will attempt to sell the story to a variety of publications, but have no firm assignment. This does not mean the writer should not be accepted for the press trip, but the destination should ensure the writer has a history of producing articles in quality publications.

Organizing a press trip from the ground up is a large financial and organizational undertaking. The media generally expect to incur very few costs on a press trip, which means that services need to be provided on a complimentary basis or paid for by the host. If the trip is not smoothly organized, organizations run the risk of actually generating negative publicity or stories that are not overly flattering to their business. If successful, however, a press trip can generate space in publications which might cost hundreds of thousands of dollars if purchased as advertising space. A press trip is the best way to secure large feature stories, and it helps develop and foster relationships with travel writers you might not have been able to meet otherwise.

The optimal press trip situation is to tie in with a trip being organized by someone else. This will save a lot of time and money and usually makes more sense. Large tourism organizations like the Arizona Office of Tourism regularly sponsor press trips and are looking for businesses willing to participate. Log on to [arizonaguide.com/pressroom](http://arizonaguide.com/pressroom) for a copy of the trips planned in the upcoming year.

Whether you are organizing your own press trip or developing a portion of an itinerary for a press trip organized by someone else, here are some tips:

### **Before the Trip:**

- If the business or community is too small to be the subject of its own press trip, partner with other tourism-related businesses in the area to give an overview of the community and make it a more well-rounded press trip.
- Develop a theme. Think about what the area is known for and develop a press trip around that. For instance, if an area has several vineyards, develop a food and wine press trip, highlighting the cuisine and wine of the area.
- Establish a budget from the beginning so you know what you have to work with. Most travel writers assume that all meals, housing, transportation and entertainment will be paid for by the hosting organization. If there is no budget for this, indicate in the itinerary what items will be the responsibility of the travel writer. Work up a price for the trip if the travel writer must pay for it.
- Send out invitations at least three months in advance. Include a basic itinerary so the writer knows what to expect. Spell out exactly what will be included for free and what will be the writer’s responsibility. Some newspaper writers are not allowed to accept free trips, so include a price for the trip in those instances. It is important to know who cannot accept these trips and send the pricing information only to them.
- Make the invitation as clever as possible to make it stand out from other invitations. But don’t waste time and money on anything too intricate. A well-worded E-mail invitation can be just as effective.

- Know how many writers can be accommodated. It is necessary to invite many more than can be accepted, but if there is only room for three writers, don't invite 300 on the first go-round. It is never a good idea to turn down a writer who received a personal invitation. Six to eight writers is an ideal number for a press trip.
- Research everyone on the invite list. If a writer just covers cruises, he or she obviously would not be a good fit for an Arizona press trip.
- Be sure to let writers know what type of clothes will be needed for the trip (formal, business, warm, cool, etc.), and let them know any other important information (strenuous activities, special packing instructions, etc.)
- Find out as much as possible about the writers beforehand to avoid awkward situations on the trip. It is easiest to have the writers fill out a standard form that asks if they have any allergies, physical limitations, etc. The form should also ask the writers to designate an emergency contact person.
- Adopt a policy on spouses beforehand, in preparation of answering the question when it inevitably arises. Most press trips do not allow writers to bring spouses. However, writers frequently ask if a spouse can attend. Many couples say they work as a team with the spouse acting as a photographer. Some writers will bring dates, claiming they are photographers. This is a difficult call which can only be done on a case-by-case basis. Many times, couples do work as a team and you benefit by having two writers sharing one room.
- If the itinerary changes drastically, inform the writers immediately. They may have already sold one aspect of a trip to a certain publication, and it will affect their willingness to join the trip if that aspect is no longer included. Provide the writers with contact information for all of the hotels ahead of time so they may give their co-workers and families phone and fax numbers.
- Do a run-through of the itinerary to make sure there is enough time for transportation, parking, traffic, etc.
- Check and double-check with key contacts all the details of the trip, so that all those involved know what is expected of them at what time. Bring these phone numbers with you on the road in case of unexpected schedule changes. Carry a cellular phone and have a back-up phone if possible.
- Make a master list of the schedule and a contact list of everyone who is helping to organize the trip. Everyone involved should have an itinerary and a list of the participating writers. The host's copy of the schedule should include detailed directions to every stop on the press trip.
- Communicate with all of the hosts ahead of time. Let them know exactly how much time they will have with the writers and what is expected during that time. Tell them to prepare press kits, image CDs, rate cards, menus, etc. so they are not scrambling to retrieve these items while they could be talking to the writers. Don't load them down with press kits – offer to mail these to them afterwards instead.
- Expect the unexpected. Plan on the people you are counting on to let you down. If you are prepared for the worst, you will be able to react much more effectively. Quite often, press trips run smoothly, but never assume that things will go as planned.

#### **During the Trip:**

- Allow free time in the schedule. Most people want to cram as much as possible into each day, but that will only result in cranky travel writers. Give writers at least one - two hours a day before the evening meal to freshen up and collect their thoughts.
- Don't schedule many activities for the first day. Flights are delayed, luggage gets lost, people fail to make connections, etc., all delaying the arrival time of the travel writer. The best option for the first day is to offer free time after you get the writers checked into the hotel, with activities beginning that evening at a cocktail reception, bringing the group together for the first time.
- Greet the writers at the airport, or have a reliable form of transportation from the airport to the first destination.
- When the writers arrive, immediately give them a detailed itinerary. The itinerary should spell out: what time they have to be at each event, where they should meet the group, what type of clothes they should wear, what will happen at each event, and when they will be back. Make plenty of copies of the itinerary because someone will inevitably lose his/her copy.\

- Pre-register each writer at the hotel to promote easy check-in. Even with a complimentary room, most hotels will require a credit card for incidentals. Be sure to communicate the need for a credit card to the writers before they arrive.
- Although it is tempting, do not create anything for the travel writers that would not be available to the general public. If a traveler can't do it, they can't write about it. For instance, don't cook a special meal for the writers unless the general public is able to purchase the same meal. An exception to the rule would be when an attraction is only open on the weekend, but the writers are there on a Wednesday. If that attraction is willing to open just for them on a Wednesday that is perfectly fine so long as the writers know it is normally just available on the weekend. Box lunches are a great time-saving technique, especially during long driving distances.
- Don't waste their time. While everyone in your community may be interested in meeting the writers, this is not a good use of time. Offer to send your boss or city council representative or anyone else who wants to spend time with the writers a detailed recap of everything that occurred.
- Don't tell writers about your product – SHOW THEM! Many hosts will sit writers in a room and show them a video or give them a speech about their museum instead of showing it to them. Writers have very short attention spans and will only tolerate this for so long. Explain the organization to them as they walk around it, and allow them free time to explore on their own.
- Make sure to have the best guide available on the day of the tour. While everyone appreciates volunteers, it is imperative that there is someone available who is able to answer the tough questions the writers will pose.
- Don't forget gratuities. A restaurant might provide a free meal for a group of travel writers, but the staff still needs to be tipped. Arrange these details beforehand so there are no awkward moments in front of the writers. Travel writers generally will not leave a gratuity.
- Psychology plays an important role in press trips. Usually the writers and hosts will all be meeting each other for the first time and will be spending a considerable amount of time together in tight circumstances. This can lead to many new friendships. It can also lead to nightmares when groups simply don't "gel," resulting in what is referred to as "the press trip from Hell."
- It is the organizer's responsibility to be the ultimate host. If two writers do not get along, try to keep them separated as much as possible. Circulate the room and talk to everyone. Hosts will undoubtedly have a few favorites, but it is their job to make sure all of the writers receive attention.
- Don't bend over backwards to pamper the writers. Their biggest concern is time and getting the most accomplished in the least amount of time. Pampering the writers with needless things they cannot write about is a waste of time. Make an effort to stick to the schedule; this will make it much easier on everyone involved. But flexibility is also important. If there are real problems with a schedule and everyone hates it, don't stick to it just because there is an obligation to adhere to the schedule. Be prepared to change it by having contact numbers easily accessible. If certain writers are particularly interested in staying at a certain attraction, offer a time in the schedule when they can return on their own.
- Trust the writers. They know how they work and what they have to do to produce an article. If they want to skip certain parts of the trip, let them. If a writer does not want to accompany the group to some scheduled activity, that is fine. But don't let the writer order you to create an alternative activity for him or her alone. Writers accept a trip knowing what the schedule is. Try to be helpful, but be firm if problems arise.
- Have cash on hand for entry fees, parking charges, tips, etc. Ask for receipts or keep a log book to record tips, time and date so it is easier to be reimbursed.
- Writers will get inundated with press kits, information and gifts on a media tour. Think ahead and bring boxes to ship the information back to them. This way, they won't feel compelled to throw it away because they don't have room. Encourage the hosts to offer to mail press kits directly to the writers.
- Keep track of the writers. Hosting a press trip is amazingly similar to babysitting. Count heads every time they return to the van to ensure that no one gets left behind.

- Include food and beverage provisions in the van – this will prevent you from having to make unnecessary stops. It is a nice gesture to offer the writers individual gifts, but it is not necessary. If you choose to offer a gift, make sure it can be used on the trip and does not take up too much space.
- Don't trust your memory. If a writer requests something, get one of his/her business cards and write the request on the back of the card immediately.

### **After the Trip:**

- Immediately send any press kits, releases, brochures, or photos that the writers have asked for or asked you to mail. They should receive these materials as soon as possible.
- Develop a feedback form for the writers to complete. This will encourage the writers to give constructive criticism so you can learn what works and what doesn't work for future press trips. Please see SAMPLE D, (page 36) for an example of AOT's Press Trip Assessment Form.
- Send a handwritten thank you note to each writer on the trip. It is extremely practical to include this with a press kit after the trip so the writer does not have to tote the kit around for the entire media tour.
- Wait a few weeks, and then begin sending them regular press releases to remind them of your destination.
- Don't call every two weeks to see if they have written anything yet. If you have not heard back from them in six months, it is acceptable to call to see if there is anything you can do to help them with their article. This will usually lead to them saying that it has already come out and they didn't send clips, or it will be coming out soon, etc. If they don't indicate anything, it is okay to ask when it will be coming out, but it is not a good approach to call demanding to know when the story is coming out.
- If the months continue to go by and no article appears, continue to call until it becomes awkward and obvious that writer is not going to produce a story. At this point, the best constructive thing to do is find out why. Was there a problem with the trip, did the destination not meet expectations or was there some other difficulty? Learn from experience and be cautious when working with that writer again.

### **Troubleshooting**

Anything and everything can go wrong on a press trip. It is impossible to anticipate everything that could possibly happen, but here is a list of potential problems and how to react:

- The most common problem is delayed or missed flights. This can complicate things right off the bat, especially if you have a tight schedule. **HOW TO AVOID PROBLEMS:** Plan a relaxed schedule for the first day, have extra volunteers ready to work late and pick up writers no matter when they arrive.
- Lost luggage can be a problem, especially if the group is moving from location to location. **HOW TO AVOID PROBLEMS:** Make sure that the person greeting the writer at the airport has the complete itinerary with all stops and contacts. This way, information can be given to the airline letting them send the luggage to the proper destination once it arrives.
- It doesn't happen often, but sometimes a writer will bring along a spouse, brother, sister or friend who is not expected. They will say something like, "Oh, don't worry, they'll pay their own way." This causes many problems. In a quiet moment after he/she is checked into the hotel, sit the writer down alone, explain that you had not expected them to bring a guest, and spell out exactly what the costs will be. It is a difficult situation because you don't want to antagonize the writer. Each situation will be unique, but the best solution to avoid this in the future is to report the writer to all other public relations professionals you know. This type of behavior is not acceptable, but it does happen.
- Cars and motor coaches do break down, but it can be awful when it involves a load of travel writers. The only way to avoid this is to have mobile phones and another car following the motor coach. If a car does break down, get the writers off the road and to a restaurant, town or unscheduled story opportunity as soon as possible. Waiting on a highway is dead time and writers will get impatient very fast. Quickly decide what to do, but don't feel obligated to stick with the schedule. If the writers are saved from two hours of wasted time, they will be grateful. There is no greater sin to commit on a press trip than wasting the writer's time.

- Illness and emergencies are a problem when people travel. People of all ages get sick when experiencing different foods, water, etc. Be flexible. Know beforehand the names of medical clinics that can take patients without an appointment. Never make a writer feel guilty about missing part of a tour if he or she is tired or not feeling well. If a writer has an emergency at home and needs to return immediately, be prepared to help him or her get home. Worry about sorting out the financial details later.
- Some writers consume large amounts of alcohol. It is the host's responsibility to monitor these activities and stop them if it is becoming annoying to the group. Every individual should be free to do what he/she wants; but if someone's drinking is bothering the rest of the group and interfering with the group's ability to gather story material, the host must step in and take action. Other frequent complaints include cigarette smoking, pipe smoking, and cigars. If someone's smoking is bothering other writers, the host should ask him or her to stop. Learn from experience and be cautious when working with that writer again.
- Writers sometimes get into disputes with hotels. Things are stolen, their rooms are not cleaned, there is a mistake on the bill, etc. In every case, the host should become the intermediary. Tell the writers at the start of the trip that if they have any complaints about any part of the trip, they should bring them to you rather than going to the host of the business.

## **9. Working with the Arizona Office of Tourism and Your Local CVB**

The Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT) and your local CVB offer many valuable media relations tools that are available to tourism businesses around the state. First and foremost, introduce yourself and make it known that you are willing to work with these agencies. Make sure both of these agencies are on your mailing list to receive press releases and press kits so they can be up-to-date on your latest happenings.

### **There are also a variety of ways to become involved with AOT:**

**What's New:** AOT keeps ongoing documentation of what is new in Arizona. This document is often used in lieu of a press kit at trade shows and on media missions. It is much easier to transport and contains the information journalists need to know. AOT collects this information from press releases and E-mails, so make sure to include the Media Relations Division on media contact lists.

**Calendar of Events:** AOT has a statewide master Calendar of Events posted on [www.arizonaguide.com](http://www.arizonaguide.com), and is used to provide information to media requesting events information. Direct all event information to the calendar of events contact the Public Relations Manager at 602.364.3695.

**ArizonaVacationValues.com:** AOT created this consumer Web site for tourism businesses from Arizona to post deals that can be accessed by potential Arizona visitors. It is extremely easy to post an offer and this site generates a great deal of traffic each day. In addition, several of AOT's advertising and media relations efforts guide traffic to the site. Visit [www.ArizonaVacationValues.com](http://www.ArizonaVacationValues.com) for more information.

**Press Trips:** AOT sponsors approximately four press trips each year, which attract six to eight top travel writers each. AOT has a commitment to visit each of the regions in Arizona every two years, so chances are a press trip is coming to your area soon. Visit pressroom section of [www.arizonaguide.com](http://www.arizonaguide.com) for a list of press trips and contact the Media Relations Manager if you are interested in participating at 602.364.3698.

## **Putting it All Together**

Now that you have all of the elements, how do you put it all together and make it happen? The following five steps to professional public relations are a good starting point:

### **Step 1: Know Your Product**

The most important thing in practicing public relations is to know your product. Read everything about the business you are trying to promote. Tour every section of it, trying to see it as outsiders or visitors will see it. Talk to employees in the business and learn what they do and how they do it.

Memorize many facts and details about your business, and develop a list of contacts who can quickly answer any questions that you can not. The most valuable service to writers is the ability to help them generate story ideas and answer questions. To do this, you must know your business well.

## **Step 2: Take a Broad View of Your Business**

In most cases, a business will not be big enough to warrant an article on its own. Combine your business with other elements to create a story. This requires knowing your industry as well as your business.

If the product is a restaurant, know the competitors and the trends taking place in food service. A hotel or resort should know everything about the entire destination including arts, history, attractions, shop-ping, entertainment and food. An attraction must know similar attractions in the area and across the country. Writers are looking for sources of information. The more you know about an entire subject, the more you can help the writer and generate press.

## **Step 3: Find or Create “News” About Your Product**

Writers are looking for news. This is the basis of every publication. Even history magazines are looking for “new” interpretations of old stories.

In order to get publicity, generate “news” about your product; just existing is not enough. There is always a fresh way to look at anything; find it...or create it by establishing packages and sales promotions around your business. Without a “news” hook, it is difficult if not impossible to get publicity.

## **Step 4: Know the Publication You Are Pitching**

Knowing your product is important, but it is just as important to know the publication you are trying to get into.

Know the types of articles and news they print, the type of columns they have, who writes them, what sections of the country they cover, and – most importantly– who reads the publication.

It is difficult to do this for each of the thousands of publications that exist; but the more you know about a publication, the easier it will be to get a placement in it. Blanket mailing the same press release to a thousand different publications will not be as successful as targeting publications, learning about them and targeting releases to them.

## **Step 5: Pitch Your News to Publications in a Professional Way**

This manual has detailed dozens of tips on how to prepare news via professional news releases, how to prepare professional photographs and video, how to present them to travel writers, how to organize press trips, how to work with writers during the trip, and how to do follow-up.

Each writer is different, but these guidelines give a general overall viewpoint on how to project yourself and your news in a professional manner. If you adhere to these guidelines, you will be respected by travel writers as a professional public relations person, and the news stories you pitch will have a much greater chance of success.

## **Lastly, When In Doubt, Call Your Local DMO for Assistance**

A local DMO is an incredible resource dedicated to promoting tourism in your area. Make yourself known to them, and reap the benefits of having a great working relationship with your local DMO.

## Press Release Samples

### **SAMPLE A – STANDARD RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE July 9, 2008**

Contact: Tina Miller, Director of Communications and Community Development  
602.364.3697, [tmiller@azot.gov](mailto:tmiller@azot.gov)

Kiva Couchon, Communications Manager  
602.364.3724, [kcouchon@azot.gov](mailto:kcouchon@azot.gov)

#### **Governor Napolitano Announces \$1.1 Million in Tourism Matching Grants**

PHOENIX (July 9, 2008) — Governor Janet Napolitano announced today that the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT) is awarding \$1.1 million in matching grants to tourism organizations and tribal entities across the state for fiscal year 2009.

AOT Director Margie A. Emmermann joined Governor Napolitano in recognizing the recipients of AOT's Teamwork for Effective Arizona Marketing (TEAM) grants, a program that enables communities and organizations throughout Arizona to promote their tourism offerings. TEAM grants fund advertising, public relations campaigns, research, strategic planning and other tourism-related marketing.

The grants are awarded to communities, regional tourism partnerships, tribal entities and statewide associations that meet the program requirements and are able to match the requested funds. Fifty communities, including seven Native American organizations, will receive grant awards, which range from \$899 to \$87,437.

"Every county in Arizona benefits from the travel and tourism industry," said Governor Napolitano. "The TEAM grants are a direct investment into our communities and contribute to the economic vitality of the entire state."

Previously, all applicants were required to attend one of the annual TEAM workshops held statewide by AOT to gain eligibility. This year, a new program feature was introduced allowing the 2008 grant cycle applicants who had previously attended a workshop to become certified via an online exam. In future years, AOT will offer both the online certification as well as the in person workshops to accommodate the needs of all applicants.

The workshops educate the participants on developing a marketing plan with measurable results and writing an effective grant application. AOT also encourages organizations to create regional partnerships, making them eligible for more TEAM grant funding.

Attached are the list of recipients and a map of awards by county for fiscal year 2009. For more information on TEAM and other grants, please visit the Grants section of [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov).

Created as an executive agency in 1975, the Arizona Office of Tourism is charged with enhancing the state economy and the quality of life for all Arizonans by expanding travel activity and increasing related revenues through tourism promotion and development. AOT works to serve the Grand Canyon State's travel industry and related businesses, the traveling public, and the taxpayers of Arizona.

**SAMPLE B – FEATURE RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Contact: Erica Rich, Media Relations Manager  
602.364.3698

**THIS HALLOWEEN, VISIT ARIZONA FOR A SCREAMING GOOD TIME**

**Phoenix, Ariz. (July 15, 2008)** – If you're looking to *really* be scared this Halloween, then put away those rented horror movies and throw away your tickets to the local school turned haunted house. Instead travel to a place where headless ghosts roam free, abandoned prisons remain almost untouched and ghost towns are alive with spirits. For a truly terrifying and frighteningly fun Halloween, come to Arizona where its "Wild West" history has made it a hotbed for ghostly activity.

**Haunted Hotels**

**The Gadsden Hotel, Douglas**

The Gadsden Hotel is home to a headless ghost who has been seen in the hallways and in the basement. Some believe it to be the ghost of Pancho Villa. The five-story hotel was built in 1907 and later burned, only to be rebuilt in 1929. In 1988, it was restored and it was at about this time that the ghost started showing up. Employees, staff members and guests alike have seen a rather startling apparition wearing old-fashioned, khaki army clothing and with a cloth cap perched on its headless shoulders. For more information, visit [www.hotelgadsden.com](http://www.hotelgadsden.com).

**The Monte Vista Hotel, Flagstaff**

The Monte Vista Hotel opened on New Year's Day of 1927 and during the 1940's and 1950's was a popular spot for Hollywood guests as more than 100 westerns were filmed nearby. Some guests included Bing Crosby, Jane Russell, Gary Cooper, Spencer Tracy and many others. One of the ghosts here is that of a phantom bellboy who knocks on doors and then vanishes. This annoying phantom has been experienced by dozens of guests over the years and he is joined by the ghost of a woman who has been seen outside of the Zane Grey suite and a man who endlessly paces in one of the rooms. He is often reported coughing and clearing his throat. Another ghost, a former bank robber, is said to haunt the saloon. For more information, visit [www.hotelmontevista.com](http://www.hotelmontevista.com).

**San Carlos Hotel, Phoenix**

The hotel was built in the 1920's on the site of the first elementary school in Phoenix. Some believe the place is so haunted because of a well that was dug for the school in 1874. This well tapped into a spring that had been considered sacred by the Native Americans for centuries. The well still operates in the hotel basement today. One resident spirit is believed to be that of Leone Jensen, who committed suicide at the hotel in 1928 by jumping off the roof of the seven-story building. She is encountered as a white, cloudy figure who is often accompanied by an eerie moaning noise. And she is not alone.... the noisy ghosts of three young boys have been reported running through the halls and the inexplicable sounds of children playing are sometimes heard coming from within empty rooms. For more information, visit [www.hotelsancarlos.com](http://www.hotelsancarlos.com).

**Eerie Prisons**

**Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park, Yuma**

The first seven inmates entered the Territorial prison at Yuma, Arizona on July 1, 1876. They were locked into cells that they had constructed with their own hands. In the coming 33 years, a total of 3,069 prisoners, including 29 women, lived in the prison. Their crimes ranged from murder to polygamy, with grand larceny being the most common. During that time, 111 of the prisoners died, mostly from tuberculosis, but even so, the stories say that some of them never left this place, even in death.

Remains of the prison include cells, an entrance gate and a guard tower. A museum at the park houses artifacts and interpretive displays of prison life a century ago. Park hours are 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily. Entrance fee is \$4 for visitors 14 or older. Those 13 or younger get in free. For more information, visit <http://www.pr.state.az.us/Parks/parkhtml/yuma.html>.

**Ghostly Towns**

**Williams**

Williams, coined by the International Ghost Hunters Society as "Arizona's Living Ghost Town," was founded in the late 1800's by ranchers, railroaders, and lumbermen. The town developed a reputation as a rough and rowdy frontier town by the turn of the century. Its saloons, brothels, opium dens and gambling houses

catered to the cowboy, logger, Chinese laborer and railroad worker seeking entertainment. Many of these businesses of vice and pleasure were restricted by ordinance to Railroad Avenue's 'Saloon Row.'

Visitors can take a tour of Saloon Row with host Dr. Suz aka "the Hearse Whisperer." The 90-minute Saloon Row Ghost Tour takes participants through William's historic downtown, which is full of paranormal tales from the Banshee of the Mountain, the East End Ghoul and tales of the soiled doves of Whiskey Row. Tour prices are \$20 for adults and \$10 for children, ages 2 – 12. Tours start at 8:00 p.m. For more information, visit [www.saloonrowghosttour.com](http://www.saloonrowghosttour.com) .

### **Bisbee**

Bisbee is thought to be one of the most haunted towns in southern Arizona. Founded in the late 1800's as a mining town, Bisbee has seen its share of mining accidents, barroom brawling gone bad, and tragedy in general. This has paved the way for a veritable cornucopia of hauntings, sightings, and other miscellaneous paranormal activity.

Visitors can take a walking tour of 125-year-old town. The 90-minute guided Old Bisbee Ghost Tour tells the stories of local haunts, including Nat the miner who owed money and paid with his life; and the lady in white, who saved three children's lives. Tour prices are \$12 for adults and \$7 for children younger than 12. Tours start at 7 p.m. Private tours are available upon request. For more information, please visit [www.oldbisbeeghosttour.com](http://www.oldbisbeeghosttour.com) .

To plan your haunting vacation, visit [www.arizonaguide.com](http://www.arizonaguide.com).

## **SAMPLE C – MEDIA ADVISORY**

Contact: Tina Lynn Miller, Director of Communications  
602.364.3697

Date: July 1, 2008

### **MEDIA ADVISORY**

- WHAT:** The 28th Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism
- WHEN:** Wed., July 9 – Fri., July 11, 2008. Please see attached for a daily agenda of conference activities.
- WHERE:** Grand Ballroom at the Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa  
3800 E. Sunrise Drive  
Tucson, AZ 85718
- WHO:** Hosted by the Arizona Office of Tourism, Arizona Tourism Alliance, Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association, and Arizona Restaurant & Hospitality Association, and attended by tourism industry leaders from throughout Arizona.
- WHY:** Tourism is one of Arizona's leading industries and generates \$19.3 billion dollars in direct visitor spending for the local Arizona economy, and the Governor's Conference on Tourism is the industry's largest annual event.
- Highlights:** Wednesday, July 9 at 6:30pm: AOT Director Margie Emmermann delivers the "State of the Industry" address, revealing industry accomplishments over the last year, 2007 Arizona visitation data.
- Thursday, July 10 at 11:45am: AOT Director Margie Emmermann presents the 2008 Governor's Tourism Awards for outstanding achievements in the industry

The agenda is attached or can be viewed at [www.aztourismconference.com](http://www.aztourismconference.com).

**SAMPLE D - PRESS TRIP EVALUATION**

Arizona Office of Tourism  
 Press Trip Evaluation

We are delighted to have had the opportunity to introduce you to the attractions and hospitality of Arizona - The Grand Canyon State. To ensure that we provide journalists, photographers and broadcasters the most positive and productive programs, we request that you take a moment to evaluate your experience and share your thoughts. It is only with your valued input that we can continue to provide the best possible experience for our friends in the media.

Please return this evaluation to the Arizona Office of Tourism media relations department: Director of Trade and Media Relations, 1110 W. Washington St. Ste 115, Phoenix, AZ 85007 or fax to (602) 364-3702. Thank you.

YOUR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/COUNTRY: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE(S) OF VISIT: \_\_\_\_\_

Please evaluate the following:

Lousy Terrific!

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Communication prior to visit              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Your travel to and from Arizona           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. The Arizona itinerary in general          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Accommodations                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Pace of your visit                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Any specific comments on the above areas? |   |   |   |   |   |

\_\_\_\_\_

Please rate the importance of the following items as they relate to a productive, high quality media tour:

- |   |   |   |            |   |           |
|---|---|---|------------|---|-----------|
|   |   |   | Don't need |   | Must have |
|   | 1 | 2 | 3          | 4 | 5         |
| 7. Group tours                          | 1 | 2 | 3          | 4 | 5         |
| 8. Individual guided tours              | 1 | 2 | 3          | 4 | 5         |
| 9. Individual self-guided tours         | 1 | 2 | 3          | 4 | 5         |
| 10. Detailed (hour-by-hour) itineraries | 1 | 2 | 3          | 4 | 5         |
| 11. Luxury accommodations               | 1 | 2 | 3          | 4 | 5         |
| 12. Hotel/resort site inspections       | 1 | 2 | 3          | 4 | 5         |
| 13. Group meal functions                | 1 | 2 | 3          | 4 | 5         |
| 14. Free time                           | 1 | 2 | 3          | 4 | 5         |
| 15. Use of an automobile                | 1 | 2 | 3          | 4 | 5         |
| 16. Stock photography available         | 1 | 2 | 3          | 4 | 5         |

17. Access to shopping 1 2 3 4 5
18. Access to cultural attractions/events 1 2 3 4 5
19. Hosted (complimentary) accommodations and/or meal functions 1 2 3 4 5
20. Multi-lingual press materials 1 2 3 4 5

21. What did you enjoy most about your experience?

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22. What was your least favorable Arizona experience?

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Please communicate any additional information that could enable us to improve our media tour pro-grams:

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## **IV. TRAVEL INDUSTRY MARKETING**

### **What is Travel Industry Marketing?**

AOT's Travel Industry Marketing division strives to increase Arizona's share in the tourism marketplace by assisting tour operators and travel agents in developing new and/or expanding existing tour and travel programs. The division also assists Arizona destination marketing organizations and tourism suppliers in their efforts to target the travel trade. Representatives from this division are available to discuss trade show and sales mission efforts, familiarization tours, collateral fulfillment, product inventories, lead reports, general industry terms (i.e. receptive vs. wholesale operator), partnering and product packaging, and international marketing and representation.

*Please Note: A complete FY09 Marketing Plan is posted on [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov) (under Programs, click on Trade Shows and Sales Missions, Trade and Media Relations). This Marketing Plan lists all scheduled activities and provides details on ways you can partner with the Arizona Office of Tourism to market to domestic and international travel trade representatives.*

### **Tradeshows**

Tradeshows are events/marketplaces that allow DMOs and suppliers to meet with buyers (operators or agents) in a set location to conduct business. Although sometimes expensive, the format, which often includes pre-scheduled appointments, is an efficient way to meet with top buyers in a short time period. Tradeshows can also include other networking opportunities and educational seminars. Partnership and booth share opportunities through AOT are occasionally available.

### **Sales Missions**

Sales Missions are pre-planned events for an Arizona delegation to call on tour operators/travel agents in the region in which they are located. Missions may be simple and cost-effective with the delegation going directly to the office of the buyer with information, or may be more complex and expensive with scheduled meal functions and entertainment.

### **Familiarization Tours/Site Inspections**

Familiarization tours/site inspections attract top travel trade professionals to experience Arizona, therefore making it easier for them to "sell" it. Hosting familiarization (FAM) tours and site inspections is still considered to be one of the most effective ways to educate buyers about a destination. A tour operator often requests FAM tours for their product managers or top-selling travel agents. Partnership opportunities with AOT, airlines, and other destinations are often requested through local CVBs and Chambers.

### **International In-Market Representation**

AOT contracts with in-market representatives in Germany, UK, Japan, Canada, and Mexico. Representatives act on behalf of AOT to assist the local travel trade, conduct many of the activities listed above, provide market updates, and produce product inventory reports detailing tour operator activity in Arizona. For complete contact information and market updates please visit [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov), (under Programs, click on International Marketing).

### **Publications & Trade Advertising**

The Travel Industry Marketing Division coordinates and/or sponsors select co-op advertising opportunities targeted toward the travel trade and international consumers. Examples of publications include:

- *Professional Travel Planner's Guide* – the primary fulfillment piece for the Trade and Media Relations Division, which is produced annually and distributed to travel agents, tour operators, and receptive operators
- *Canadian Traveller Annual Arizona Sales Guide* – an annual insert targeted to Canadian travel agents and typically distributed in the September issue of Canadian Traveller Magazine
- *Entdecken Sie Arizona* – targeted to German-speaking trade and consumers in Germany, Austria and Switzerland (produced bi-annually)

- *Guia de Vacances* – targeted to French-speaking trade and consumers in France and Quebec, Canada
- *West Magazine* – targeted to Japanese trade and consumers (produced annually)
- *Descubra Arizona* – targeted to Mexican trade and consumers

Additional co-op trade advertisements, which better leverage marketing dollars, are also available through AOT's Teamwork for Effective Arizona Marketing (TEAM) program.

### **Collateral Fulfillment**

Promptly fulfilling collateral requests for tour operators and travel agents is one of the division's top goals. AOT produces the following items to assist members of the travel trade in their marketing efforts:

- All publications listed above including the Professional Travel Planner's Guide
- Maps
- Images on CD-ROM
- Sample Theme Itineraries
- Videos
- Posters

### **Other Assistance**

The Trade and Media Relations Division of AOT is always available to answer questions and assist travel trade, Arizona destination marketing organizations and tourism suppliers.

## **Understanding the Industry Distribution System**

Marketing to the tour and travel industry can be done through direct or indirect marketing. It is possible to use both methods, but if you do, it is important to understand the differences between them.

First, understand there are several different levels or tiers of buyers and sellers (distribution system) within the travel industry. At the top are receptive operators who sell inbound tours wholesale to tour operators followed by tour operators or wholesalers who sell tours to travel agents, pre-formed groups and individual consumers. Next are travel agents or retailers who sell tours and other travel components to pre-formed groups and individual consumers, then group leaders who sell tours to their pre-formed groups, and finally individual consumers who can buy tour packages from all of the above.

Because profit margins have become so competitive, many lines overlap today, and you will often find both travel agents and tour operators handling the entire package themselves, from creating itineraries to selling the tours directly to the public.

Direct marketing is selling your service "direct" via toll-free numbers, advertising, direct mail, or Internet to individual consumers or pre-formed groups, which are usually comprised of members of associations or social clubs who enjoy traveling together.

Indirect marketing is selling your services through a distributor – a travel agent, tour operator or receptive operator. Your sale is to a "middleman" who must in turn successfully market and sell to the actual travelers in order for you to receive customers. Though seemingly more complex, this may actually be the easier option because it is more likely that you will be dealing with a professional who knows the business.

Understanding the basic characteristics of the various tour operator types and pre-formed groups will help you develop a targeted plan for attracting each.



with each culture having its own needs, interests and motivators. In general, international inbound itineraries are extensive sightseeing tours that cover a broadly defined region, highlighting key attractions and features within each destination they visit. To attract their business, you must show sensitivity to their travelers' needs for hospitality and security. Examples include providing foreign language brochures, signs, menus and multilingual staff. To begin, choose one or two foreign markets that you understand or that interest you.

### **Tour Operators (Wholesalers)**

Tour Operators may be tour and/or bus companies that offer scheduled tours, custom tours (also called pre-formed group tours), individual packages, charters or a combination of these.

Scheduled tour operators (e.g., Mayflower, Tauck, Globus) frequently offer tours with a number of departure dates (also called a series tour); therefore, getting a tour to stop at your establishment often means contracting for several tour dates. Seats are sold to individuals via a brochure or Web site, through the company's reservation desk and travel agents or group leaders.

Working with scheduled operators allows you to target a specific regional market where their company is based and their tours originate. The larger scheduled tour operators market nationwide, with passengers flying in to gather as a group and begin the tour at the destination area.

Scheduled operators plan well in advance and the tours they book with you are speculative. Space requests are based on their projections of sales prepared by assessing past volume and future marketing and sales plans. Scheduled operators' success is based on the ability to offer quality and value, tour after tour.

Custom/charter operators are likely to be bus or tour companies who design and arrange a specific tour at the request of a group client. Sometimes a flyer or brochure has been assembled with a suggested itinerary, but usually the space for these tours has not been reserved in advance.

When a group client expresses interest, the itinerary is discussed, modified to meet any special interest, and a price is quoted. The operator may be dealing with a loyal, well-known customer or competing with other operators to win on a bid for the trip. You may expect to be asked for immediate response on requests for space availability, rate negotiations or menu details, because the operator is under pressure to meet the decision-making deadline of the group client.

Charter/custom tour operators are the companies who are most responsive to entertainment, theme tour packages and special events. Success with this segment requires your ability to be prompt with responses, creative, flexible, spontaneous and willing to personalize your services.

### **Travel Agents (Retailers)**

Travel agents today fulfill many different functions – travel counselor, advisor, trip planner, insurance provider and even tour operator. Agencies vary in size from large corporate agencies to small “mom-and-pop” organizations, but the trend toward large mega-agencies is growing due to the increased services that they can provide.

Many suppliers frequently call on agencies because agents have their fingers on the pulse of the consumer travel market and can be very influential in the decision-making process. In recent years, the elimination of airline commissions has encouraged many agents to become more creative in their leisure marketing efforts. Thus, many have begun to sell more cruises and tour packages; some now even develop and market their own tours.

### **Pre-formed Groups**

Pre-formed groups are likely to be composed of members of civic organizations, social clubs, senior communities, churches, or schools. They may take a day trip as often as every month or longer trips at least once a year. Wherever a group exists, there will often be a group leader willing to serve as travel coordinator – accepting reservations, taking payments and forwarding everything to the travel agent, tour operator or supplier(s) with whom the coordinator chooses to work.

In recent years, these group leaders have become more aggressive in planning and arranging their own getaways, although many still choose to work through a professional travel agent or tour operator for

convenience and liability reasons. Some group leaders are simply seeking recognition of their personal efforts, which may be conveyed by a public announcement or note of thanks, a room upgrade or a small gift. Many group leaders, however, take their positions very seriously and expect various travel discounts, sales incentives, free trips, or even commissions for their efforts.

### **Individual Consumers**

Individual consumers are bombarded with travel information from advertisements in print and news media, written articles, word-of-mouth and the Internet. The opportunity to travel remains one of the most desired options when receiving a windfall of money or reaching retirement. Many consumers rely on a travel agent's experience and recommendations for booking non-automobile trips, but more have begun to book on their own by calling suppliers directly via toll-free numbers or using the Internet. Factors affecting consumer travel include gasoline prices, airfare prices, interest rates, inflation and the U.S. dollar's exchange rate.

## **Preparing your Product**

Knowing your product is just the beginning – you need to prepare it to attract the attention of the tour and travel industry. Price, quality service, location, uniqueness or newness, and packaging strategies are all-important marketing factors.

### **Price**

If a group is price-conscious, this is sometimes one of the most important factors. In setting your price, you need to consider your own profitability needs, your competition's pricing and your market's needs. If you can offer a slightly better price than a competitor, it can sometimes result in a more successful tour in terms of additional passengers and departure dates, and that means more revenue for you.

If you plan to market to receptive operators, tour operators, travel agents, group leaders, and consumers, pricing becomes a critical and more complex issue. The key to success is a strategy often called "tiered pricing."

Tiered pricing needs to reflect several different rates in order for it work properly. The highest rate level (first or rack tier) should be targeted to individual consumers who book directly and may only come one time. Travel agents and pre-formed groups should receive the next highest rate level (second or retail tier), because they usually sell directly to consumers and may bring you only one or two "custom" groups per year or every few years.

If a travel agent or pre-formed group is bringing you direct business on a regular schedule, however, you may want to consider upgrading them to the next tier. Tour operators should receive the next rate level (third, net or wholesale tier). Since operators sell to travel agents and groups as well as individuals, you cannot offer them the same price and expect them to make a profit.

Your lowest rate level (fourth, net-net or double wholesale tier) should be reserved for receptive operators or large volume operators who sell wholesale to other tour operators and often extend their marketing efforts nationally or internationally.

Tier rates could differ by percentages, dollar amounts or other factors depending on what best fits your organization. Pricing should be a strategy that helps profitably achieve your own unique business goals. Remember, there are no set rules.

### **Quality Service**

Quality service is another important marketing factor. If passengers are dissatisfied with any aspect of a tour (for example, a motel in a noisy location, a tasteless meal, or an attraction that does not meet expectations), they will blame the tour organizer. Client opinions on whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with a tour are greatly valued, since many customers represent repeat business. If you can offer consistent high quality at a slightly lower price than your competition, or even better quality at about the same price, you stand an excellent chance of getting and keeping leisure business.

## **Location**

A good location – near the highway along which a group will be traveling, near an attraction where the tour will be stopping, or in a spot that offers a good view of a scenic area – can also be a major selling point.

## **Uniqueness and newness**

Being unique or new are also important marketing factors; these are usually the first things that tour operators want to know about a destination. It does not matter what the price is, how good the service is or where something is located if it is not of interest to the group. People like to visit a certain region to experience unique attractions that they cannot experience anywhere else. Examples include the Statue of Liberty in New York, spectacular shows and lights in Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Nearby suppliers that are not unique or new can also promote themselves by associating themselves with a unique attraction, such as being the closest hotel to Niagara Falls or Karchner Caverns State Park. In the case of a restaurant, good regional cuisine or themes may add a great deal to the tour experience and may be an advantage. New or newly renovated hotels imply that a guest may be more comfortable and enjoy a good night's rest.

## **Packaging Strategies**

Attracting group tour business requires a somewhat different kind of selling job. Whether your basic sales target is a tour operator, travel agent, or group leader, you should understand how important packaging can be. For example, a hotel may partner with a nearby attraction for a "Stay and Play" program, a restaurant may partner with a hotel for a "Bed and Breakfast" program, or an entertainment venue may partner with a restaurant or transportation company for a "Dinner and Entertainment" package. Unique packages mean value and convenience to a tour planner who is often pressed for time and creativity. Packaging your product can encourage them to try it.

## **Researching the Market**

The first step in marketing your idea or organization is to determine who your prospects are. A good place to start your research is with directories and manuals provided by national tourism associations such as the Travel Industry Association, National Tour Association, American Bus Association, United States Tour Operator Association, American Society of Travel Agents, Association of Retail Travel Agents, and Group Leaders of America. (Please refer to the back of the manual for contact information.)

Frequently, these associations will provide directories that highlight specific information on their tour operator members including detailed profiles of members' product lines, customer types, planning deadlines, seasonal operating patterns, and marketing activities.

If you are interested in pursuing international markets, the Arizona Office of Tourism has a "Product Inventory" from each of our five key markets (Mexico, Canada, Germany, UK, and Japan) available at a nominal cost. These Product Inventories include a list of operators doing business in Arizona, scanned brochure pages, listings of hotels utilized, and more.

Once you have identified the target audience most likely to be satisfied by your service, you will want to do a careful analysis of the information to determine if they are a "fit" for you. For example, if a tour operator stays only at luxury resorts, and you operate a budget motel, that operator is probably not a good prospect. On the other hand, a group that goes right past your establishment and stops at a similar one just a few blocks away may be a very good prospect, especially if you can offer something better than your competitor.

## **Contacting Prospects**

Compiling your list of prospects is the starting point, but how do you contact them? There are several methods you may want to consider, and you may use any or all of them depending on your promotional budget.

### **Printed Collateral**

First, you should create some printed collateral like a flyer or brochure about your organization. Ideally, this should be a “lure” piece to create interest in your product. If you are trying to attract international business, it should be written in one or more foreign languages (a certified translator is recommended). Consider including a description of the product, why it is unique or special, featured amenities, rates, location and proximity to major highways or attractions, availability of packages, and other pertinent information.

### **Direct Mail**

Direct mail can be very cost-effective and efficient in reaching your target market, if done correctly. Include a customized cover letter with your brochure or flyer to introduce you and your product. Spelling, grammar and appearance are very important; remember that first impressions are critical. Interesting packaging, such as colored or hand-written envelopes, may draw attention to your piece and prevent it from going unopened into the trash. Sending gifts or promotional items with your brochure and letter, while appreciated, is not necessary.

### **Telemarketing Follow-up**

The best way to add impact to your direct mail campaign is to connect it with a telemarketing follow-up program. To increase your success rate, schedule the call to be made seven to 10 days following the mailing. If you are working alone on this, you may need to arrange to have your direct mail to go out in smaller batches so you can keep the follow-up calls on schedule.

Be sure you have written a script or call guide to cover the points you want to make and to record any notes. Tour operators and travel agents tend to be very busy, so keep it brief but pleasant. Send out any requested information or collateral immediately. A good telemarketing program can be an important step in building a relationship with a prospect.

### **Tradeshows & Marketplaces**

Another good way to build relationships with your prospects is through membership in industry associations whose conventions feature a tradeshow or marketplace. At a tradeshow you will have an opportunity to meet face-to-face with the people who are responsible for putting together tours. If you have done your research about the operator or agent with whom you are meeting, you will be able to explain how your company can meet their needs.

### **Sales Calls**

Finally, you can visit tour planners on their own home turf. Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) like the Arizona Office of Tourism and area convention and visitors bureaus often invite suppliers (membership sometimes required) to travel together to a target area for a coordinated sales mission (fee involved) to call on receptive operators, tour operators and travel agents in top markets.

These sales missions, or blitzes, often include personal office visits, hosting a reception or meal followed by a tabletop show where you can distribute materials and talk face-to-face with your target market. This can be a good way to open a new market and develop some contacts where you have never before done business.

If you have identified some key prospects who have the potential to bring you significant volume, it may also be worth your time to schedule personal sales calls of your own to introduce yourself and get to know the operator, agent or group leader better. Your local area is a great place to start! Always call ahead to request an appointment; unscheduled calls are generally unwelcome.

## **Familiarization (FAM) Tours**

Another cost-effective way to attract attention to your business is to volunteer to host familiarization (FAM) tours. Let your local DMO know that you want to work with them if they are directing business to your area. FAMs are usually offered to receptive operators, tour operators, travel agents and sometimes group leaders to familiarize them with an area.

The idea is that if a tour planner can actually experience and enjoy a prospective region, it will make them more comfortable with the itinerary and encourage them to assemble their own tour. If everything goes well, many operators actually end up contracting with the suppliers that participated. Hotels, restaurants, attractions, shopping malls, transportation companies, and others are encouraged to participate.

An example of a FAM itinerary is included at the end of this section. Additionally, for more details on coordinating and implementing FAM tours you can request the workbook "Familiarization Tours" from the Tourism Education and Development Division at the Arizona Office of Tourism.

## **E-Marketing**

E-marketing can be done via the Internet or by E-mail, and may be very cost-effective. Broadcasting unsolicited E-mails (spam) is not appreciated, but lists of appropriate target E-mail addresses can be obtained through some industry associations or other marketing companies, or self-solicited. Directing companies to view your Web site at their convenience can be an effective way for them to investigate your product. Remember that frequently updated information and pricing are critical to this type of marketing. Make it easy for the recipient to "unsubscribe" should they have accidentally made it onto your list, and make sure that they are removed promptly.

## **Group Tours**

If you are unaccustomed to working with group tours, you need to know something about the simple mechanics. While we can generalize about how the system works, keep in mind that every tour planner has his or her own method of dealing with suppliers.

### **How They Work**

Tour operators tend to plan as much as 18 months to two years in advance, although recent shifts in travel patterns have led to some changes. When a tour operator develops an itinerary, they will typically book hotels first followed by transportation, meals and attractions.

Exceptions include any tour component that is likely to sell-out early such as jeep tours in Sedona, or is critical to the program, such as guided tour of Grand Canyon. On any given tour there may be many departure dates. On some of those departure dates, there may be more than one busload of passengers. However, other departure dates may be canceled if they do not attract enough bookings.

Typically, as a show of good faith, the tour planner is expected to make a deposit when booking or several months prior to each scheduled departure date. Naturally, however, tour planners prefer not to tie up their money for such a long period of time, and if a planner has developed a strong track record, you may be willing to forego the deposit.

The tour planner should also be contacted at least 30 to 60 days prior to the group's arrival and asked to reconfirm or cancel the group booking. Flexibility is an issue here and you may be asked to extend the cancellation date when the tour planner thinks the tour will go if they can book a few more people.

Your response depends on several factors, but you may want to agree to the request if you believe that the tour planner has the potential to come through with their numbers and bring you future business. You may also ask for a rooming list at this point, containing the names of the people booked and special preferences. Obviously, throughout the course of a booking season there should be a lot of contact between the tour planner and the suppliers involved in a tour.

## **Following Up – Why It’s Important**

Once groups have been attracted, you must ensure that they receive quality treatment and service that will make them want to return. The most common complaint from group tour passengers is that they felt like they were treated like a “herd of cattle” rather than like a group of individuals who just happened to be traveling together. Your employees should be trained to treat group members just as courteously and efficiently as they would treat any other customer. Hospitality training programs and service tips are available from several local destination marketing organizations if you need help.

## **FIT – The Independent Traveler**

According to the National Tour Association, there are several definitions for the acronym FIT. You may have heard that it stands for Frequent Independent Travelers, Foreign Independent Travelers, or Fully Independent Travelers.

With so many choices, the key is not to restrict yourself to any one definition as it is no longer necessary to give a specific word for each letter. Instead, follow this simple definition: FIT is a custom-designed, prepaid travel package with many individualized arrangements. FITs are unescorted and usually have no formal itinerary.

These packages are designed for the independent traveler, a person who wants more freedom in their travel while participating in a reduced rate package that tour operators achieve through volume purchases. Essentially, FITs aren’t really tours after all. It is a volume-purchasing program benefiting individual travelers. The choices are many, just like those on a menu at your favorite restaurant. Clients can choose the transportation and lodging portions of a tour from a tour operator’s “menu” and then select his or her own dining and entertainment options, which may or may not be a part of the overall FIT package.

## **Packaged Travel Industry - Research**

According to the latest “Packaged Travel” study completed by the National Tour Association (NTA), residents of the United States and Canada purchased a total of nearly 129 million overnight packaged trips during 2001. This accounted for approximately \$166 billion in direct economic impact worldwide. Over one-half of this amount, approximately \$99 billion, was spent in overnight trips in the United States. Nearly three-fourths (\$75 billion) of this amount was spent on packaged trips. Another \$24 billion in expenditures was made for additional purchases (i.e., not part of the package cost) while traveling on packaged trips.

The packaged travel industry supported more than one million jobs, both full-time and part-time, in the United States travel industry. These jobs accounted for total earnings (wages, benefits, and proprietor income) of more than \$21 billion.

The packaged traveler can be either an independent traveler or part of a group. Independent packages accounted for 56 percent of the total market. Group packages, in which the traveler said that his or her immediate travel party joined and traveled with a larger group, accounted for 44 percent.

Most groups have some sort of affiliation or common interest (30 percent of the 43 percent). The more typical group affiliations were clubs with shared interest, church, work and family connections. Packaged trips were also found to be longer than the typical U.S. trip (6.3 nights vs. 5.0 respectively).

Packaged travelers are somewhat older than the average traveler and have a higher incidence of unemployment among group packaged travelers. This is attributed to a higher number of retirees buying group packages. Men and women each accounted for approximately half of the packaged travel market. However, women were especially important to group packages – 59 percent of group packaged travel was purchased by women.

## Summary

We have sought to present a logical, step-by-step approach to attracting tour and travel business. The specifics of your marketing plan will naturally depend on the nature of your business and its location, but the basic elements are these:

1. Understand the market. Research your potential customers then select either the direct marketing route selling to pre-formed groups and individual consumers, or the indirect marketing route selling to receptive operators, tour operators and travel agents.
2. Identify what you have to offer: price, quality service, location, and being unique or new.
3. Decide whether you can sell your product on its own or if you need to package it with others.
4. Develop a qualified list of prospects for each market segment you have identified and wish to attract.
5. Prepare your marketing materials (brochure, flyers, cover letter).
6. Start selling your product by participating in trade shows, sales missions, direct mail, telemarketing, personal sales calls, e-marketing, etc.
7. Ensure that your treatment of leisure travelers will make them want to keep coming back.

*NOTE: You are encouraged to contact the tourism representatives at your local DMO or Chamber to find out how they can assist you in your marketing efforts to attract tour and travel business. (A complete listing of Arizona DMOs and Arizona tourism-related associations can be found in the reference section.) Opportunities and services vary by organizations, but may include guidelines on developing a written marketing plan and program of work, destination planning guide or visitors guide listing opportunities, newsletters, marketing seminars, travel terminology booklets, hospitality training programs and opportunities to become involved in familiarization tours and site inspections. Because most DMOs are membership-based, many opportunities and services are available only by becoming a member of the organization. Please contact each organization directly for further information.*

## Sample Itinerary

Transportation Sponsored by: Arizona Office of Tourism

Transportation Provided by: DeTours

Additional FAM Sponsors: Flagstaff Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Greater Phoenix Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Scottsdale Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau

### Day 1

- 4:15 PM AOT Representative will meet group arriving at Sky Harbor Airport on British Airways flight #289
- 6:30 PM Check into **Pointe Hilton Tapatio Cliffs**
- Contact: Kim Pfeifer, Sales Manager  
1111 N. 7th Street  
Phoenix, Arizona 85020  
Tel. 602-870-2777  
E-mail: kim.pfeifer@hilton.com
- 7:30 PM Complimentary dinner at the **La Cantina Restaurant** located inside the hotel and retire for the evening

### Day 2

- 8:15 AM Depart for the **Tempe Mission Palms Hotel & Conference Center** for breakfast located in the heart of downtown Tempe at Fifth Street and Mill, this metropolitan Phoenix hotel combines distinctive style of the Southwest with a casual, yet sophisticated ambience. Tempe Mission Palms is an easy walk to more than 170 unique shops, restaurants and entertainment venues.
- Contact: Mandy McKaskle  
60 East 5th Street  
Tempe, AZ 85281  
Tel. 480-317-1514  
E-mail: mmckaskle@destinationhotels.com
- 10:15 AM Departure for the **Pueblo Grande Museum and Archeological Park**  
Pueblo Grande Museum is located at a 1,500 year old Hohokam village ruins in modern day Phoenix.
- Contact: Ellen Riske  
4619 East Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85034  
Tel. 602-495-0901  
E-mail: ellen.riske@phoenix.gov
- 11:45 AM Depart for Donovan's Steak & Chop House
- 12:15 PM Complimentary lunch at **Donovan's Steak & Chop House**
- Contact: Kevin Larkin  
3101 E Camelback Road  
Phoenix, Arizona 85016  
Tel. 602-955-3666

- 3:30 PM Check into the **Carefree Resort & Villas**
- Contact: Kimberly Freer  
37220 Mule Train Road  
Carefree, AZ 85377  
Tel. 480-595-3710  
E-mail: kfreer@carefree-resort.com
- 5:30 PM Depart for a complimentary dinner and show at the **Broadway Palm Dinner Theater**. The Broadway Palm Dinner Theater is a 500-seat dinner theater. In the lobby you'll find The Playbill Bar, serving cocktails and other refreshments before and after the show.
- Contact: Francie Christopher  
5247 E Brown Rd  
Mesa, AZ 85205  
Tel. 480-325-6700  
E-mail: francie@broadwaypalmwest.com
- 9:30 PM Depart Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre and return to hotel.

### Day 3

- Breakfast on own and check out of Carefree Resort & Villas
- 8:00 AM Depart for Tucson
- 11:00 AM Visit **Mission San Xavier Del Bac**, lovingly referred to as the "White Dove of the Desert," located on the Tohono O'odham Indian Reservation. The church was built between the years of 1783-1797. Authorities have acclaimed San Xavier Mission as the finest example of mission architecture in the United States.
- 1950 West San Xavier Road  
Tucson, AZ 85746  
Tel. 520-294-2624
- 12:00 PM Enjoy a complimentary lunch at **Old Tucson Artisans, La Cocina Restaurant**, located in Tucson's Presidio Historic District. Housed within the 150 year-old restored adobe buildings are seven distinctive shops and galleries featuring contemporary and traditional art and fine crafts from hundreds of local and national artists.
- Contact: Mary Lou Focht, Owner  
201 N Court Ave  
Tucson, Arizona 85701  
Tel.520-623-6024, Fax 520-622-0494
- 1:00 PM Depart for **Old Tucson Studios**, the famous movie location and studio.
- Contact: Gilbert LaRoque, Sales Manager  
201 S Kinney Road  
Tucson, AZ 85746
- 2:00 PM Depart for the **Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum**, which tells the unique story of the Sonoran Desert region. Over 200 species of live animals and 1,000 species of plants, indigenous to the Sonoran Desert are exhibited in naturalistic habitats.
- Contact: Lorie Anderson, Marketing Manager  
2021 North Kinney Road  
Tucson, AZ 85743  
Tel. 520-883-2702

- 4:00 PM Arrive and check into the **Hilton Tucson El Conquistador Golf & Tennis Resort**
- Contact: Kim Pfeifer, Sales Manager  
10000 N Oracle Rd  
Tucson, Arizona 85737  
Tel. 602-870-2777
- 7:00 PM Enjoy a complimentary dinner at **Last Territory at Hilton El Conquistador**
- Day 4**
- Breakfast on own
- 8:00 AM Depart for **Flagstaff**
- 12:00 PM Complimentary lunch at **Charly's Pub and Grill** in downtown Flagstaff located at the historic Weatherford Hotel.
- Contact: Chris Henry, Events Coordinator  
23 North Leroux  
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001  
Tel. 928-779-1919
- 1:30 PM Stroll through Flagstaff's Historic Downtown.
- 2:00 PM Arrive at the **Lowell Observatory**, Lowell Observatory was the first astronomical observatory in Arizona. In 1894, Percival Lowell, a mathematician and amateur astronomer from Massachusetts, was one of several astronomers in search of clearer skies through which to observe the planets and stars.
- Contact: Kevin Schindler  
1400 W Mars Hill Road  
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001  
Tel. 928-774-3358
- 3:00 PM Arrive at the **Riordan Mansion State Historic Park**, Completed in 1904 in the Arts & Crafts style of architecture, the historic mansion is expansive, with over 40 rooms and 13,000 square feet of living space.
- Contact: Kathy Farretta  
409 Riordan Ranch Road  
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001  
Tel. 928-774-5395
- 4:30 PM Check into the **Little America Hotel**
- Contact: Gina Leingang, Sales Manager  
2515 East Butler Avenue  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001  
Tel. 928-779-7920
- 5:30 PM Complimentary line dancing lessons at the **Museum Club**, This famous roadhouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Southwest's largest log cabin, it was built in 1931 to house Native American artifacts and a collection unique animal preserved through taxidermy.
- Contact: Joe Lange  
3404 East Route 66  
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001  
Tel. 928-526-9434

7:30 PM Enjoy a complimentary dinner at **Black Bart's Steakhouse**

Contact: Gary Weisskopf  
2760 East Butler Avenue  
Flagstaff, AZ 86004  
Tel. 928-774-1912

## Day 5

Enjoy a complimentary breakfast and site inspection at host hotel

10:00 AM Morning departure to the **Museum of Northern Arizona**, Visit Northern Arizona's premier museum to learn about Native American cultures, tribal life ways, and traditional arts and stories of the surrounding region. Interactive exhibits feature geology, natural history, anthropology, and archaeology of the Colorado Plateau.

Contact: Michelle Mountain  
3101 North Fort Valley Road  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001  
Tel. 928-774-5211  
[www.musnaz.org](http://www.musnaz.org)

11:30 AM Have a complimentary lunch at the **Galaxy Diner**

Contact: Patricia Black  
931 West Highway 66  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001

1:00 PM Depart for **Scottsdale**, AZ

3:30 PM Meet and greet **Kate Cavaliere** at Kierland Commons at the center plaza fountain near Barnes & Noble for welcome bags.

Contact: Kate Cavaliere  
15044 North Scottsdale Road  
Scottsdale, AZ 85254  
E-mail: [kate.cavaliere@westcor.com](mailto:kate.cavaliere@westcor.com)

5:30 PM Check into the **Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort & Spa** at Gainey Ranch.

Contact: Kecia Hoverson  
7500 E Doubletree Ranch Road  
Scottsdale, AZ 85258  
E-mail: [khoverson@hyatt.com](mailto:khoverson@hyatt.com)

Dinner On Own

## Day 6

7 -8:30 AM Complimentary breakfast at the **Hyatt Regency Club**

9:30 AM Depart for **Taliesin West**, Taliesin West is the international headquarters for the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, the site of the Frank Lloyd Wright Archives, and the winter campus for the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture.

11:30 AM Afternoon Free Time

4:30 PM Depart for **Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport**

# V. TOURISM RESEARCH

## **What is Research?**

AOT conducts a proactive research program to enhance AOT's marketing efforts, to monitor performance of trends in the tourism sectors of the state and national economy, and to measure AOT's performance in reaching its goals and objectives as defined in the strategic plan. The primary functions of the Research Division are to conduct industry research (i.e., to monitor state, national and international travel trends that affect travel and tourism in Arizona), and act as a clearinghouse and data repository for that information. Representatives from the research and strategic planning division are available to discuss tourism data.

## **Where do I start?**

The Research & Strategic Planning Division of the Arizona Office of Tourism has a variety of statistics that can help with a marketing plan, strategic plan, general information, and much more. This research information is posted at [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov), which follows the governor's e-initiative to allow access to information online and all the time.

There are monthly updates for lodging indicators at a county level, metro-city level, and state level; visitation at Arizona State and National Parks; airport traffic; and gross sales and tourism taxes. Available every quarter is AOT's Tourism Indicators Research Newsletter, which offers two or more articles about different tourism-related subjects and quarter totals on the above-mentioned indicators. Also, selected research reports are posted, ranging from power point presentations to the annual Statistical Report. Take advantage of the great wealth of information AOT provides.

## **How will I know when I've done enough research?**

One-time data collection is, at best, a snapshot of what "was." Trends are evident only after time, so make a commitment to gather information on an ongoing basis. Then share the information with others. Your employees have a vested interest in knowing how they are doing and in understanding why certain changes are being made. A good research project should lead to new questions that will help you better serve your current customers and turn new customers into loyal customers.

## **Using data for strategic decision-making**

One of the best starting points for strategic tourism planning in a community is to focus on what type of visitors you want to attract to your community, given the resources that you have. Take time to assess current tourism activities in your community:

- What has been the cost/benefit of tourism to the community?
- What kind of payback are you getting for the time and resources you are now investing in tourism development?
- What is the ratio of total tourism expenditures to total direct expenditures on tourism-related activities?

Plan time annually to evaluate your tourism development and marketing program, or how you are now doing business. Utilize the data you've collected to assess the impact of tourism on the community. Use this data to make strategic choices directed toward strengthening your visitor attractions, events, and marketing. What actions could be taken to increase the level of expenditures made by visitors in your community?

Use the data available to you in your planning efforts. If admission at key attractions is down, make it a project in the following year to find out why. If the community is having trouble attracting new motels, and thus increasing the number of (or replacing obsolete) rooms available, make finding out the reason(s) a key objective in your strategic plan. If you identify a specific target market for promotional purposes, search out as much existing information as possible on this market. Ask tough questions. Does your community have a high-value experience to offer this market? If not, what must you do to improve your product? If you do have the product, how do you reach your target market?

Visitor surveys indicate that “word-of-mouth” is an important way visitors find out about community attractions. The best way to get good word-of-mouth advertising is to offer current visitors a quality experience and outstanding customer service. Travelers are becoming more discriminating as they travel. They often rely heavily on travel guides which tell them not only what is available in the community, but also provide a rating of the quality. Communities need to diligently work at turning current visitors into tourism ambassadors for the community.

## **Research Methods**

### **Qualitative Research**

Useful for gaining insights into consumer attitudes, beliefs, motivations, behaviors and opinions. Results from qualitative research do not allow for statistical analysis, but do allow an in-depth understanding of the “whys” of attitudes or opinions.

- **Focus groups**  
Take the form of in-depth discussions with small groups of eight to 10 people who are carefully selected based on a set of criteria, with the discussion usually lasting one to two hours.
- **One-on-One**  
In-person interviews, usually 20 minutes to one hour in length with individual respondents. This method is most appropriate for sensitive subjects that may be difficult to discuss in front of others or for in-depth evaluations of new concepts or promotional materials.
- **Dyads**  
In-person interviews with two respondents, usually people who make decisions together, such as husband and wife.

### **Quantitative Research**

Allows for statistical analysis and is used to measure, track and assess effectiveness and in identifying visitor profiles. The results of this type of research can be projected to the population at large.

#### **Telephone studies**

Participants are asked to respond to a short (10-15 minute) interview over the telephone. This type of study is most common because it is relatively inexpensive and easy to obtain a representative, sample. Participants are generally not paid.

##### **Advantages:**

- Quick data collection
- Staff is relatively easy to supervise
- Data can be entered directly into computer during the survey, which can save time and reduce potential inputting errors

##### **Disadvantages:**

- There could be a bias if phone numbers are pulled from a specific database
- Actual response rate is difficult to estimate

#### **Mail studies**

This method is useful if participants need to read detailed descriptions or answer complicated questions that can't be asked over the telephone. Cash or other incentives for completing the questionnaire are often included in the mailing.

##### **Advantages:**

- Fairly simple to complete
- Cost-effective
- Survey can be longer in length

##### **Disadvantages:**

- Can't control who will actually fill out the survey
- More expensive than distributing them on-site
- Takes more time to obtain results

### **On-line studies**

This method is useful if participants need to read detailed descriptions or answer complicated questions that can't be asked over the telephone. In addition, this method also gives you the ability to display visuals and graphics.

**Advantages:**

- Quick data collection
- Cost-effective

**Disadvantages:**

- On-line population may not reflect population as a whole
- Survey length should be kept shorter than mailed surveys

### **On-site Written Questionnaires (Intercept Studies)**

Respondents are recruited in a public place, often at an attraction, visitor center or shopping mall, screened for target criteria and given a highly structured interview. This method is appropriate if the respondent needs to look at products, pictures of new products, or advertising, or if you are conducting an on-site visitor survey. Intercepts are also appropriate if it is important to interview respondents in the context of something they are doing.

**Advantages:**

- High response rate.
- Allows you to obtain quick results.
- Allows you to ask follow-up "probing" questions.
- Visitors tend to have excellent recollection of their trip.

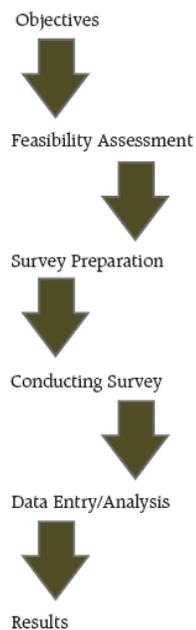
**Disadvantages:**

- Can be expensive to hire trained interviewers who will not skew the answers in one direction or another

## **Conducting Visitor Surveys**

What is a visitor survey? A visitor survey is a way to communicate with people who come to your destination in order to learn more about them. You may conduct a visitor survey using the telephone, the internet, the mail, or by interviewing people at your event or attraction. By asking specific questions you can learn different aspects of the visitor's behavior and motivation, and you can use this data to make strategic decisions about many of your community's activities. Most of the discussion in this section focuses on on-site visitor surveys.

**Figure A: Process**



## **Objectives**

Once you decide that a visitor survey can provide the information you need, the first step is to determine the objectives of your survey. It is important to develop clear, concise objectives in writing to determine if they make sense and are understood and agreed upon by all parties involved in the project.

Start by asking: "What do I want to know about the visitors to my local community?"

This will help define your key objective, which should remain the focus when evaluating the rest of your survey needs. There are some common objectives that can be addressed by surveying a visitor population. Examples include determining the economic impact of visitors to an event in your community, developing a profile of existing visitors, and understanding what perception visitors have of your area. The following is a brief discussion of possible visitor survey objectives:

### **Visitor Economic Impact**

Economic impact measures the visitor spending generated by an event or in a specific geographic area during a specific time period. It estimates the net impact of spending originating from visitors who live outside the defined geographic area and those dollars that stay in the local economy. It represents the incremental spending above and beyond what would be expected in the region if the event/tourist activity were not held.

Below are some basic ways to evaluate economic impact in your local community or event:

- How much do tourists spend in the local community?
- What portion of sales made by local businesses is due to tourism?
- How much income does tourism generate for households/businesses in the area?
- How many jobs in the area does tourism support?
- How much tax revenue is generated by visitor spending?

The direct impact of visitor spending can be seen as the number of visitors to the event or region during a specific time multiplied by the average spending per visitor. Please note that the direct effects are the most important and are captured well by estimates of visitor spending. Multipliers are only needed if one is interested in secondary effects.

Please note the Arizona Office of Tourism has economic impact information for the tourism industry available on [azot.gov](http://azot.gov) which includes county-level data.

### **Visitor Profile**

A visitor profile is a description of visitors based on demographic and behavioral characteristics, such as age, income, accommodation preferences, travel party size, season of travel, etc, as well as spending behavior. Having a clear understanding of what visitors to your area "look like" can help you make better marketing decisions, project funding decisions, product development decisions and revenue planning decisions.

By understanding who is currently coming to your area, for example, you can decide if that is indeed the group you want to attract to your area. If not, you can make strategic changes to your marketing to target your desired audience.

- Target Marketing is choosing a specific group of people to market to based on demographics, preferences and travel patterns. You will find that using target marketing is more cost effective and successful than non-targeted advertising or promotion.
- Segmentation is grouping visitors by age, gender, income, lifestyles, activities and/or interests. Dividing the market into segments means taking a look at who comes (and when) and who doesn't (and if not, why not). The goal is to identify the customer segment in your geographic target which offers the highest potential as a visitor to your area.

### **Visitor Perceptions**

Understanding the perception visitors and potential visitors have of your community (and competing destinations) can provide direction to your marketing and communication program of work. We all think we know what makes our community great or unique, but we often find that those things are not resonating with visitors. Armed with this information, we can make decisions about whether the perception visitors

have is acceptable, or whether we want to change peoples' perceptions. If we do, the solution may be as simple as changing our communication strategy or it may mean we change our entire marketing mix and message. Information is power.

### **Feasibility Assessment**

The process of determining whether a survey project is feasible involves determining whether there are other ways to get the information you want without conducting a formal visitor survey (a Research Inventory Assessment) and if not, examining the project management resources (time, money, personnel) that you have available to undertake a new project.

### **Research Inventory Assessment**

Once you know what the objectives of your research are, you should thoroughly investigate existing resources that might meet your needs.

- Is there another way of getting to this information?
  - Review newspaper articles, trade magazines, and internet resources
- Is there existing information on visitors you can use?
  - Does this information exist for nearby communities or at the county level?
- If you have information but it does not specifically address your needs, what questions need to be asked to specifically address what you want to know?

### **Project Management**

When assessing the feasibility of any project, certainly it is important to understand the resources that will be required. There are generally two possibilities – conducting the research yourself or paying someone else to do it.

Conducting research using in-house resources:

This option may well make the most sense for many communities, but you need to make sure you have specific resources to dedicate to the project.

- Personnel
  - Do you have staff to dedicate to the project from beginning to end? This individual should be knowledgeable about tourism research techniques and how to construct a research project. All collected data should be consistently compiled in a database for further analysis. While Microsoft Excel is certainly an option, there are statistical software packages, such as SPSS, that would enhance your data analysis capabilities.
  - Will you conduct the visitor surveys using paid staff or volunteers? Paying interviewers will increase cost, but it may also increase the reliability of data collection. Volunteers may not stay for the duration of the study.
- Software
  - Do you need a statistical software package for data entry and analysis?
- Cost
  - Costs may include staff to manage the project, research training, interviewers (if paid) and software.

Hiring a research vendor:

- Personnel
  - You'll need to appoint a staff person to be the vendor's key contact from beginning to end of the project.
- Software
  - The vendor should have any software needed.
- Cost
  - It is generally more expensive to hire a vendor to conduct the full project, however your role would be primarily oversight, and you would not have the responsibility of conducting the research yourself. An option that should not be overlooked is contracting with a University or Community College to conduct the research. Because academic researchers are often able to enlist students to do much of the field work, this may represent a lower cost option.

## Survey Preparation

Preparing to conduct your visitor survey involves several actions. This section will discuss designing a questionnaire, including both what types of questions are typically asked with different objectives in mind and tips on how to formulate those questions, as well as guidance on how to make sure your survey project meets your objectives.

### Determining Survey Approach

Once you have determined what your objectives are and whether you will manage the research in-house, the next step is to design your survey approach. There are two broad methods of research: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative research allows you to explore issues and to understand the “whys” of attitudes or opinions, while quantitative research allows you to put numbers to results. In the context of our discussion, conducting a visitor survey will most likely use quantitative methods.

### Designing a Questionnaire

Many types of information can be gathered in a quantitative questionnaire. The matrix below highlights a variety of questions that are commonly asked when completing a visitor survey, and some different survey objectives that can be met by the different questions. Remember to stay focused on your key objective.

**Figure B: Questionnaire Design Matrix**

Question	Economic Impact	Visitor Profile	Visitor Perception of your area
# in Travel Party (Adults/Kids)	X	X	
# of Nights in Local Area	X	X	
Total Spending	X	X	
Expenditures by Category	X	X	
Origin State		X	
Trip Started		X	
Trip Ended		X	
Primary Activities for Visit		X	
Purpose of Visit (Business/Leisure)	X	X	
Other Local Cities Visiting	X		X
Type of Accommodation	X	X	
Main Mode of Transportation	X	X	
# of Persons in Household		X	
# of Children in Household		X	
Age of Respondent		X	
Gender of Respondent		X	
Annual Household Income		X	
Occupation of Head of Household		X	
Education Level		X	
Marital Status		X	
Zip Code of Household		X	
Internet Usage		X	
How they book travel		X	
List Frequent Traveler Program		X	
Accommodation Value			X
Accommodation Satisfaction			X
Accommodation Service			X
Rental Car Value			X
Rental Car Satisfaction			X
Overall Destination Value			X
Overall Destination Satisfaction			X
Number of Visits in last 3 years		X	X

## Sampling

A sample is a representative subset of a larger population. Sampling involves using a subset of a population to draw conclusions about the larger population. For example, if you are conducting a visitor survey of people attending a three-day event in your community, you could conduct a census, which would require surveying everyone attending the event, or you could survey a portion of the whole visitor population (a sample) and use that data to draw conclusions about all of the visitors to that event.

Generally, the larger the sample size, the more accurate the data and the more accurate your conclusions are about the whole population. There are Web sites that will allow you to enter some key pieces of information and calculate the sample size you need to achieve a certain level of confidence in the results. If you work with a research vendor, they will create the sample plan and sample size for you, and make sure it is adhered to during the survey process. A common sampling technique used for visitor surveys is to interview every “nth” person to come through the entrance of the event until the quota for that day is reached.

Please note that if you are computing sample size for a year-long visitor survey, you will need an estimate of the total visitor population to the area covered in the survey. This information can be drawn from prior surveys of the area, or if that information is not available, you will have to rely on other available sources, such as visitation at nearby state or national parks or attractions. It will be necessary to study this alternative information in order to make an educated estimate of the total visitor population in order to calculate a sample size.

## Instructions for Completing Questionnaire

Once you have determined your approach, designed your questionnaire, and decided on your sampling procedure, administering the surveys properly becomes critical. In order to ensure that surveys are conducted correctly and consistently by all interviewers, clear instructions should be provided to the interviewer, including:

- Purpose/Objectives of survey
- Sponsors and the organization administering the survey
- That the survey will remain confidential
- If there will be some type of follow-up to the questionnaire
- A contact that respondents can call or write if they have questions or concerns
- If it is a mail survey, when the survey should be returned

If different interviewers conduct the same survey differently, they can introduce what is called “bias,” or the possibility that they are influencing the respondents’ answers, thereby impacting the reliability of the data collected.

## Figure C: Tips on Writing & Formatting a Questionnaire

### TIPS ON WRITING & FORMATTING A QUESTIONNAIRE

Group questions together in the following order:

1. Ask the most important questions first
2. Related to the same subject
3. Related to the same response category

Write questions in the following manner:

- Neutrally worded to avoid bias
- Short and concise
- Require simple responses
- Ask one thing at a time
- Will directly address the overall objectives of the study
- Only use open ended questions when it is not possible to use close ended question

Other valuable tips on how to write questions:

- Describe the geographic you are evaluating (in this city/town/county/state)
- Use standard census content and format for demographics questions relating to age, income, education, race and ethnicity. This will allow you to compare responses from the survey to census data
- If a question provides categories for responses, make sure to indicate all possible responses and then group them
- Always include “other (please specify)” as an option when providing categories in order to capture all visitors
- For written questions that ask for dollar amounts or percentages, use dollar signs or percentage signs in the space for the response. If you ask the respondent to provide percentage responses that total to 100%, put 100% below the spaces for all the responses.
- Remember to minimize the number of open ended questions because these type of questions are difficult to interpret, time consuming when completing data entry and analysis
- Borrow well constructed questions from other surveys when applicable. An Example survey questionnaire is located in the reference section

Formatting the questionnaire

- Start with simple and interesting questions followed by the most important questions. This gives the respondent the opportunity

## **Pre-testing Questionnaire**

It is a good idea to administer the actual survey to several volunteers under the same conditions the actual respondents will experience. If this is an on-site survey, the pre-test should be conducted at the survey site. Make note of any issues, such as:

- Any difficulties respondents have completing the survey
- Questions consistently left unanswered
- How long it takes for respondents to complete the survey

It is critical to address all issues before the survey is officially launched.

## **Conducting the Survey**

There are several factors to consider when conducting a survey:

Deciding when and where to survey

- If you are conducting a survey of overall visitors to your destination, it is best to survey through the course of a full year in order to account for any seasonal variations.
- Survey sites with high traffic volume are best, because there is a higher likelihood that the sample you draw will be representative of the larger population.

## **Managing interviewers**

- The length of time it takes to conduct every completed survey will help you determine how many interviewers you need at any given time. If you are conducting the survey at a specific event, it is important to reach your survey quota within the given time, but remember that interviewer fatigue can impact the reliability of your data. Schedule enough properly trained interviewers to make the task feasible.
- If you are conducting interviews over an extended period of time to account for seasonality, your sample plan should call for completing a specific number of interviews on specific days. You will not need to interview every day.

## **Data Entry and Analysis**

The key to getting the most out of all of your work to this point is to have a clear plan for getting the data you collect into a program that will allow you to analyze it. Data entry should begin as soon as data starts coming in from the field. Organization is important because timely and consistent data entry allows you to detect any problems early in the process and correct them. If you leave all data entry till the end of the project, it becomes a mammoth task that could lead you to ultimately give up on the analysis and waste all of your effort.

### **Tips to getting quality results:**

- Select a data inputting system before you start surveying
- Test the selected system with pretest data
- Enter data as it is collected when possible in order to evaluate the in-coming responses
- Edit the data to make sure that missing responses are properly coded, expenditure data makes sense on a per person per day basis and there are no easily detectable errors in data entry
- Deciding how to handle outliers such as a visitor who stay unusually long periods of time or has hefty expenditures
- If this is a year long study, you should complete quarterly reports to analyze the results

### **Managing database of respondent information**

You should take the time to properly record not only responses to all questions on the survey, but also any contact information from to warm up to you and less likely to stop the interview when being asked the key questions respondents. In today's world, most people do not give up their contact information lightly. If they do give it to you, ask them whether they would like to receive further information about your event, destination, special offers, etc. Once they have given their permission for you to contact them again in the future, use that permission respectfully. By specifically identifying those people in your database that you can contact again, you have the beginning of a marketing list or a future survey group.

Take time to record:

- The event or project being surveyed, including date(s)
- Whether you have their permission to contact them again
- Contact information: name, address, telephone number, E-mail address
- Total distributed, returned and completed surveys

## **Analysis**

The software package chosen for data entry will determine what kind of analysis you can easily do. It is certainly possible to analyze data from Microsoft Excel, and the program offers graphing capabilities, however a more robust statistical package like SPSS will contain more tools to make the analysis of your data more turnkey.

## **Results**

Keep the key objective of your research project in mind as you formulate the results of your survey.

## **Formatting Report:**

- Choose method(s) to report results based on needs and audience
  - Formal report
  - Executive summary of report
  - Press Release
  - Talks and slide presentations
  - Workshops and seminars
  - Documents on your Web site
- The report structure should be composed of:
  - An executive summary with the highlights of the study
  - An introduction
  - The results presented in text, tables, and graphs
  - Conclusions and recommendations
  - An appendix with sampling methodology and analytical methods
  - An appendix with a copy of the survey instrument
- Other suggestions on how to present the information:
  - Graphics should be displayed in a way that makes data easier to interpret
  - Tables should be displayed in an organized fashion
  - Compare the information between different types of visitors in your study. For example, between day trip and overnight visitors or between business and leisure visitors.
  - Make recommendations based on findings.

## **Other Ways to Measure Visitation**

Here are some common methods of gathering visitor information that might work well for you:

### **Bed Tax Revenues**

The most objective source of data for monitoring tourism in the local economy is bed tax revenue data. This data is often available at the city, county, and state level. If you know the tax rate and have bed tax revenue data, you can estimate total expenditures at lodging places very effectively. You are also able to identify this data out seasonally.

Before you do so, talk to the fiscal officer who keeps this information to find out if he or she is reporting the total collected for each month or the total amount due. If it is the total collected, it could represent taxes due in previous months, not just the current month. The total collected per month may vary in ways unrelated to the total amount due each month. Typically, this month's tax receipts were actually collected by hotels in the previous month. It may not be possible to compare this data on a month-to-month basis. However, it may still be possible to compare for the winter and summer season and for the year.

Ask your local fiscal officer about exemptions to the tax. For example, it is common to waive the bed tax for visitors who stay for 30 days or more. If there are a lot of these types of visitors to your community who stay in commercial lodging, estimates of lodging expenditures based on bed taxes will underestimate the actual amount spent on accommodations. Likewise, state employees are exempt from paying bed tax in some states. Their lodging expenditures will not be reflected in estimates based on bed taxes.

*Figure D. Estimating Lodging and Total Expenditures using City Bed Tax Collections*

*Let's say that the city bed tax is 4 percent. The annual total of bed taxes collected is \$50,000. This means that the amount spent on lodging in the city was  $\$50,000 / .04 = \$1,250,000$ . Recent surveys conducted for the Arizona Office of Tourism show that on average about 20 percent of total visitor expenditures were on lodging. If we were trying to estimate total visitor expenditures, we might estimate that  $\$6,250,000$  ( $\$1,250,000 / .20$ ) was spent by visitors in the community.*

Some hotels and motels may not be within city limits and will not be included in your lodging expenditure estimates. You may need to collect data directly from them on their average room rates and occupancy rates by month to estimate their contribution to total lodging expenditures. Likewise, your city may have just annexed an existing hotel. This will cause the city lodging taxes to increase even though total lodging expenditures in the area have not really increased. Also, have average room rates increased over the previous year? Are the increases in bed tax collections the result of increased visitations or higher room rates?

In addition to bed taxes imposed by cities and counties, the State of Arizona charges a 5.5 percent bed tax. It records this data by county and by month. This data is available through the Office of Tourism, which is another source for estimating total visitor expenditures on lodging and on total expenditures at the county level.

The examples provided show how you can use tax figures to estimate total visitor expenditures. It is important, however, to know that the share of visitor expenditures in lodging can vary significantly among communities and can change over time.

*Figure E. Estimating Lodging Expenditures at the County Level*

*Let's say that you want an estimate of total lodging expenditures at the county level. State bed tax receipts for the county are \$660,000, so total lodging expenditures are  $\$660,000 / .055 = \$12,000,000$ . The Arizona Department of Revenue report provides the hotel/motel sales on a collection basis (i.e., sales reported in one month are actually from the month before). Let's say that there is one large community and a number of smaller communities in the county. The large community has a bed tax, but the smaller ones do not. It would be possible to estimate what part of the lodging expenditures are occurring in the large community and what part in the rest of the county by using both the city and state bed tax information. Say the city bed tax rate is 2 percent and \$150,000 was collected in the last fiscal year. This means that  $\$150,000 / .02 = \$7,500,000$  of lodging expenditures occurred in the large community and  $\$12,000,000 - \$7,500,000 = \$4,500,000$  occurred in the rest of the county.*

## **Hotel Room Inventory and Occupancy Rates**

At the very least, you should maintain in your database an inventory of the number of hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, dude ranches, outfitters, RV parks, and campgrounds in the area, the number of rooms or spaces that they offer, rates, and the name of the current manager. In addition, you may be able to get local hoteliers to cooperate in providing you with their monthly occupancy rates throughout the year. Knowing the size of each facility and the occupancy rate gives you a basis for estimating room-nights spent in the community. Note: Confidentiality is essential in gathering such information. Data on a specific firm should generally not be shared publicly. Instead, share only aggregated data or totals for all lodging in public documents.

With this information, you can track the changes in the number of rooms or spaces available in the community over time. You can also track the number of room-nights spent in the community over time. By dividing total estimated expenditures in hotels from bed tax revenues by room-nights, you can estimate average cost per room-night over time as well.

The number of rooms multiplied by the number of nights in a month, season, or year gives the total supply of room-nights in your community for the month, season, or year. A summation of the average occupancy rate times the number of room-nights for the month, season, or year for each lodging facility will give you an estimate of total demand for the number of room-nights. You can graph room-night supply and demand over time to see what trends are occurring in your community.

Be more cautious using these numbers than when you are using tax receipt numbers. Some hotel managers do not keep good occupancy records, others may provide numbers that are higher or lower than their actual occupancy rates. You might do a rough check of occupancy data by also asking for average room-night price data from each lodging place (or by using an estimate from a published source). Estimate total room-nights as shown in Figure F and multiply by the average room-night price. Compare the sum of this estimate of total lodging receipts to your estimate based on bed taxes. If the figures are different by more than 10 percent, you may have some inaccurate occupancy or average room-night price data.

*Figure F. Estimating Total Room-Nights and Average Price Per Room-Night Using Hotel Occupancy and Bed Tax Data.*

*Let's say that there are 450 hotel rooms in your town. The average occupancy rate in January was 40 percent and the average occupancy rate in June was 80 percent. This would mean that there were a total of  $450 \times .40 \times 31 \text{ days} = 5,580$  room-nights in January and  $450 \times .80 \times 30 \text{ days} = 10,800$  room-nights in June in your community. Let's assume that we have estimated total lodging expenditures from bed tax data. Let's say that the January expenditure was \$306,900 and the June expenditure was \$702,000. This means that the cost per room-night to stay in your community was  $\$306,900/5,580 = \$55$  in January and  $\$702,000/10,800 = \$65$  in June. As you might expect, the average room rate tends to be lower during the off-season when hotel occupancy is lower and higher during the peak season when hotel occupancy is higher. It is possible to examine not only trends from year-to-year but also season-to-season in this way.*

### **Zip Code Surveys**

This is one of the easiest and most reliable ways to track visitation to your area. Ask local hotels and lodging establishments to track the home zip code of every guest checking in. This will tell you where your guests are coming from and when.

### **License Plate Surveys**

If it is not possible to get zip code information, this is another way to get a general idea of where your visitors are coming from. There are some challenges because rental cars may have local plates, and you have to dedicate someone to actually observing and recording plates accurately. Please note that it is important to get permission from the property owners before you do this.

### **Web Site Surveys**

Having a survey available for those that visit your Web site is a way to understand:

- The reasons why they are coming to your Web site
- The influence your Web site has on them visiting your local community
- Improvements that you can make on your Web site
- An opportunity to have them complete a follow up survey that will allow you to determine the conversion rate to your local community

There is technology available that will guide you through the setup of a survey that could be added to your Web site as visitors exit your site (see online surveys for more detail).

### **On-line Surveys**

It is possible to contract with a company that owns an "online panel" to ask a series of questions about your destination. The online panel is comprised of people who have agreed to participate in online surveys on a wide range of topics. It is important to make sure that the panel represents a balanced sample of the population as a whole.

If you have an existing database of E-mail addresses and you wish to ask these people a series of questions about your destination, or perhaps an event they attended in your area, there are online survey programs that allow you to compose your own survey and release it yourself to your desired respondents. Some of these online programs are Survey Monkey, QuestionPro and Zoomerang.

## **Database Management**

As discussed earlier, a visitor survey will provide you with a database that you can draw on to understand your visitors better. You can also build a database that contains information about people that have called your community or organization to obtain information. Maintaining such an “inquiry” database will:

- Provide information on potential visitors’ preferences and trends
- Provide a potential source of names for future research
- Provide a basis for employing a number of customer relationship marketing techniques

The key to acquiring a quality database is to:

- Develop a specific set of questions that is consistently asked of each inquirer.
  - Information that can be gathered includes name, home address (with zip code), phone number, E-mail address, date called, where they saw your number, reason for calling. If you code advertising you run in specific markets or as part of specific campaigns, you can also ask for the code in the ad they saw, ask which month they want to visit, and what their interests and preferences are during their potential vacation in your area.
- Consistently asking these questions is key
- Have all employees that interact with customers participate in data collection
- Have one person manage the database

How to use this data once you have obtained permission to contact them:

- Distribute newsletters, brochures and other media to this group
- Send information to individuals based on date they intend to visit or their vacation interests and preferences.
- Conduct a profile analysis on the database that will help you understand more about the demographics, psychographics and lifestyle characteristics of this group
- Conduct a conversion study on inquirers from a specific timeframe to determine whether they actually used the information you sent to visit your destination.

## **Attraction Visitor Counts and Admissions**

Another valuable set of data is visitor counts and admission to area attractions. These can be useful indicators of total visitor numbers in tracking trends at specific attractions. Without survey data, however, it is difficult to use this data directly to estimate visitor numbers and impacts. This is because both local residents and visitors may visit attractions, and it can be difficult or impossible to determine what percent of total people admitted are visitors. A review of the sign-in registers at your community’s attractions will indicate what percent of total visitors are local residents. Local residents tend to be less likely to sign such registers, thus you may overestimate the percentage of out-of-town visitors using this method.

Find out what kinds of visitor count data are available from local attractions. If some of your local attractions do not already keep a good count on the number of visitors (as is frequently the case for attractions with free admission), then you might consider working with them to establish a registry or to install turnstiles, door counters, or road counters.

Paid admissions may be a good way to keep count, except that some attractions sell memberships or an annual pass and allow free admission to card holders. Unless the attraction keeps track of member and complimentary admissions separately, these may be overlooked. Another problem with admission data is that if different admissions are charged for various age groups, it may not be easy to estimate total number of people admitted from the gross admission receipts alone. Check to see if your local attractions keep track of tickets sold by admission price category (such as children, adults, families, and senior citizens).

The admission data may help confirm trends that you see in the tax revenue data you collect. It may also reveal some changes in how popular specific attractions are to visitors over time. If a specific attraction is declining in number of visitors or not keeping up with other attractions, it may indicate some problems at that attraction. These problems could range from inconvenient hours of operation to the need for major repairs and remodeling.

## **Event-Related Figures**

Events that are held in enclosed areas requiring admission are the easiest to monitor. Use of event locations with limited entrances and exits (such as fair and rodeo grounds) might be encouraged even when admission is not charged in order to keep better track of the number of visitors. When this is not possible, due to the nature of the event or the purpose of the event, then it may be necessary to use other sources of information to estimate attendance. These include estimates by police of crowd size and estimates by volunteers with handheld counters stationed at key entry or exit areas and traffic counts. You may be able to supplement some of this information with data on raffle ticket sales or soft drink sales.

## **Visitor Information from Visitor Centers**

Many local chambers of commerce and convention and visitor bureaus maintain visitor centers to provide information to tourists. Keeping counts of people who stop for information is another good source of visitor numbers. There is typically no admission fee to enter a visitor center, so door counters and registration books are used to keep track of visitors.

A registration book can be used effectively to collect more information than simply where the visitor is from. You can also set up the registration to ask questions, such as how many nights visitors are staying in the community and how many people are in their visitor party, reason for visit, how they heard about the visitor center, and home zip code or country. Keep in mind that generally only a portion of total visitors stop at a visitor center and their characteristics may not be typical of all visitors.

## **Strategic Target Marketing Research**

Strategic target marketing means that destination marketing organizations specifically attempt to reach individuals within targeted segments, using traditional and non-traditional marketing approaches. This is called "target marketing," because instead of broadly advertising to everyone, you can pick specific media or approaches for a specific group of potential travelers. Tourism marketers generally find target marketing to be more cost effective and successful than non-targeted advertising or promotion.

Today's competitive environment increasingly suggests the importance of following a preferred customer-identification process by addressing issues of seasonality, geographic targeting, customer segmentation, and desired message in order to identify those customers most likely to travel to and within Arizona.

### **Seasonality**

Not all customer segments are equal and many prefer to travel during specific times of the year. From a research perspective, this is the easiest information for you to assemble, and you probably have a good "gut feeling" for the seasonality of your community without any research at all. However, for the sake of accuracy, you should consider gathering the following information:

- Contact your city or county finance department and ask for the transient occupancy tax collections by month for the past three years;
- Use a spreadsheet program such as Microsoft Excel to record the information and create a bar graph, using the months of the year across the base and the tax dollars collected by year as your vertical axis. You now have a graph of your seasonality, by month. You now have either proof of what you knew all along, or an eye-opening piece of information.

### **Geographic Segments**

It may not come as a surprise to learn that a majority of visitors to Arizona originate from Arizona or California. Assuming for a minute that you could not advertise your destination to everyone, upon whom would you concentrate? Your answer will probably be Arizonans or Californians, as it likely should be. Certainly, seeing busloads of Japanese tourists arriving at your destination for a day of shopping, dining and more shopping is the dream of every destination marketing professional. Even with this knowledge, it is important to thoroughly evaluate and track where these visitors are coming from. In addition, there are many factors that affect travelers planning decisions. Take for example the tragic events of September 11, 2001, travel patterns changed. Visitors were using their own vehicle, staying closer to home and taking

shorter trips. Travel will always be subject to current events. Knowing the average length of trip, distance willing to travel and mode of transportation will provide you with a remarkably clear picture of where to concentrate your tourism marketing efforts.

Once you determine how far visitors to your destination are willing to travel you should take out a map, and draw a circle with your area at the center, extending the perimeter to the equivalent this distance. Of course, mountain destinations with slow, winding roads might have to adjust the circle a bit. Now take a look at major population center(s) within the circle. If there aren't any, then cheat a bit until you get to one. In all likelihood, you have found your primary market. Below is a brief exercise to determine possible geographic target markets for your area.

What are the nearest population centers within two hours that might generate day visitors:

1. Name of city/area: \_\_\_\_\_ Population \_\_\_\_\_  
Hours away by car \_\_\_\_\_ Miles away \_\_\_\_\_  
Ease of driving (i.e. freeway/road conditions, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ Excellent \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Poor
2. Name of city/area: \_\_\_\_\_ Population \_\_\_\_\_  
Hours away by car \_\_\_\_\_ Miles away \_\_\_\_\_  
Ease of driving (i.e. freeway/road conditions, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ Excellent \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Poor
3. Name of city/area: \_\_\_\_\_ Population \_\_\_\_\_  
Hours away by car \_\_\_\_\_ Miles away \_\_\_\_\_  
Ease of driving (i.e. freeway/road conditions, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ Excellent \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Poor

What are the nearest population centers within five hours that might generate overnight visitors:

1. Name of city/area: \_\_\_\_\_ Population \_\_\_\_\_  
Hours away by car \_\_\_\_\_ Miles away \_\_\_\_\_  
Ease of driving (i.e. freeway/road conditions, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ Excellent \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Poor
2. Name of city/area: \_\_\_\_\_ Population \_\_\_\_\_  
Hours away by car \_\_\_\_\_ Miles away \_\_\_\_\_  
Ease of driving (i.e. freeway/road conditions, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ Excellent \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Poor
3. Name of city/area: \_\_\_\_\_ Population \_\_\_\_\_  
Hours away by car \_\_\_\_\_ Miles away \_\_\_\_\_  
Ease of driving (i.e. freeway/road conditions, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ Excellent \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Poor

Certainly, people living in the cities you listed above are not the only people likely to come to your community; you may now see people coming from all areas of the country, and even international travelers. What you should look for are those population bases most likely to generate new visitors.

### **Segmenting the Market**

What particular customer segments (age, gender, income, lifestyles, activities, and interests) should be targeted? Not everyone who lives in the cities listed above is equally likely to visit. If your area is located in the mountains, then people who like to hike, camp, and fish may be more likely to visit than those who travel for the opening of the opera season. Nor is it likely that you receive visitors in 12 equal monthly installments throughout the year. If you are located in a cool mountain area, your high season is probably in the summer time. If you are a desert community, chances are that more people seek out the warmth of your winters than the heat of July.

Dividing the market into segments means taking a look at who comes (and if so, when) and who does not (and if so, why not). For example, "campers" are a market segment, as would be "families with young children" or "seniors." The goal is to identify the customer segment in your geographic target which offers the highest potential as a visitor to your area.

Segmentation studies can be conducted in many different ways through mail, telephone, or on-line surveys for both visitors and nonvisitors. You can segment your customers based on data from existing visitor surveys or through analyses of an existing customer database (see Visitor Surveys and Database Management sections). The most desired segment would be those groups of people, out of the total number interviewed in the survey, who gave similar answers to specific travel-related questions.

## **Determining Most Effective Media and Message**

Once the desired customer segment has been identified, marketers need to: (1) know the preferences of the people they are talking to; (2) speak to them in a language that motivates them; and (3) speak to them when they are open to receiving the intended message. Market research that can provide this information includes:

### **Communications survey**

This type of survey is used to obtain trip planning characteristics of targeted customers, such as how and when visitors gather information for a trip, and what communication outlets they use for trip planning purposes (for example, magazines, Internet, radio, TV, etc.).

### **Advertising concept testing**

This testing is used to obtain the reactions of target customers to preliminary, rough versions of alternative advertising approaches. The objective is to test the ad with consumers to see if it works with the targeted customer before you spend the money to place the ad. A variety of survey methods can be used, but a qualitative data collection procedure such as a focus group is the norm.

## **Advertising Effectiveness Research**

Advertising effectiveness research measures whether your advertising is reaching the intended target markets and whether it is influencing those people to visit your destination. This research can be used not only to make necessary changes to your marketing mix and message, but it can also calculate a return on investment (ROI) that will help you determine whether your advertising program is paying the kind of dividends you expect it to. Two types of research can help determine marketing effectiveness: conversion studies and advertising tracking studies.

### **Conversion Studies:**

The purpose of conducting conversion research studies is to learn whether or not advertising and marketing campaigns generate visitors and profits greater than what would have occurred without using them.

Conversion studies are used for direct-response advertising, wherein the intent is to stimulate prospects to request travel information by returning a coupon, calling an 800 number, or visiting a Web site. The studies determine if consumers in your existing inquiry database have converted to visitors as a result of the direct-response campaign. These studies can be conducted many different ways (through mail, telephone, or on-line surveys) using names captured from those requesting information.

### **Advertising Awareness Studies:**

Advertising awareness studies are used to determine if consumers are converted to visit your destination by advertising solely on the basis of awareness and image-building impacts. They generally do not rely on an database, but rather a larger population that may have seen your advertising. There are two ways to conduct advertising awareness studies:

- One type typically includes a “pre-wave,” consisting of phone interviews with a representative sample of respondents in the target group just prior to the launch of a campaign, followed by a “post-wave” consisting of the same questionnaire administered to a representative sample drawn from the same target group.
- The second type would present samples of your advertising to a representative sample of your target consumers using either an online panel or a mail panel. Panels are comprised of people who have agreed to participate in surveys on a wide variety of topics. By starting with a group representing all people who could have seen your advertising in the markets you target, and not just the group represented in your inquiry database, you are able to include in the analysis people who saw and were influenced to travel to your destination, but did not actually call and order your visitor information. This can be critical to the measured success of a campaign.

## Return on Investment (ROI)

It can be exciting tracking visitor revenues, but many people who work in tourism are less excited about tracking the costs of tourism. Direct costs for visitor centers and tourism promotion are relatively easy to track. Visitor center costs can be identified and tracked as a separate expenditure in your organization's budget. Be sure to include in this amount the time spent by staff in serving visitors. If all bed tax revenues are earmarked for tourism development and promotion, then these visitor expenditures may also be documented and shared with local leaders and citizens. In addition, if there are events held primarily for out-of-town visitors, the revenues and costs of these events can be tracked. If the costs are consistently greater than the revenues, it may be time to evaluate whether the event should continue.

Often you hear tourism promoters claim that for each dollar spent on tourism promotion, X dollars are generated in tourist expenditures. The most common way to reach this amount is by dividing total tourist expenditures by the amount spent on promotion. While these claims are not completely accurate, the ratio of tourist expenditures to promotion expenditures is worth tracking over time.

The ratio is not a measure of either the average or marginal impact of promotion. Measuring expenditure changes generated by promotion is more difficult. It requires taking into account changes in the availability and quality of visitor facilities and attractions, and changes in customer service, inflation, and general economic conditions affecting tourism and travel.

*Figure G. Estimating Total Visitor Expenditures to Costs of Promotion Using Visitor Center Cost Data.*

*Let's say that total tourist expenditures in your community are \$2,000,000. The budget for the visitor center and all promotions last year was \$100,000. Therefore, the ratio of visitor expenditures to promotion costs is  $\$2,000,000/\$100,000 = 20$ . The following year, let's say that tourist expenditures were \$1,800,000 and promotion costs were \$100,000. The ratio now falls to 18. This may be due to a single poor tourism season or it may be due to ineffective use of the promotion funds. If the trend continues, it should be of concern.*

*Alternatively, let's say that you receive an extra \$20,000 for a special promotion campaign. During the year, visitor expenditures increase from \$2,000,000 to \$2,500,000. Dividing the increase in visitor expenditures ( $\$2,500,000 - \$2,000,000$ ) of \$500,000 by the increase in promotional costs of \$20,000, we get a ratio of 25. Since this is higher than the ratio of 20 for all visitor expenditures to promotion costs, you have an indication that the new campaign was successful. However, other factors unrelated to the promotion may have caused the increase in visitor expenditures. If the increase in expenditures was only \$250,000, the ratio would be  $\$250,000/\$20,000 = 12.5$ .*

Although tracking total visitor expenditures to promotion costs is a helpful indicator, local government officials are going to be much more interested in knowing whether or not the revenue generated by visitors is covering the public cost of serving customers. While it may be difficult to account for the use of public infrastructure such as roads and parks by visitors, costs for promotion should be readily available. Where possible, it is worthwhile to estimate additional costs for police service, search-and-rescue operations, maintenance of public parks and facilities, solid waste disposal from public receptacles, and road maintenance. Estimating these costs may require discussions with local service providers to identify total costs and visitors' contributions to those costs. The government revenues from visitors comes directly from taxes they pay and also indirectly from a portion of taxes paid by local residents who earn some of their income from tourism. Using bed tax information, you can assess a rough measure of direct revenues.

*Figure H. Estimating Direct Revenues and Direct Costs from Tourism.*

*Let's say the annual costs for tourism promotion and operation of the visitor center plus other local public service costs are \$250,000. This community has a 2 percent bed tax and collected \$80,000 in bed tax revenues. This means that there was \$4,000,000 in lodging expenditures in the community. Let's say that a recent survey tells us that 22 percent of visitor expenditures are on lodging. So the estimated total expenditures of visitors is  $\$4,000,000/.22 = \$18,200,000$ . The same survey shows that 61 percent of all visitor expenditures are on taxable retail items (i.e., groceries are not included). Visitors spent a total of  $\$18,200,000 \times .61 = \$11,100,000$  on taxable retail items. If the city retail tax is also 2 percent, then retail tax revenues from tourists would be  $\$11,100,000 \times .02 = \$222,000$ . Total direct revenues from tourists are  $\$222,000 + \$80,000 = \$302,000$ . In this case, direct revenues more than cover the direct promotion costs of \$250,000. The ratio of revenues to costs is then  $\$302,000/\$250,000 = 1.2$ .*

## **Improving Data Collection**

There may be additional initiatives that you can carry out to improve the quality of the information which is being collected about tourism in your community.

In terms of tax information, you can discuss with your city's fiscal officer or elected officials the need to provide lodging and retail sales revenue data, based on the month that the revenue was due (i.e., the month in which the sale occurred), so that it can be used to track trends.

Cost information from chambers and other organizations responsible for visitor centers and tourism promotion is most useful when costs related to tourism can be broken out from other costs. If you don't already keep track of costs in this way, it might be worth exploring with your bookkeeper or accountant as to how you may begin.

As suggested earlier, you can check to make sure that some mechanism is in place at all local attractions and at major tourist-oriented businesses to keep track of the number of visitors. If these mechanisms are inadequate, you can work with the manager of the facility to install registries, door counters, road counters, turnstiles, or other appropriate (formal or informal) tracking systems.

Encourage managers to have their frontline personnel routinely ask visitors appropriate questions to obtain information that will assist in the operation and marketing of the business. Such questions might include: Where are you from? How did you find out about (this attraction/business)? How long will you be staying in the community? Then establish a reporting mechanism within the community. Designate someone to make contact with the managers of local attractions and major tourism-oriented businesses on a quarterly (seasonal or annual) basis to collect and assess visitor data.

At your local visitor center, review your registration book and compare its numbers with the number of people coming through the door (if you don't have a door counter, get one.) If few are registering, try to develop strategies for increasing registrations, such as asking visitors to register before providing information, or hold raffles where visitors who leave their home address are entered into a periodic (monthly/quarterly) drawing for some travel or community-related prize (like a night for two at a local hotel).

Review the form you use for registration to make sure that you are collecting key information which will be important to you. Instruct your frontline people on how to greet visitors and encourage them to register. Then recognize your frontline people for the good job they are doing.

Find out about the training that local police have received in estimating crowds. See if there are ways to offer additional training to police personnel related to this important skill.

Finally, decide on a specific date each quarter, season, or year when you will schedule time to review data from the previous quarter, season, or year. Spend some time thinking about what the data means for tourism development in the community. Share this information with people in your community who are actively involved in tourism. Use it as a basis for updating yearly tourism-related plans.

## **Conclusion**

This guide has outlined strategies for collecting information about tourism in your community and the economic contribution tourism makes. The most credible data sources available to you are current visitor surveys which provide accurate expenditure and visitation estimates. However, without survey data, bed tax data also provides a credible source of information because it is collected by an outside, disinterested source.

It is possible to make fairly good estimates of lodging expenditures directly from this data. By making some assumptions about the percentage of total visitor expenditures on lodging, it is possible to come up with a rough estimate of total visitor expenditures (see Figure D). By keeping an inventory of hotels and their total number of rooms, you can track supply of rooms and room-nights in your community.

If hotels and motels in your community are willing to share occupancy data, you can estimate demand for room-nights in the community. By combining this information with lodging expenditures, you can track average cost per room-night (see Figure F). Estimating the total number of visitors to the community is extremely difficult without conducting a survey of visitors. Counting visitors at visitor centers, attractions and events, however, can give you some indicator of visitor levels over time and allow you to assess how well individual attractions and events are doing in your community.

Tourism activity cuts across a number of sectors in the economy, so it is virtually impossible to track total tourism impacts with secondary data. However, this information can be used to see how specific sectors like hotel and lodging, and eating and drinking places are doing over time in the community. Most of this data is available at the county level, and is available several years after it is collected. National, regional and state studies, as well as studies from other communities, can give you some indication of the trends in tourism that may help shape your decisions concerning product development and marketing.

It is important to follow and respond to trends over several years, rather than one year's events. You can also compare how your community is doing relative to other communities, the state and the nation. Reviewing the trends and questions presented in conjunction with the data you have collected can help you make tourism planning and marketing decisions. In addition, consumer feedback from community swaps, focus groups and postcard surveys can help you assess the quality of customer service in your community.

It is difficult to estimate the economic effect which tourism and travel are having on a given community, but this does not mean that you should not use all possible information at your disposal to make these estimates. To be credible, it is important to explain how you made these estimates. The strategies presented here should help you begin to estimate tourism activity in your community.

A final note on research ethics, it is important to know the unwritten rules of conducting research in order to avoid irritating respondents or diminishing their willingness to participate in research. Here are the key dos and don'ts:

**Maintain confidentiality.** Even if you do not explicitly state that respondents' answers will be held confidential, they will presume this. Once they have participated in a study, they should not be contacted again unless they have agreed to further contact. Information obtained through market research should never be added to a database (for example, to enhance future contacts with respondents).

**Do not mix selling and research.** It is important that research activities be kept separate from any outbound direct marketing. Research participation rates have been steadily dropping, in part from consumer fears that a survey will lead to a sales pitch.

## Resources

Tourism Data Resources:

- **Arizona Office of Tourism Web site** – <http://www.azot.gov>, under “Research & Statistics”
- **Specific information on how to conduct a visitor survey** – ,  
<http://www.azot.gov/documents/How%20to%20Create%20A%20Visitor%20Survey.pdf>
- **NAU Tourism Library** – <http://home.nau.edu/ahrrc/library.asp>
- **Travel Industry of America** – <http://www.tia.org/index.html>
- **United States Census Bureau** – <http://www.census.gov>
- **International Trade Administration, Office of Travel & Tourism Industries** –  
<http://tinet.ita.doc.gov>
- **World Tourism Organization** – <http://www.world-tourism.org/>
- **Economic Impacts of Tourism, Daniel Stynes** –  
<http://www.msu.edu/course/prr/840/econimpact/pdf/ecimpvol1.pdf>
- **Sample Size Calculator** – <http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>
- **Travel Research Certification Program:**
  - Lynne Fuller, CenStates Chapter TTRA  
110 E. Washington St., #1301, Indianapolis, IN 46204  
E-mail: [l.fuller@sbcglobal.net](mailto:l.fuller@sbcglobal.net)  
Phone: 317-634-6412

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# VI. ADVERTISING AND FULFILLMENT

## What is Advertising and Fulfillment?

The Advertising and Fulfillment division seeks to create a positive brand image for Arizona, through a comprehensive schedule of advertising aimed at stimulating interest and motivation levels of potential travelers in key target markets and customer segments. Representatives from this division are available to discuss branding, advertising strategy and terminology, media buying and developing a media plan, online and e-marketing, fulfillment, database marketing and relationship marketing.

In this section, you will learn the basics of advertising as well as practical methods to make your advertising dollars as cost effective and as targeted as possible.

Advertising is the cornerstone of most marketing plans, and having a marketing plan is the first key to success. A marketing plan enables companies to see the ultimate goal with clarity, and helps communicate the vision to employees, members, constituents and contractors. The advertising plan is only one component of the larger “marketing plan” picture. When completed, your plan should outline seven elements in your approach to marketing:

- Your advertising strategy and positioning
- The benefit to consumers
- Your positioning in the marketplace: What business are you in?
- Your target market
- Your budget
- The tools and techniques you'll use to reach your audience and how you'll measure results
- An implementation timetable

## Developing Your Advertising Strategy and Positioning

Effective advertising starts with creating your brand. To begin this process, start by asking the following questions:

What products does your destination have to offer tourists?

- Attractions: Lakes, National Parks, National Monuments, State Parks, Museums, Archeological Sites, Historical Landmarks
- Activities: Golf, River Rafting, Hiking, Birding, Shopping, Festivals, Special Tribal Events, (events unique to your destination)
- Lodging: Resorts, Hotels, Motels, Bed and Breakfast, Campsites, RV Parks, Dude Ranches

What are your destination drivers?

- Products or services unique to your area that draw the largest numbers of visitors. Nationally ranked golf courses, world-class dining, National and State Parks, one-of-a-kind shopping and entertainment, working dude ranches, rare art exhibits/artist colonies, etc.

How do you create advertising that highlights your strengths?

- Determine your unique selling points, and create advertisements that show your community as having a feature or benefit, as compared to other destinations.

## **Target Markets**

Developing target markets will allow you to focus on the consumers most likely to visit and benefit from your community's attractions and featured activities. Defining target markets will help maximize advertising dollars spent, allowing you to target with a laser pointer rather than a flood light.

Your community may utilize any or all of these criteria to develop your target markets:

- Propensity to travel to your destination. Are consumers likely to travel to your region of the state? Have they visited a nearby town, state or the Southwest? Do they take drive vacations often or fly often?
- Demographics. The population and makeup of your audience determined by age, income, residence, marital status, employment status, etc.
- Psychographics/Lifestyle Characteristics. Reads magazines, attends sporting events, dines out once a month, drives a Volvo, member of a frequent flyer club, etc.
- Population density. Are most of your visitors coming from Los Angeles or New York? You'll want to consider the ratio or percentage of the population in your markets compared to actual number of visitors or respondents.
- Climate. Weather conditions including temperature, precipitation, and wind, that characteristically prevail in your region; is the target living in a climate like yours? What makes your climate more attractive and when?
- Proximity. How close does the target live to your destination?
- Concentration of wealth/disposable income. Consumers may make a large amount of money, but do they also have significant debt, affecting their ability to travel?
- Media costs. Determine your budget for advertising and stick to it. Make sure you set frequency and reach goals as well as "response" goals. Determine what results you want and develop your plan to achieve those results.
- Transportation accessibility. Highways, airports, trains, buses.

## **The Brand – Arizona**

In today's intensely competitive marketplace, brands and the emotional connections that they are able to forge with their target audiences are key elements of competitive advantage. Yet traditional branding methods are being rendered ineffective as increasingly skeptical and message-bombarded consumers become overwhelmed by the noisy clutter of brand claims and hype.

A clearly articulated brand position is key to driving high impact and consistent brand messaging that cuts through the hype, differentiates your brand from the sea of competitors and resonates with your target consumers. Why? Because it is what a brand stands for in the mind of the target customer that dictates whether a product or service wins or loses in today's marketplace.

In 2005, AOT initiated a project to help brand Arizona. The information included in this section includes the overall brand promise, or emotional value that the state will deliver to the consumer. The brand dimensions that have been identified help provide a framework for each region of the state and the state as a whole to differentiate our destination and communities from the competition.

The images, colors and style elements that are representative of the overall brand positioning that AOT has defined help provide a consistent message in the marketplace and can be done on both a regional and community level as well. The brand dimensions are designed to solidly convey the destination drivers for the state, proper and consistent usage will help to ensure the overall effectiveness of the Arizona brand.

### **Brand Promise**

AOT's brand promise to the consumer is the heart and soul of the brand. It is a precise articulation of what makes Arizona unique and helps clarify the meaning of the brand. Arizona's Brand Promise: Inspiring Unforgettable Southwest Moments. The hallmarks of this brand promise:

- Built around the ultimate meaningful consumer benefit – memory-making experiences that are genuine, special, personal and one of a kind.
- Inspiring and directive; a unifying mission and rallying cry for a range of statewide stakeholders.
- Speaks to the genuinely inspiring places and experiences of Arizona.
- Arizona as the ultimate personification of the region – the real Southwest.

- The master promise of a brand promise system that is own-able on the regional and community level (i.e. Inspiring Unforgettable Northern Arizona Moments, Inspiring Unforgettable Flagstaff Moments and so on).

## **Brand Dimensions**

Brand Dimensions are the perceptions AOT wants to own in the market. It gives further meaning and clarity to the brand promise. The dimensions describe the unique elements of the brand's identity and values. Each of the following dimensions is actionable and tangible to the senses.

- **Unexpectedly Exhilarating Signature Scenery**
  - Arizona's own brand of signature scenery – no other state can claim it
  - Natural discoveries that genuinely awe inspire and wow
  - Arizona's breathtaking, yet largely unknown, natural diversity and inspiring contrasts
  - Diffuses perceptions of sameness and not much to see and do
  - A genuine sense of discovery
  - Captures Arizona's vast, open and unspoiled sensibility that other states cannot claim
- **Rejuvenating Open-Air Lifestyle**
  - An uplifting concept built around this dimension's core emotional benefit: rejuvenation
  - Sophisticated by nature
  - 'Open Air' designed both to capitalize on our year-round open-air climate – our key appeal and critical to articulate as well as contradict perceptions of Arizona as oppressively hot
  - Friendly, not formal
  - Carefree, yet confident
  - Energizing exploration – not wearing, hassled or harried
  - All about recharging your batteries through stimulating experiences
  - A genuine expression of Arizona lifestyle throughout the state – particularly characterizes our urban difference, and should be a key message for our city destinations
  - Opposite helps us further emphasize the positive energy that sets our urban experiences appealingly apart from our competitors
- **Timeless Discoveries**
  - A sense of heritage and rich history, stepping back in time
  - Off the beaten path exploration and discovery, including cultural discovery
  - Genuine
  - Characterizes the wealth of our unspoiled territory – Native American reservations, vast ranches, genuine cowboys, beautifully preserved national parks and monuments
  - Sense of timeless mystery from Native American ruins to old west towns
  - Cool, distinctive, individualistic small towns untainted by modern development and urbanization
  - Rural charm, friendliness
- **Vibrant Variety**
  - The vivid, diverse fabric of our state, both naturally and culturally
  - Speaks to the wider range of diversity including climate and weather throughout the state
  - All about choice – the wide range of choices that we provide to our visitors and traveling residents, the freedom to personalize their Arizona experience
  - Variety is about noticeable heterogeneity; virtually always connotes a pleasing collection of different offerings
  - An exciting range of engaging, stimulating and diverse experiences (i.e., intrepid exploration by day; spa, fine dining, nightlife by night)
  - Unique nature of our cuisine – zesty flavors, vibrant colors, fusion of flavors, creative combinations, cultural adventure
  - Energetic and exciting; rooted in joyful discovery

## **Creative Message**

As you develop your brand or image and identify target markets, you can also begin developing your creative message. Regardless of the mediums you utilize, your creative message should have continuity. It is important to set your destination apart from others by advertising what is important to your target market and not necessarily what is obvious. Your creative message should also build support for what your ads are designed to do, and set a tone and “personality” for your advertising.

Decide what you want your ads to accomplish before you create them. Make sure you have performance measurements in place to determine the success as well, such as number of phone calls generated, number of visits to the Web site, number of visitors to the event, etc. To measure results most effectively, a campaign or an advertising schedule must have a start date and an end date.

Here are a few suggestions for developing your message:

- Use the same font for all of your advertising and promotional pieces.
- Highlight your brand, products, or destination drivers through clear images.
- Focus on one message or idea; remember: “Less is More”.
- Use a “call to action” to drive consumers to take action.
- A “call to action” can be a telephone number, a Web site address, a mailing address, or any other method consumers may use to actively pursue your destination.
- Don’t forget your logo!
- Hint: “We Have It All” or “We’re in the Center of Everything” does not tell what is important about your destination. You should try to focus on one major attribute, and resist political pressure to be broadly inclusive.

## **Media Placements**

Research shows that the average American sees more than 3,000 advertising messages per day. Only one out of nine well-designed ads is ever “seen” by the targeted consumer. For an ad to make enough impact to motivate an action, it needs to be “seen” at least three times. So, to achieve significant results, your ads need to be in front of the consumer 27 times. Reach and frequency goals should be established at the beginning of every campaign.

## **Make a Commitment**

According to Jay Levingson & Seth Godin’s *The Guerilla Marketing Handbook*, if you don’t have a long-term commitment to advertise, don’t advertise. If you do advertise, it makes sense to use the same ad, to use the same media, and to buy enough frequency to reach your target customer countless times. Furthermore, remember that quality counts. Your ads should achieve the goals and objectives that you have established. Keep the ad simple. Answer the following questions to determine the quality of your advertising:

- What is the one idea that the consumer should take away from the ad?
- What action should the reader take after reading, hearing or seeing the ad? Don’t make consumers guess. Chances are, if they have to guess, you have lost them and your advertising will not meet your goals.

## AOT Advertising Initiatives

AOT places advertisements in publications and other media outlets that best reach the desired target markets, as well as publications targeting specific geographic regions. Often, print advertising is the most cost-effective medium. The cost of ad space depends on a variety of factors including the demographic profile of the publication's readers, circulation or reach (i.e. number of copies distributed), and the ad size. For specific rates, contact the individual publication or media outlet.

### AOT Target Markets:

#### Primary - Empty Nesters/Affluent Boomers

- 43 to 60
- Household income of \$75,000 or more
- In a relationship
- Travel 4 to 6 times a year for leisure
- 
- Live in suburban areas around cities
- No children at home



#### Secondary - Gen-X Families

- 27 to 42
- Household income of \$75,000 or more
- In a relationship
- Travel 1 to 2 times a year for leisure
- Live in suburban areas around cities
- One or more children



Although it is important to note *differences* between these targets, it is more critical to understand the *similarities* between them. Finding common touch points and lifestyle characteristics between targets allows for the maximization of efforts and resources.



As a result, lifestyle categories play a large part in AOT's FY09 National Campaign targeting. Lifestyle categories have been compared between Boomer / Empty Nesters and Generation X targets. Those lifestyle characteristics that are relevant to both groups of targets have been selected for this campaign to ensure consistent and effective messaging while stretching the budget to hit multiple target segments. The key lifestyle categories as identified by AOT are outlined below:



### Immersion / Entertainment Tourist

They like engaging, participatory and active entertainment as well as unique and engaging culinary experiences. They try new foods and new cuisines and prefer actively participating in the new food experience. They want to try the culture themselves by building something, taking part in a ritual, making food, wearing the garb, etc. They enjoy the group dynamic of a nightlife scene and like active dancing, wine tasting, drinking, game playing, etc. They enjoy concerts and are but are not passive symphony listeners or "standing staring at a statue" people – they are intrigued by concerts and art that actively engage their imaginations.

### Outdoor Tourist

They like low-exertion activities in beautiful and unique locations. They tend to enjoy light hikes, bicycle cruising, golf, and swimming. The experience of the destination must be different than how they partake in these activities at home – incredible scenery, interactive guided tours, diversity in what can be enjoyed in a day. They actively seek out environmental, green, and nature-based adventures.

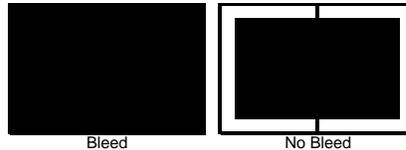
## Relaxation Tourist

They like unique relaxation experiences that offer a sense of place. They actively seek “ahhhh” moments like spa treatments, soaking in pools, relaxing drinks, reading, etc. The location of these activities must be unique, highly scenic, worthy of bragging rights to friends.

For the media plan and a complete list of contacts for advertising placed by AOT, please visit the Advertising page in the Programs section of [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov).

## Advertising Terms You Should Know

**Bleed:** Occurs when ad placement continues off page.



**BRC:** Usually the Business Reply Card appears inside the pages of publications to supplement an ad already running in the book. Readers may fill out their name and address, and mail it in (usually at no cost to the reader) to request more information.

**Column Inches:** Newspaper ad space is sold in column inches, similar to real estate or plots of land. A column inch measures 1 inch deep by 1 column wide, whatever the standard width is for the particular publication.

**Commission:** Most media automatically grant recognized advertising agencies a 15 percent commission on all ads placed. The Gross Rate is the Retail or “Commissionable” rate of an ad and the Net Rate is the Agency rate. For example, an ad with a gross cost of \$22,000 has a net rate of \$18,700 (15 percent less of gross). Ad agencies typically bill the client the gross amount for the ad and pay the publication the net rate. However, if you do not work with an agency to place advertising, it may be possible to negotiate a net rate to be billed directly to your company.

**CPM:** Cost per thousand. This is the cost of an ad divided by the publication’s circulation. For example, a \$15,000 ad in a magazine reaching 500,000 people has a CPM of \$30 ( $\$15,000/500$ ).

**Frequency:** Rate of recurrence of ad placement. Frequency or recurrence refers to the number of times a consumer is exposed to your ads in a single publication, or in a single broadcast station within a specific interval of time. Discounts are often given for higher frequencies in publications.

**Fulfillment:** The delivery system through which information is distributed from beginning to end. In some cases, this is the distribution of collateral, Web site address and/or answers to questions. The system may begin with a consumer calling for more information, data-basing the lead and mailing the requested information to the consumer.

**GRP:** Gross Rating Points - The total number of all rating points achieved in a market for a spot placement schedule. GRP is equal to the average quarter hour rating (AQHR) multiplied by the number of spots. For example, if the AQHR is .5 and your destination ran 100 spots, the GRP would be 50. Similar to a Cost per Thousand, GRP allows advertisers to compare the GRPs achieved per station or channel per campaign or dollars spent.

**Gross Impressions:** Gross impressions are calculated by multiplying the average number of viewers, listeners or readers by the number of spots or insertions in a schedule. For example, if there were 24,000 listeners to a radio station and your destination ran 20 spots, the gross impressions would be  $24,000 \times 20 = 480,000$  gross impressions.

**Insertion Order:** An order form provided to a client by the publication or media vendor which details placement of advertisement, cost of placement, and materials due date; this is a contract that both publication and client sign.

**Placement:** This refers to the positioning of advertisements in optimal markets to influence consumers to travel to your destination.

**Production:** All procedures necessary to produce an ad, including graphic design, match prints (high quality color copy that is a true representation of the printed piece), copywriting, etc.

**Reach:** The number of different people exposed to your ad. A measurement of unduplicated audience; i.e., the circulation of a publication.

**ROI:** Return On Investment is determined by the amount spent on your campaign and the amount of impressions, responses, sales, and/or revenue it generates. How much was returned for the money spent? For example, a hotel spends \$1 million on an advertising campaign, and generates 20,000 room reservations at \$150 a room. A simple calculation indicates the revenue generated is \$3,000,000 (20,000 X \$150), and the return on investment is \$3.00 (\$3 million divided by \$1 million). This means that for every dollar the hotel spends, it generates \$3.00 of revenue. Or, companies may consider the incremental value of those people now staying in the hotel spending money on meals, spa treatments and other incidentals.

**Share:** Share, or to be more exact, share of audience is a broadcast term used in television and radio which indicates the percentage of all people listening to or watching a specific channel or station. For example, only 60 percent of the television sets in the Phoenix DMA are on at 7:00 p.m. on a Tuesday night. The program gets a 10 rating (10 percent) in this 7:00 p.m. time period. Its share is based on a universe of only viewing households. Therefore its share is 16.7 (16.7 percent or 10 percent divided by 60 percent). The share of a program is always larger than its rating. Whereas ratings define the size of a TV audience, share indicates the strength of a program versus its competition in a given time period.

**Sample Publications, Readership Information, and Rates:**

Before advertising in any publication or media outlet, contact the advertising department and request a media kit. Media outlets will provide the media kit at no charge to you. Most media outlets also offer media kit online as well. The media kit will tell you everything you need to know to advertise, such as how many copies are distributed, where the publication is distributed, display advertising rates, mechanical specifications of ads, deadlines for various issues and months, and more. Most media kits also include demographic, psychographic and geographic information, which will enable you to decide whether the readership is an appropriate target market and a good investment. Samples of this type of information are listed below for five publications.

Publication	Travel + Leisure	Golf Digest	Sunset	National Geographic Adventure	US Airways In-Flight Magazine
Circulation	950,000	1,600,000	1,450,000	600,000	1,386,000
Median Age	51	52	51	43	44
Median HHI	\$94,969	\$130,806	\$85,544	\$69,720	\$91,931
Full-Page 4C	\$101,325	\$110,080	\$95,625	\$76,360	\$27,040
1/2-Page 4C	\$60,795	\$63,160	\$57,790	\$45,815	\$16,220

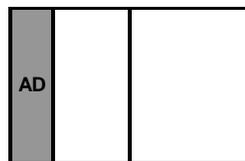
Additional information on other media outlets with which AOT advertises can be found online at [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov), or can be obtained by contacting the Advertising & Fulfillment Division at (602) 364-3705.

**Sample Advertising Size and Placement in Magazines**

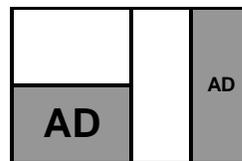
Mechanical specifications vary from publication to publication. The layouts below illustrate the most common configurations for display advertising. Each publication has its own individual size, so never assume that your ad can go to every publication with the same dimensions or in the same format. Mechanical specifications and deadlines for materials can be obtained from the media kit or by contacting your advertising sales representative at the publication.



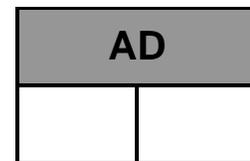
FP4C: Full Page, four-color ad



1/3P4C: 1/3 Page, four-color ad



1/2FP4C: 1/2 Page, four-color ad



1/2PSPD: 1/2 Page spread ad

## **Additional Advertising Opportunities**

Additional advertising opportunities can be found in outdoor billboards, online advertising, television and radio. While these media offer an exciting way to advertise your product, the cost associated with production and placement can be quite significant. The same creative message principles should be applied to any medium. Check with local companies to find out about opportunities within your designated target market area, either locally or regionally. Your destination may consider the following guidelines for selecting advertising placement:

### **Internet/Online:**

**Advantages** – Online advertising technology allows for very specific targeting. The cost per thousand (CPM) to target users is much lower than other media. There can be a high visual impact and results can be measured quickly (fast turn-around times)

**Challenges** – Click-through rates from online banner advertising is typically low. Additionally, a robust tracking and statistics system should be in place so that you can understand what users do once they click-thru to your site. The use of Internet advertising can be highly intrusive and easily ignored by users. Outside of the highly mainstream Web sites, there is still concern over how impressions (number of times that an ad is viewed) are served/tracked on the sites.

### **E-mail/E-mail Blasts:**

**Advantages** – Similar to the Internet/online benefits, advertising through e-mail or e-mail blasts offers very low-cost, direct target-marketing capabilities. The CPM is much lower than the costs of other direct marketing options, and can have a high impact with easily tracked results.

**Challenges** – E-mail and Internet opportunities have many of the same disadvantages as online advertising. Click through rates tend to be very low. Depending on the quality of the E-mail names you are sending to (especially if they have been purchased from a third party), there may be a high rate of bounce-backs (returned, or undeliverable mail). E-blasts can also be easily deleted or ignored without even being viewed, thanks to new filtering software provided by many e-mail providers. It is critical to stay apprised of current spam laws and ways in which to maximize the potential of your message being received and read.

### **Newspaper:**

**Advantages** – Newspaper offers advertisers a large circulation. The readership is often located close to your destination, and newspapers offer a high degree of flexibility to alter your advertisements. The medium reaches a broad audience and can usually be purchased by “section” to help you target your audience even further. This tool is great for getting across facts, special-event dates and phone numbers which readers can keep. Ads can usually be purchased on very short notice.

**Challenges** – Newspaper advertising has a short shelf life (newspapers are usually discarded daily), and are not nearly as targeted as magazines or other media outlets. The readership and circulation of printed newspapers has been on the decline in recent years. Ask your newspaper about their online programs in conjunction with the print advertising as this will increase your exposure.

### **Magazines:**

**Advantages** – Magazines may be of general interest or aimed at specific audiences. Readers often have ads (the magazines) in their homes for a month (or until the magazine is published again), and there are usually several readers per copy. Magazines publish editorial calendars so you know what stories will run in advance, and whether or not it’s appropriate to run advertising in specific issues. The print quality of a magazine is typically much better than that of a newspaper.

**Challenges** – Advertisers must plan far in advance, and costs may be high for a more targeted focus.

**Radio:**

Advantages – Radio is considered to be a very persuasive medium. The radio advertiser can buy “spots” of time, in either 30 or 60-second segments, between or during regular programming. The size of the radio program’s audience, as well as the time the advertisement will be on air, determines how much money a station will charge for the ad placement. Radio can target by age, gender and interests, and there is an opportunity for high repetition. Radio is immediate and timely, but the message needs to be easy to understand and remember.

Challenges – Radio can be an intrusive medium. The listener is often doing something else while listening. Radio does not allow for visual images. Listening audiences tend to be fragmented, so a broad reach is difficult to achieve under normal buying circumstances.

**Television:**

Advantages – Like radio, television is purchased based on time of day and frequency. Costs are broken down into parts of the broadcast day (dayparts). Audiences are both larger and more diverse than radio. TV commercials create an image and can show your destination. People believe what they see. TV broadcast offers great emotional appeal and involvement for the viewer and provides an atmosphere of being there.

Challenges – Ad production costs are probably most expensive for television. A lot of money can be spent for very little response except for high branding value. It is difficult to do both branding and direct response with TV commercials. In addition with the dawn of TiVo and DVR there is greater potential of your message being overlooked or forwarded through. Have realistic expectations going in.

**Outdoor Billboards:**

Advantages – Billboards can reach millions of consumers if placed on national highways, but producing large quality images may be expensive. Aside from ad production costs, billboards can be very affordable. Billboards are big and bold and deliver messages with power on a continuous basis, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Outdoor advertising reaches audiences in a very specific location.

Challenges – The cost of a billboard is based on the location of the billboard. The busier the location, the more the board will cost. Advertisers are limited to a very brief message, keep in mind ‘less is more’; seven words or less is best, and the boards are often not available when you want them. Great billboard ads take considerable planning.

**Direct Mail:**

Advantages – The advertiser has total control over both message and audience with direct mail. It also offers a detailed and personalized appeal. Often, direct mail is an inexpensive alternative for reaching a large audience. Mail can be flexible, quickly executed and specifically targeted, and can serve as a reminder of an earlier or upcoming advertising campaign. Responses are easy to measure and good for reaching previous visitors. A direct mail effort should call the reader to take action. A typical response rate is 6% of total sent.

Challenges – The medium is most cost-effective for businesses that can offer a special discount or offer, and less so for a general branding promotion.

**Where to start and what media to use?**

Research your target market. Determine demographics and lifestyle characteristics. Find out what they read, watch or listen to, and when they are open to receiving your message. Reason indicates that your target will be more inclined to listen to your message in certain instances more than others. Billboards are great examples of how well-placed advertising can generate great impact.

An ad placed along well-traveled highways or roads a few miles from an attraction can draw visitors who are looking for something else to do along that road. It may seem impulsive, but the travelers are in their car, reading signage along the road, and if their interest is piqued they may have time in their vacation schedule

to make a stop. Timing is crucial. This same general example can be applied to buying regional sections of a newspaper or targeting specific consumers online.

Develop your budget first to help determine what your organization can realistically afford. Remember to plan for a long-term commitment. Develop a plan and follow it. Adjustments are allowed along the way, but make sure to follow through with an established time commitment. For example, don't pull a newspaper ad after you have only let it run once. Frequency is necessary for results. Compare your results to like businesses, destinations or competitors. Research what your competitors are doing and find out what has worked for them. If competitors won't work with you, ask the sales representatives to provide you with historical data on other destinations or communities results, so you have a benchmark and realistic expectations for the various mediums.

Look into fostering partnerships/cooperative opportunities with other organizations within your community that may have complementary product offerings and target markets. Cooperative ad buys allow you to share the expenses of advertising with a partner and at the same time appeal to a larger audience.

### **Advertising on the Internet**

The Internet has proven to be an extremely popular way for consumers to gather information about travel destinations, and a convenient way to buy travel. According to Pew Internet, 73 percent of the U.S. population uses the Internet. Before starting any online advertising campaign, ensure that your Web site offers comprehensive and useful information for your audience.

Following are some basic tips when creating a tourism-focused Web site:

- Choose a URL (Web site address) that is short, easy to remember, says who you are and contains key words that describe your organization.
  - Example: arizonaguide.com. Arizona and the keyword Guide are easy to remember and good for search engine optimization.
- Use a consistent design and layout throughout site.
- Make Web site images consistent with your offline images.
- Don't post pages that are under construction.
- Avoid putting too many images on your pages. Numerous images tend to create additional download time for your users.
- Keep graphics small. Use "thumbnails" on a photo album page to keep loading time to a minimum.
- Have as much information on the site as possible, but make sure it is well organized and concise. Use "click here for more information" links and icons.
- Use a site map, search function or index and make sure your site is easy to navigate.
- Steer clear of gimmicks such as scrolling text, music, etc. They tend to annoy more than entertain.
- Add value and interactivity to your Web site with helpful links, maps, giveaways, games, etc.
- Incorporate an interactive request form, guest book and/or survey. Make sure your Web site is truly a two-way street. Again, double check the CAN-SPAM laws.
- Update your Web site often. Even if it is just a photo, web users respond to visual clues to tell them that something has changed on your site.
- List your Web site with all the major search engines and check often to see where you page is listing in the search ranking.
- Link to additional informational sites, such as map sites and weather sites that will provide valuable information for your consumer.
- Consider using a "splash page" for destination marketing (a splash page is a colorful opening page that leads into the site).
- Evaluate whether to develop your Web site in-house or hire a company to produce one for you (if you have Web design expertise in-house, use it. If not, consider outsourcing your Web site development).

Below are key information categories that are popular for destination Web sites. Keep in mind that these are popular categories, but not all may be right for your business or community site.

- Accommodations
- Activities
- Calendars of Events
- Cities
- Contact Information (E-mail for all staff)
- Dining Guides
- FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)
- Maps (Don't forget the possibility of linking to a map on the Web)
- Media Center/Pressroom with link to appropriate staff – include a press kit and photographs
- Meeting Planning/Convention Planning Information (and link to appropriate staff)
- Photo Gallery
- Photo Library/Film Commission
- Shopping Guides
- Special Offers/Vacation Deals/Coupons or Discounts
- Sweepstakes
- Travel Industry Marketing/Trade Information
- Visitor's Guide Request Forms
- Weather

### **Using E-mail to Keep Your Customer Coming Back**

Once you have established a database of customers, and the database of names continues to grow, there are ways to contact your customers again to remind them (frequency) about your destination. Marketing is an ongoing process; it doesn't stop after you have that customer's name in your database, or after he or she has stayed at your property. The goal is to establish a relationship with your customers and convince them to return to your destination often.

E-mails, e-newsletters and e-cards are effective ways to efficiently reach your customers. Sending promotional E-mails to your internal list of customers is usually accomplished by using E-mail marketing software. E-mail marketing software is offered by a variety of companies, with numerous plans, prices and features. When choosing an E-mail marketing software consider how many E-mails you are going to be sending per month, how much flexibility you need in the creation of the E-mails and how in-depth you want to track the results of your E-mail campaigns.

Here are a few companies that offer E-mail marketing software:

- ConstantContact - <http://www.constantcontact.com/>
- E-mailLabs - <http://www.E-maillabs.com/>
- Lyris - <http://www.lyris.com/>
- BlueHornet - <http://www.bluehornet.com/>
- ExactTarget - [http:// exacttarget.com/](http://exacttarget.com/)

### **Fulfillment**

Consumer inquiries are collected through AOT's call center, Web sites, business reply cards (BRCs), reader service listings (RSLs), white mail, kid's requests and promotions. The leads are then filtered through a series of analysis tools and fulfilled in a customized manner. AOT produces two pieces annually for distribution through our fulfillment channels. Both the Official State Visitor's Guide (OSVG) and Official State Visitor's Map constitute AOT's standard travel packet and are the primary fulfillment pieces for AOT. The Official State Visitor's Guide is available both online, and as a printed piece. Consumers may select electronic or print fulfillment, or both.

With potential visitors segmented by interest and qualified by propensity to travel, AOT may re-contact these consumers after they receive their travel packets to provide more specific information and ensure a higher conversion rate. With new technology, AOT has significantly improved the ability to track customers and record their interests and activities they plan to do while visiting Arizona. This data capture is integral to the

success of AOT's relationship marketing projects and builds the foundations for valuable cooperative marketing programs.

The arizonaguide.com Official State Visitor's Guide Request form is one example of how AOT gathers information in order to track customer's inquiries and actions.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://www.arizonaguide.com/Request.aspx>. The page title is "Request a Free Vacation Guide". The navigation menu includes: Home, Where to Go, What to Do, Where to Stay, What's Happening, What to Know, Travel Deals, and Request a Search. The main content area features a large image of a desert landscape and the heading "Request an Official Visitors Guide". Below this, there is a form with the following fields and options:

- A text input field for "Email\*" with an asterisk indicating it is a required field.
- Radio buttons for "Which version would you like to receive?": Print, Electronic, and Both.
- Form fields for "First Name\*", "Last Name\*", "Address\*", "Address (Cont.)", "City\*", "State/Province\*" (with a dropdown menu), "Zip/Postal Code\*", "Phone", and "Country\*" (with a dropdown menu set to "United States").
- A dropdown menu for "Have you already decided to visit Arizona?" with a "Choose:" label.
- A dropdown menu for "If yes, when?" with a "Choose:" label.

On the right side of the page, there are several promotional sections: "ARIZONA" logo, "Request an Official Visitors Guide" button, "My Itinerary", "Newsletter Subscription", "Questions? Chat Live", "Travel Deals" (with a link to "Full Deals List >>"), and "Calendar of Events" listing various events with dates and links to "More Info >>".

## Call Center

AOT contracts the use of a call center to answer incoming calls that are a result of advertising placements. Contact One Call Center handles call center services for AOT. The Tucson, Arizona based operators receive monthly training on tourism products throughout the state, as well as regular customer service training.

Guest speakers from Arizona Destination Marketing Organizations (chambers, CVBs, tribal lands, and other associations) are invited to visit Contact One and educate operators on their destinations and product offerings. In an effort to accommodate as many speakers as possible, representatives will be grouped together by region or niche when appropriate by AOT. If you are interested in being a guest speaker, please contact the Fulfillment Manager at 602.364.3712 .

## Data Entry

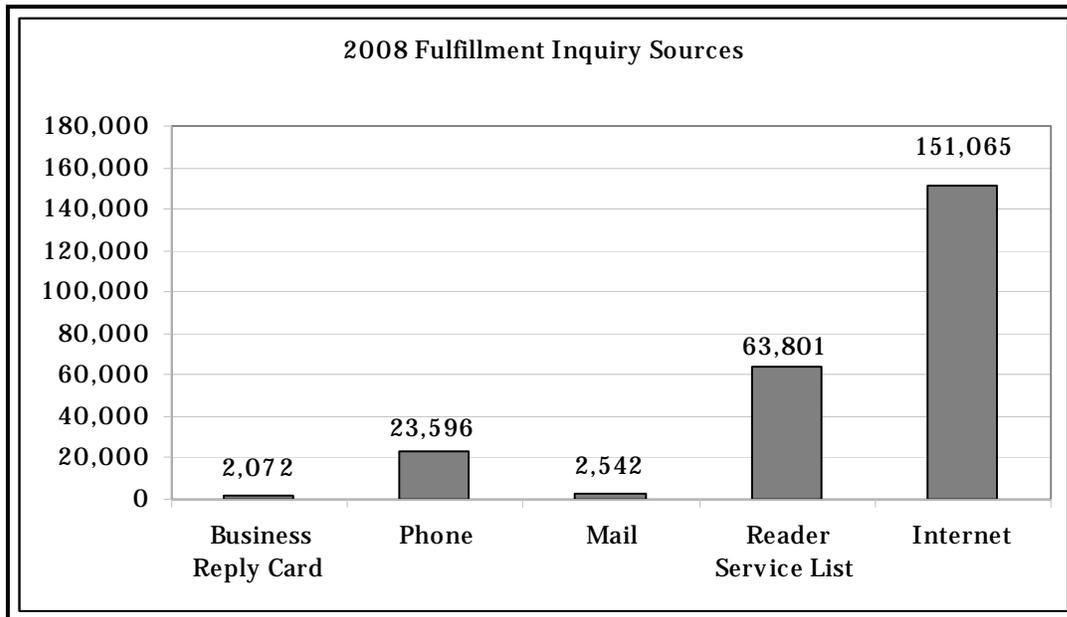
Due to the high volume of leads, AOT out sources all data entry needs. HDI Solutions, AOT's data entry vendor keys in all kids' requests, white mail, Business Reply Cards and Reader Service Listing leads. Once completed, all records are transferred for fulfillment, storage and data analysis.

## Data Analysis

RUF Strategic Solutions provides AOT with a seamless process for data transfer. Its data analysis and warehousing capabilities allow AOT to store all 2.7 million leads in a comprehensive database, and to analyze segments of that database to further identify key target markets, consumer preferences, campaign success and much more.

## Arizona Travel Packets

AOT's standard travel packet containing the OSVG and Official State Visitor's Map is fulfilled in Tampa, FL through Jagged Peak. Once all leads from data entry, the Web and the call center are transferred to RUF for consolidation, storage and data analysis, names are sent to Jagged Peak for fulfillment. The entire process from the moment AOT receives a request to the time that the travel packet is received by the consumer averages 2-3 weeks.



## Relationship Marketing Opportunities through the AOT

The Arizona Office of Tourism, in cooperation with RUF Strategic Solutions, can provide direct marketing opportunities to chambers of commerce, convention and visitor's bureaus and tribes around the state. These services are outlined on the following page and include utilizing AOT's database for direct mailings and email campaigns, acquiring new customers through the purchase of new names, and enhancing visitor information by appending customer data.

### Direct fulfillment to names from AOT's database

Through the direct fulfillment program, AOT's database information (name, address, E-mail, source of inquiry, interests, etc.) on qualified customers – people who have previously requested an Arizona travel packet – is utilized to create a customized mailing list. AOT then directly fulfills those leads for the interested DMO (with a DMO provided collateral piece) from our fulfillment house in Florida or through our email systems.

Specific information about each customer is captured in AOT's database. Then, partners provide characteristics or criteria for the group they want to target. For example, a partner may request the following criteria to sort consumer inquiries (names):

- Inquiries received in the last twelve months
- Inquiries from California and Illinois
- Inquiries that have E-mail addresses
- Inquiries that said they were interested in golf

The AOT database can also provide Smart Target and Smart Target Plus life-style/psychographic and household clustering information on each customer in AOT's database. Partners can select criteria from 114 different lifestyle characteristics. The customization enables partners to create a message that speaks more

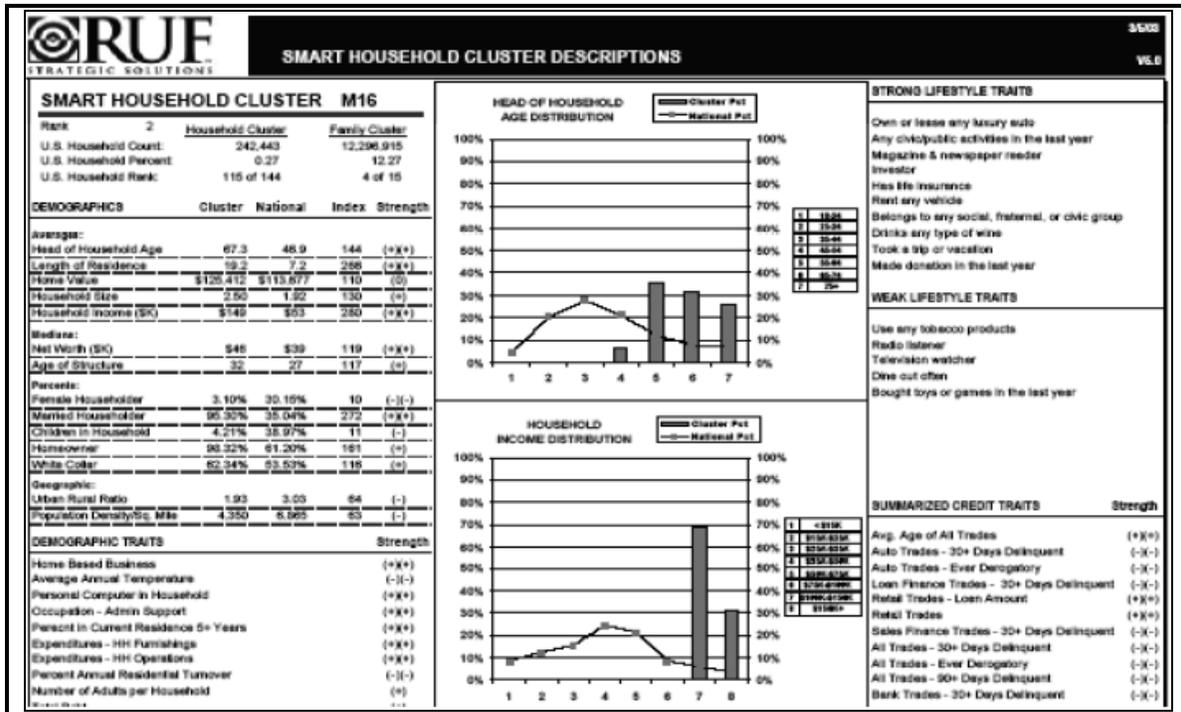
directly to their targets, creating a stronger impact. This process is usually successful at meeting the partner's goals and objectives efficiently. For example, a partner may request the following criteria to pull an extremely targeted list of individuals who:

- Subscribe to Smithsonian Magazine
- Have an American Express Card
- Drive a Volvo
- Have a household income (HHI) of \$75,000+

### Acquiring New Customers

Another option is to acquire new names outside of the AOT database. Annually, AOT completes an analysis of the consumer inquiry database in order to identify target segments likely to inquire about Arizona travel information. Other travel and lifestyle characteristics of consumers are also available.

The options for buying new names similar in characteristics to those in AOT's consumer inquiry database are outlined under the "Purchase New Names" section. The benefit of going through AOT to purchase names is that some of the work has already been done for you. The Smart Target and Smart Target Plus systems provide a demographic profile and a lifestyle profile of households exclusive to AOT's data analysis vendor. Purchasing a list of names from a mailing house may be more affordable, but will not allow the same kind of segmentation or intelligence. Being familiar with AOT's database and consumer profiles makes it easier to choose new customers who are more likely to respond to your particular advertising campaign. See the illustration below for an example of how AOT can segment consumer populations, based on very specific demographic and lifestyle characteristics.



### Distribute Marketing Material in AOT Travel Packets

AOT's main fulfillment packet consists of the Official State Visitor's Guide (OSVG) and Official State Map. Opportunities are available for DMO's (Destination Marketing Organizations) to insert marketing or promotional material (standard rack size brochure or CD's) into outgoing travel packets.

## Advertise in the Official State Visitor's Guide (OSVG)

The OSVG is the 144-page fulfillment piece for the Arizona Office of Tourism's consumer requests. Advertising space and listings are currently available for next year's OSVG. Advertisers are listed on the FREE Reader Service Card for direct, qualified leads. In addition, the entire publication is available online in an interactive magazine format, which includes direct links back to advertisers Web sites, on [www.arizonaguide.com](http://www.arizonaguide.com).

Additionally, advertising opportunities are available in other AOT publications such as The Professional Travel Planners Guide, and international language publications such as our German, Spanish and French language guides.

### Monthly E-Newsletter

On a monthly basis, AOT sends an e-newsletter to more than 50,000 opt-in inquirers. Each month, E-mail recipients will be selected by special criteria such as geo-targeting, interests, and time of year they are traveling, based on topics for that month. AOT features editorial/advertorial copy about Arizona, focusing on different niches and areas of the state based on the editorial calendar. Tribes, Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) and their membership bases have opportunities for involvement to further represent their regions. Partners will receive advertorial opportunities as well as links to their Web sites.

### AOT FY09 Monthly E-Newsletter Editorial Calendar

#### 2008

July:

**Timeless Discoveries** – Native American experiences, cool temperatures and towns.

August:

**Unexpectedly Exhilarating Signature Scenery** – cover nature, outdoor adventure statewide, and the attributes of the unexpected beauty of the state.

September:

**Vibrant Variety** – (color is key in the images used to convey this idea – red rocks, brilliant sunsets, etc.) Fall colors in the northern part of the state.

October:

**Timeless Discoveries** – rich and storied landscape. Off the beaten path exploration and discovery. Ghost Towns, mystifying ruins, mining towns, and night filled skies.

November:

**Unexpectedly Exhilarating Signature Scenery** – national and state parks, Grand Canyon adventures.

December:

**Vibrant Variety** - Urban energy of Greater Phoenix and Tucson, eclectic dining and shopping, artwalks and nightlife.

#### 2009

January:

**Rejuvenating Open Air Lifestyle** - sightseeing, dining with a view, romantic getaways, spas, and cultural performances.

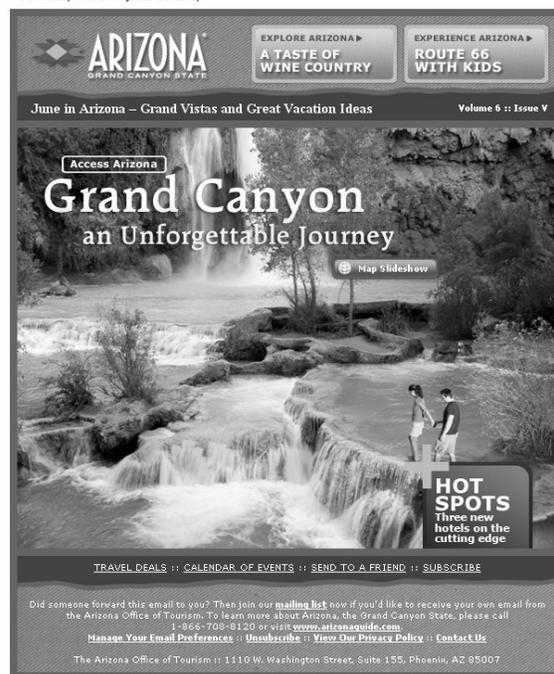
February:

**Rejuvenating Open Air Lifestyle** – Cactus League, al fresco dining, and golf.

March:

**Geotourism** – Timeless Discoveries – natural old west, preservation, sustainability, dude ranches, and spring training.

IN THIS ISSUE: A Taste of Wine Country :: Route 66 with Kids :: Hot Spots: Three new hotels on the cutting edge :: Grand Canyon an Unforgettable Journey



- April:           **Vibrant Variety** - museums, modern art and architecture, summer fun, and culinary travel.
- May:            **Rejuvenating Open Air Lifestyle** - family water activities, learning adventures, and resort values.
- June:           **Timeless Discoveries** – stars and solstice, observatories, film and stars.

### **Relationship Marketing In Action**

AOT strongly encourages all DMO's and tribes to get involved with the high quality, low-cost opportunities developed to aid communities throughout Arizona in expanding their reach and encouraging tourism in the State of Arizona.

For example, a partner could create a direct marketing campaign to Arizona residents using email addresses from the AOT database. The partner would purchase 10,000 email addresses at for one-time direct fulfillment. AOT would send out of the email on the partner's behalf from AOT's systems. The partner would be responsible for content creation of the E-mail, tracking responses, administering the call-to-action, and fulfillment of requests.

### **Enhancing Your Own Visitor Information and Consumer Inquiry Database**

There are many options as listed on previous pages within this section which illustrate ways that organizations can enhance programs and gain more leads through partnering with AOT.

One tool that may greatly benefit what you know about the individuals in your database is by appending or adding information to what your inquirer or customer has already given you. The appending data function is a process that includes taking customer data and adding information to the record based on zip code. This process is another resource available for Arizona tourism partners. Basically, the process appends household information to a database, like a guest register. For instance, if zip codes were the only piece of data collected, estimated household age, income, ethnicity, presence of children in the household, homeownership and marital status could be added to the records based on the zip code. This data may provide more demographic information to the partner's customers than was previously available. Partners would be able to use this data to determine characteristics about their customers to better target their marketing goals and objectives.

These services are provided to tourism partners wishing to develop a program that will be both beneficial to and successful for their businesses and AOT. The Arizona Office of Tourism reserves the right to make changes to any of the above programs. To learn more, contact the Fulfillment Manager at 602.364.3721.

## Interactive Consumer and Business Web sites

### Arizonaguide.com: The Arizona Office of Tourism's Consumer Web site

The Arizona Office of Tourism's primary consumer-focused Web site, arizonaguide.com, is continually being updated and enhanced to encourage potential travelers to visit the Grand Canyon State. Last year, the Web site underwent a major redesign which incorporated several more categories of information, new content and a focus on the five geographic regions: Phoenix and Central Arizona, Tucson and Southern Arizona, Northern Arizona, North Central Arizona, and Arizona's West Coast.



Additionally, the Web site also contains major sections on 'Where To Go', 'Where To Stay', 'What's Happening' and the 'What to Do' section, where consumers can learn about all the different activities available in Arizona. This section is divided into 12 major categories: The Grand Canyon; Arts, Culture & Heritage; Dining; Driving Tours; Family Fun; Golf; Nightlife; Outdoor Recreation; Shopping; Spas; Special Interests; Sports, and with a link to the Arizona Scenic Roads site. These categories are further divided into relevant subcategories where consumers can find more information and descriptive listings of businesses and locations where these activities can be enjoyed.

The listings are compiled from information from AOT's partner CVBs, Chambers and third party providers. Listings are updated bi-annually. Contact your local CVB or Chamber for more information. This information makes arizonaguide.com a rich source of information while also providing these organizations an excellent opportunity to further promote their local businesses.

Additionally, arizonaguide.com also provides links to Arizona's convention and visitor bureaus, chambers of commerce, tribal information, designated AOT niche groups, and other valuable Arizona tourism-related sites. These convenient links allow our tourism partners to benefit from the high volume of traffic this site generates. The more visitation arizonaguide.com garners, the more opportunity for Arizona communities to attract visitors to their Web sites.

## Arizonaguide.com/KidZone: The Arizona Office of Tourism's site for Kids

KidZone is an educational Web site for school-age children based on virtual tours of Arizona's public lands, historic sites, and cultural attractions. This Web site is featured on [www.arizonaguide.com](http://www.arizonaguide.com). KidZone educates students on state history and geography while it promotes communities, outdoor recreation and attractions statewide.

The screenshot shows the KidZone website interface. At the top left, the title "Kid Zone" is displayed in a large, bubbly font. To its right, the text "Main Site" is visible. Below the title, a navigation bar contains links for "Welcome!", "Play Games!", "Arizona Facts", "Teachers", and "Student Sign Up". The Arizona state logo, featuring the word "ARIZONA" above "GRAND CANYON STATE", is positioned in the top right corner. A map of Arizona is shown, divided into five regions: "Northern Arizona", "North Central", "Arizona's West Coast", "Phoenix & Central Arizona", and "Tucson & Southern Arizona". To the right of the map, a "Welcome Kids" section contains a paragraph of text: "This interactive Web site has been created especially for elementary school students to provide general, tourism and recreation information on Arizona. For example, if students want to learn about the Grand Canyon, the Wild West or want to know when Arizona became a state or what is the state flower or state bird,". Below this text is a circular image of several small, round objects, possibly rocks or seeds, with the text "Did you Know?" written below it. At the bottom left, there are links for "Contact Us" and "Privacy Policy".



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