

# THE ENGLISH NATIONAL PARK EXPERIENCE COLLECTION

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## Becoming Travel Trade Ready



**The English National Park  
Experience Collection**



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# INTRODUCTION TO INBOUND TOURISM

**The travel trade – intermediaries such as tour operators, wholesalers, travel agents and online travel agents - play a significant role in attracting international visitors to England and the National Parks.** Working with the travel trade is an effective and valuable way of reaching larger numbers of potential travellers in global markets.

The National Park Experience Collection focusses on attracting overseas consumers, initially from the target markets of Germany and Australia.

Marketing to visitors from overseas markets through direct sales (e.g. your website) is usually not enough for businesses to get results - a combination of selling directly to the visitor and working with the travel trade works best. Understanding the industry in these markets – the distribution systems, recommended rates (gross or net), commissions, and the various functions within the travel trade can help you access these and your own target markets.

This guide is designed to give you an easy reference manual of what actions need to be taken by you to increase sales and revenue, particularly by working with the travel trade in order to access international visitors.



## Key Takeaway .....

The travel trade is a complex market made up of many players, and is essential for accessing overseas (and specialist) markets. The travel trade is generally perceived as targeting the group market, but it is also used extensively for small, specialist groups and individual travel.

Recent research by VisitBritain identified that the travel trade is looking for new bookable and commissionable products and experiences outside of London. This guide will help you assemble and present your products and services to meet the requirements of the trade.

# GETTING YOUR BUSINESS 'TRAVEL TRADE READY'



## What does it mean to be a travel trade ready business?

There are many factors that need to be considered before you can go out and offer your product as “market ready.” It is important to make sure that your product works for you, the consumer and the distribution organisation that will market it.

Not all tourism products or experiences are suitable for international markets. Some products may need to be refined before being marketed to inbound travel trade or may only suit specific markets or niche consumer segments.

Other products may be more attractive to inbound markets as part of a package, but are currently marketed independently. At the same time the systems and processes within a business might not be sufficiently receptive or adaptable to meet travel trade criteria or specifications.

Being travel trade ready means your tourism offer is produced, priced and promoted so it's easy to find, bookable and an attractive proposition for overseas customers and travel trade intermediaries. It means understanding the way the tourism trade works — including the different commission rates for the different players — and pricing your product accordingly.

Before investing time and resources in international markets, ask yourself the questions opposite.

Answering YES to the majority of these questions means you are already on the way to becoming travel trade ready.

### 1. Is your business established in the domestic market?

Very few businesses enter the inbound market without first establishing themselves in the domestic market

### 2. Do you have booking mechanisms in place for international markets?

Do you offer same day booking confirmation, by email, at the very least (a quicker response mechanism is preferable, however)?

### 3. Do you understand the international distribution system?

Are you familiar with the role of a destination management company (DMC), inbound tour operator (ITO), wholesaler, online (OTA) and retail travel agent?

### 4. Are you familiar with commission levels?

You should offer commissionable rates to trade partners such as: DMCs, ITOs, OTAs, wholesalers and retail travel agents

### 5. Do you understand how to distribute your product online and how this impacts on other distribution partners?

Will you set and guarantee rates up to 18 months ahead to coincide with the travel industry calendar?

### 6. Do you understand where consumers can source information about your product?

Be aware of user generated content, travel websites and how these influence consumers' product choices

### 7. Have you researched international markets to establish where your product fits?

Use industry resources to understand key source markets

### 8. Do you understand the needs of international markets?

Consider the travel styles, motivations, expectations, language and cultural differences of international travellers

### 9. Do you have marketing and promotional material in different languages?

Provide quality resources for trade and consumers in their language



# ATTRACTING INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION

**International visitors stay for longer periods and spend more money than domestic travellers. However, the National Parks might only be part of an itinerary for a traveller when visiting England.**

Attracting international visitors or customers has many benefits, but remember the following points when working in international markets:

- There are much higher marketing costs overseas
- Selling your product through the international travel trade requires a commitment to working with their pricing and commission structures
- International markets vary considerably between each country. Research and planning is required before entering a market
- Language and cultural differences create additional challenges when marketing your product overseas
- Entering and establishing your product in the international market is a long-term investment and it may take some time before returns can be seen. Being successful in the international arena requires significant effort and is based on establishing and maintaining good business relationships with travel trade intermediaries over an extended period

## WHY INBOUND TOURISM IS GOOD FOR YOUR BUSINESS

### Reach

Opportunities to reach new markets and customers more easily (operators and agents have influence - consumers consult them, their brochures and websites)

### Seasonality

International travel patterns are not always focused around weekends or school holidays and can support shoulder and low season periods

### Lead times

Reservations and booking lead times are usually longer, especially from long-haul markets like Australia and the USA

### Higher yield and spend

International visitors have a higher spend per person this is in part due to their longer length of stay

### Spreading risk

Diversity in your market segments builds your business, as you do not have to rely on a single source or market

### New markets, more business

Provides opportunities to extend your market beyond traditional channels through the international distribution system and reach a larger numbers of potential consumers

### Innovative

Expose your company to new people, new ideas, different management practices and systems and marketing and sales approaches



# UNDERSTANDING YOUR TARGET MARKETS

Understanding your international target markets is a vital element of your inbound strategy. International visitors from different countries may have different travel needs and their expectations might vary from those of domestic visitors. Not all products and experiences will be suitable for all international visitors.

VisitBritain has extensive research available on international visitors, their travel styles and the experiences they are looking for on a UK holiday.

Looking at the research can help you build a profile of inbound visitors who may be interested in your product or experience. Use it to help you identify which are the key markets to target for your business.

## Researching your target markets will help you understand:

- Which markets are currently visiting or likely to visit England and the National Parks
- How long they stay
- What they like to do
- Who they travel with
- How they book

## What are the different styles of travel

Visitors choose different styles of travel based on whether their trip is for leisure, business, special interest or family reasons. The demographics, styles of travel, choices and likes/dislikes vary amongst different visitors and markets. Adapting and being responsive to your target markets is important. VisitBritain ([www.visitbritain.org](http://www.visitbritain.org)) provides online resources about target markets and segments.

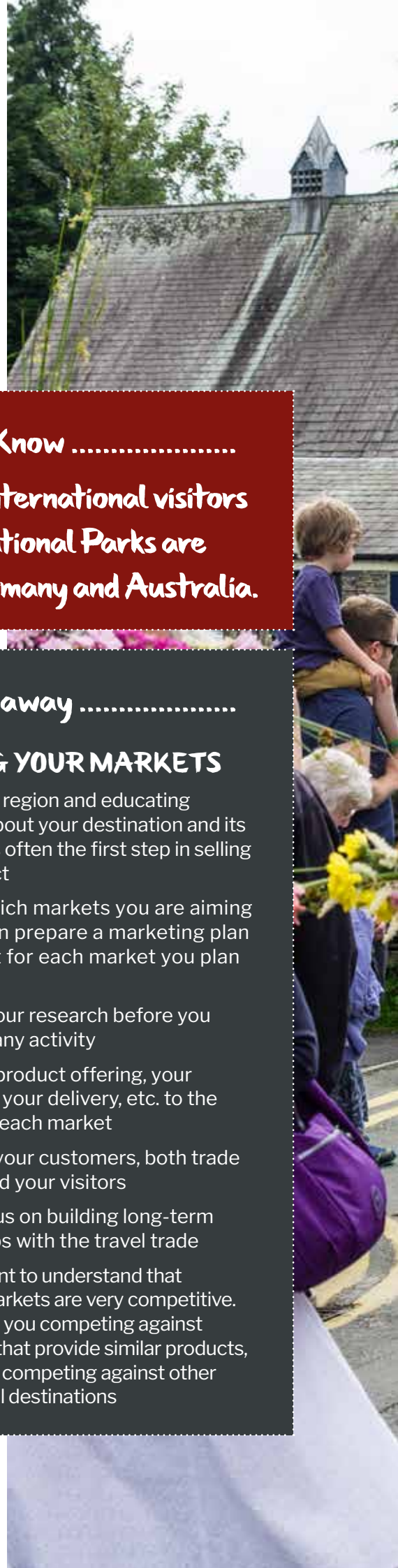
## Did you Know .....

**30% of international visitors to the National Parks are from Germany and Australia.**

## Key Takeaway .....

### KNOWING YOUR MARKETS

- Selling your region and educating travellers about your destination and its attributes is often the first step in selling your product
- Identify which markets you are aiming for and then prepare a marketing plan and budget for each market you plan to target
- Carry out your research before you undertake any activity
- Tailor your product offering, your messaging, your delivery, etc. to the nuances of each market
- Look after your customers, both trade partners and your visitors
- Always focus on building long-term relationships with the travel trade
- It is important to understand that overseas markets are very competitive. Not only are you competing against companies that provide similar products, you are also competing against other international destinations



# Travel Styles

The following outlines several defined travel styles. As with everything in the tourism industry, travel styles are constantly evolving and definitions may vary from market to market.



**Fully Independent Traveller (FIT):** Like to design their own itineraries and arrange their own travel plans—FITs do not travel with group tours but will book some elements of their holiday prior to arrival; they organise most of their trip independently



**Group Inclusive Tour (GIT):** Buy from a wholesale brochure or a specially tailored itinerary before their holiday; prefer organised itineraries; usually pre-book tour arrangements



**Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR):** Visiting friends or relatives is the reason for travel; will travel and participate in many activities associated with holiday visitors; use recommendations and advice from friends and relatives when planning their trip



**Youth/Backpackers:** Like the FIT market but spend at least one night in a backpacker/youth hostel during their stay; highly independent and are more likely to purchase travel experiences direct whilst travelling; generally 18 – 25 but age profile is changing; high use of internet and social media for information



**Education Travellers:** Student groups or international students are classed as education travellers; they have specific requirements for accommodation and parts of their itineraries; tend to stay for extended periods whilst studying; long-term students generate more visitors (parents and friends visit them while they are here)



**Special Interest Groups:** Groups with personal interests, e.g. gardens, health, attractions, heritage; book through agents / operators who specialise or have high level of expertise; includes lectures, location visits; can be high yield but low volume



## Who is the target audience?

VisitBritain has identified six distinct types of traveller and provide a description of each to help tourism businesses decide which segment(s) they would be most interested in. It sets out who these customers are and what they really want from a holiday.

The English National Park Experience Collection prioritises two segments:

### Outdoor enthusiasts

Nature lovers who love to get close to nature on active breaks with the family. Discovery and learning are an integral part of their holidays, given their keen interest in local heritage and cultures as well as spending time in the great outdoors.

### Mature experience seekers

A more mature segment that is best defined by their attitudes - 'young at heart'. With greater freedom, money to spend and time to enjoy themselves, travel is a key pastime that satisfies their desire for new experiences and learning.

Find out more on the visitor segments from VisitBritain / VisitEngland website:- <https://www.visitbritain.org/england-research-insights>

### TOP TIP

Products are generally more compelling and distinctive if you have a focused target definition – hoping an idea will appeal to everyone and thus avoiding making a choice is not a strategy for success!



## How do you target these travellers?

There are two ways for you to find and sell to potential customers:

### Directly

You target visitors directly through your own advertising, brochure distribution, website, social media and client referrals. Direct online bookings and sales will be through your own booking engine on your website; or they may be through phone, email or walk-in bookings and sales.

### Indirectly

Another way to promote your business is indirectly through a third party by using tourism distribution channels such as travel agents and online travel agents, wholesalers and inbound tour operators, including handling agents, destination management companies (DMCs) and professional conference organisers (PCOs).

### KEY DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

#### Tourism Product

(Hotels, B&Bs, hostels, self-catering, and experience providers, restaurants, activities, events)

#### DIRECT

Online  
Brand website  
Email  
Internet booking engine  
Mobile  
Social media  
Offline  
Phone  
Walk-in

#### INDIRECT

Wholesalers  
Tour operators  
Inbound tour operators  
Retail travel agents  
Handling agents  
Destination Management Companies  
Professional conference organisers  
Online travel agents  
Third-party websites

### THE CUSTOMER / VISITOR





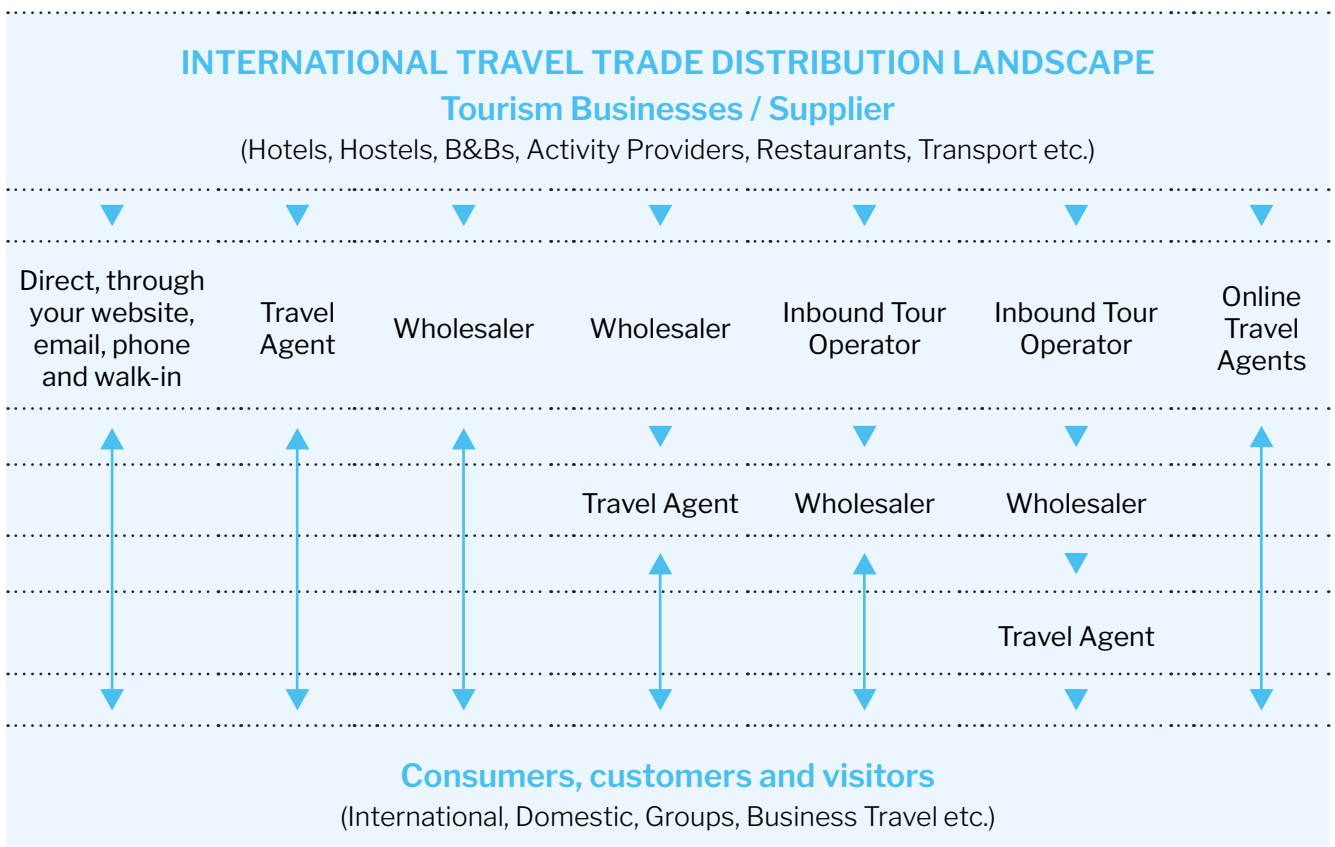
## Understanding International Distribution Channels

Whilst a significant proportion of your customers will find you by themselves, either online or through your other marketing and promotional channels, it's critical that you are aware of the different distribution channels and how they are likely to impact on both your product and your costs.

It's also important to understand the roles of each type of travel trade distributor and how they will help sell your product. International distribution channels and systems vary from market to market. You need to know and understand what structures are in place in the markets you plan to target.

### The international travel distribution landscape

As a tourism business your best opportunities are to use multiple channels, focus on direct sales as well as partnering with specialised tour operators, destination management companies and online travel agents. The graphic illustrates the travel distribution landscape links.



## Working with the travel trade and travel intermediaries

Travel trade intermediaries (travel agents and tour operators) play a significant role in the decision-making process of many international visitors: they help to open up new markets and encourage tourists to spend longer exploring England. But, as with all markets, the travel trade is dynamic and its role will vary depending on the consumer and the market.

Learning about the different distribution channels and how likely they are to impact on both your product and your costs is crucial. You may need to put new procedures and systems in place to support the international distribution process from the time of booking, through to the visitor's arrival and post visit.



### TOP TIP

If you are sending a tour operator an email, there is every chance that they are receiving hundreds from other tourism businesses as well. Do your research first and make sure you tailor your approach to suit their needs.

Advantages of working with the travel trade include the following:

- You are partnering with companies that market internationally, to sell your products and experiences, and who will work with you to reach new markets.
- They are connected into the international distribution system and have an established customer base extending your market reach even further.
- They have market knowledge and are experts in their field and know how to work with and sell to consumers in their key markets.
- They have established networks and relationships with customers who are looking for products.
- Your product is included in printed brochures and / or websites, and translated into different languages and distributed to travel agents who sell to consumers directly, via online booking engines and call centres or through travel agents.
- You pay only for results. In most cases you only pay commission or offer a discounted price when the sale is made which is an opportunity for greater promotional reach of your product at little additional cost.
- You benefit directly from their marketing programmes at no cost as they use their own marketing activities e.g. attending trade workshops, missions and shows, make sales calls and are an extension of your marketing efforts, providing you with more international exposure.
- They give presentations to their staff to enhance their understanding of the destination. These educational events would be directed at the tour operator's reservations and sales teams, as well as their product management staff.
- They know the important details about rules and legislation (i.e. consumer protection laws), visa requirements for overseas visitors and are a local point of contact for their clients.



# HOW TRAVEL TRADE AND TRAVEL INTERMEDIARIES OPERATE

The key travel trade distribution channels are:

- Wholesaler
- Travel Agent (TA)
- Tour Operator (TO)
- Destination Management Company (DMC)
- Online Travel Agents (OTA)

Traditional travel distributors such as wholesalers and travel agents are taking a digital approach in addition to, or as an alternative to, offering their services from a retail shop front.

Wholesalers and Travel Agents rely on Destination Management Companies (DMCs) recommendations, as they are based in the UK and have the knowledge of tourism products and experiences, as well as being a single point of contact.

Online and traditional distribution partners have the opportunity to work both with each other, and directly with local tourism operators who supply tourism product (e.g. accommodation, tours etc.). It's important to know each partner's role in the travel trade and how local tourism businesses can benefit from their part in the distribution network. The travel trade and the distribution network are dynamic, with new players, products and experiences joining all the time.

## Wholesalers

**Wholesalers are located in the consumer's country of origin and develop and market inclusive tour options, including transport, accommodation, tours and attractions.**

Wholesalers link individual tourism businesses with travel agencies and they generally sell to other elements of the travel trade rather than directly to the consumer – they develop the product then resell through established distribution channels: both travel agents and online, who then sell directly to the consumer. Wholesalers work closely with DMCs to develop inclusive tours or packages and itineraries.

It is important that good relationships are established with DMCs who specialise in the wholesalers target markets. Examples of tour wholesalers are GTA; Service-Reisen Geissen; Behringer Touristik; Vosai; Greatdays; JAC Travel.

### Working with wholesalers:

- Research the markets, segments and itineraries that the wholesaler offers and show them how your product or service can fit into that itinerary and make it even better
- When working with wholesalers it is important to understand their distribution network, target markets and the DMCs they work with in the UK
- Understand how your product fits into their offerings and keep them informed and updated with changes and new developments in your business
- Suggest experiences that are unique and authentic, ones that promote and profile the character and appealing features of the National Parks

## Travel Agent

**Travel agents sell holiday and travel products directly to the consumer; they are based in the consumer's country of origin and are a link to the international consumer.**

They organise personal travel for the consumer providing travel and tourism services on behalf of suppliers including airlines, hotels, cruise lines, railways, and package tour operators. Travel agents usually provide a shopfront for customers in shopping centres and local town centres, or an online sales channel. Many travel agents belong to a larger chain of travel agencies or consortiums that use their combined resources to market the agency brand.

In some countries, agencies may be operated by travel wholesalers, or may concentrate on particular market segments such as special interest or family travel. Many travel agents also have an online presence. Examples of travel agents in the UK are: Thomas Cook, Virgin Holidays, Co-Operative Travel and Kuoni Travel (note that Kuoni is both a wholesaler and a travel agent).

### Working with Retail Travel Agents

- Register your business on VisitBritain's Travel Trade site - [trade.visitbritain.com/supplier-login/](http://trade.visitbritain.com/supplier-login/)
- Keep them up to date by sending relevant product information updates using email, ezines or social media. Don't add your trade customers to your consumer databases - a quarterly newsletter specifically for tour operators, travel agents etc will be more suitable.

## Tour Operators

**Tour operators offer travel at lower rates than a person or business could get by booking individually.**

They offer tours that buy services from different accommodation providers, attractions and transport companies. They book blocks of their inventories and can combine these services into different tours. A tour operator may sell direct to the consumer or through travel agents and may operate through print and online. Examples of well-known tour operators are Abbey Tours, Abercrombie & Kent, Best of Tours, CIE Tours.

### Working with Tour Operators

- Tour operators can be considering and choosing products for itineraries at least two years in advance. Keep this in mind when working with trade initially.
- When working with tour operators you should have a recommended retail price so that there is pricing transparency across all your distribution channels.
- Have your brochure (or at least a fact sheet of your product or service) that has been professionally translated into the local language. While many tour operators will speak English it is always easier for them if you can sell to them in their own language.
- Ensure that you identify any seasonality in your product (i.e. high season, low season, and days of operation).
- Do not be afraid of asking questions to clarify requirements. The operator should understand you seek to improve your product offering to them. It is better to ask than guess: most tour operators expect a certain amount of back and forth before the right trip or tour is finalised.



# Destination Management Companies

**A destination management company (DMC), sometimes known as an inbound tour operator (ITO), or a ground handler, is a UK based business which specialises in packaging and bundling programmes and itineraries featuring UK tourism products for marketing and selling to the overseas travel trade.**

DMCs have commercial relationships with a network of international and domestic intermediaries.

They are the link between UK tourism businesses and their products or services and the overseas travel distributors that buy them, including travel wholesalers, direct sellers, travel agents, meeting planners and event planners.

They usually coordinate itineraries about 6-12 months in advance and require inbound rates to be supplied for the tourism calendar year of 1 April to 31 March. This is linked to the wholesaler's brochure production.

DMCs are in charge of all itinerary planning, product selection, booking all travel arrangements and working directly with suppliers. DMCs are very helpful in getting your product to market. Examples of DMCs include Abbey Tours, ASA Tours, Cashel Travel, Hotels & More, Wedgewood Britain, e-voyages.

## Working with Destination Management Companies

- It is important to understand their distribution and target markets and ensure they understand how your product fits into their offer. Before you make contact, do your research to establish what markets, products and experiences they promote. If you are new to working in an overseas market, contacting a DMC should be your first step.
- Keep them up to date with your product and maintain regular contact with your key partners providing them with updated information on your product.
- Depending on the DMCs requirements, you will need to give them net and/or commissionable rates as appropriate for groups and FITs (Frequent Independent Travellers) or individuals both for the current year and the forthcoming year.
- Provide them with promotional material and product information professionally translated highlighting the following:
  - what makes your product special?
  - Where can you add value? What experience are you offering? Also include high quality photographs.
- DMCs have well established links with overseas tour operators and they can promote you to their partners in the markets. They can be an important marketing partner as well as your shop window. Contact the relevant VisitBritain market office for advice.
- Have published travel trade-oriented booking, payment and cancellation policies.

# Online Travel Agents (OTAs)

**Online travel agents (OTAs) are the fastest-growing distribution channel for travel products. OTAs now represent the second-largest travel booking channel (after direct hotel channels) both in Europe and further afield.**

OTAs sell travel products to customers online and act as a bridge between suppliers (hotels, airlines, car hire companies, visitor attractions, experiences etc.). They deal directly with consumers and tourism businesses and their products. Many OTAs also offer dynamic packaging that allows the consumer to purchase their hotel, flight, car hire, tour or experience in one transaction.

Working with OTAs can be a relatively easy entry introduction to reaching new and international customers. Understanding how you update and control information about your product is essential as this can be time-consuming.

OTAs can be very effective for independent hotels, B&Bs and guesthouses who will not typically be known internationally and who might not have the expertise or marketing budgets to directly target international visitors. Well-known examples of OTAs include Expedia, Viator, Booking.com, Hotels.com and Adventure finder.

## Working with OTAs

- Before working with OTAs be very clear about contractual arrangements, commission levels and allocations, and be sure to review the business terms and conditions in detail, checking the small print for their refund policy
- Ask about the volume of searches and bookings in your area, case studies of success and what type of account management support is available
- Check what the commission rate will be and what promotional opportunities and plans are available
- Find out how the site operates and how it will promote your product, as well as how information is loaded and updated
- It is important that you are aware of any affiliate sites and where rates may appear

## TOP TIP .....

Remember that OTAs are not just for accommodation providers!

The major online distribution platforms for activities, experiences and tours are Viator, Expedia, Airbnb, GetYourGuide, Klook, and Peek. Viator / TripAdvisor are in pole position with the largest number of tour listings, more than twice as many as the next closest competitor.

Site comparators are sites which visitors use to research their trip. Examples include Trivago, TripAdvisor, Hipmunk and Kayak. They do more than price comparison, providing everything in one place: search, maps, photos, ratings, availability and prices. They provide users with accurate tailored information.



# RATES AND COMMISSIONS



## Different rate types

It is important for businesses to understand the need to have a rate structure set up that allows for a commission to be paid to your trade partners for each booking that is made.

Commissions are the payment to the inbound tour operator, wholesaler, online and retail agent for the services they provided to your business i.e. the marketing, distribution and selling of your products and services. Commission is usually their major source of revenue.

This means you need to price your products or experiences to allow for commissions or discounts to those that sell for you. Remember; you only pay commission once a sale has been made.

When dealing with the travel distribution system, suppliers must provide the correct rates to each level of distribution system. Rates should be clearly marked as either gross (retail) or net.

When dealing with the travel trade it is vital to understand the difference between a gross (retail) rate and a net rate and to provide the correct rates to each level of distribution system.

### Gross (retail) Rate = Net Rate + Commissions

The gross rate is the rate the consumer pays and should be the same through all distribution channels.

- Consumers should pay the same rate if they book directly through you, via the internet or via a travel agency
- If you offer a better price for direct purchase, the travel trade will not market and sell your product

### Net Rate = your cost plus your profit margin (minus commissions)

Net rates are generally given to DMCs and Wholesalers who then mark up the price to cover their commissions.

- Often your product is part of a package therefore mark-up is hidden
- Net rates should be kept confidential

## Typical Commission % by Travel Trade and 3rd party Intermediaries

<b>DESTINATION MANAGEMENT COMPANY</b>	Typical Commission <b>Up to 30%</b>
You provide a net rate/gross rate based on a 30% margin	
<b>ONLINE TRAVEL AGENT (OTA)</b>	Typical Commission <b>10% - 30%</b>
You provide a net rate/gross rate based on a 10-30% margin	
<b>WHOLESALER</b>	Typical Commission <b>20%</b>
You provide a net rate/gross rate based on a 20% margin	
<b>TRAVEL AGENT</b>	Typical Commission <b>10% - 15%</b>
A travel agent charges the gross (retail) rate and retains 10% commission.	

Remember that commission levels vary and the above information is intended as a guide only

### Key Takeaway .....

- Rate consistency is important to maintain good business relationships
- Provide guaranteed rates for at least one year
- State terms and conditions with your rates
- Show high and low season rates
- Keep track of your business partners and the rates you have given them
- Update your rates when they expire

# IS YOUR PRODUCT OR EXPERIENCE BOOKABLE?



**Just as you need to make it easy for your customers to find and book you, you also need to make it easy for your potential or actual travel trade partner to work with you rather than your competitors. You can do this by making your products and services “bookable”.**

**A bookable tourism product for the international consumer is:**

- a specific offering which has been developed in line with insights into the target market and consumer i.e. language, interests, cultural considerations, dwell time.
- available for sale and commissionable for the travel trade so it can be included in packages or through trade platforms such as OTAs.

**Travel trade insights about developing bookable product include:**

- Products and services need to be well researched and backed by evidence of demand (domestically successful).

Source: VisitBritain

- Differentiate your product by ensuring that visitors have memorable, authentic experiences.
- Develop ‘off the shelf’ saleable products - complete packages that can be built easily into tour programmes - not just concepts or information.
- Awareness of the key contractual requirements of the travel trade.
- Work closely with other product developers to develop attractive combined tour products and to undertake joint marketing and visitor servicing – with integrated booking, where possible.
- Engage with DMCs, on whom many tour operators rely heavily to source new product – obtain their advice on how to make the product as attractive as possible.
- Remember that OTAs will become an increasingly important route-to-market.
- Educational visits, press trips, training and trade - ready collateral/images are all requested.

## Key Takeaway .....

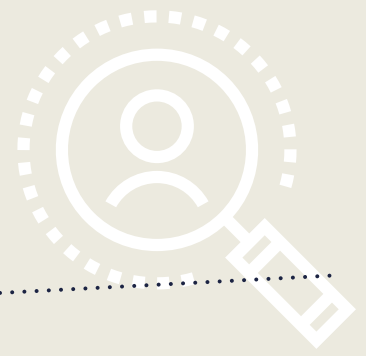
Viator, Expedia, Airbnb, GetYourGuide, Klook, and Peek are the top six online tours and activities booking platforms (source Skift). Many activity providers are now realising the potential of having activities and experiences bookable online via desktop, tablet or mobile. Having your tour or activity booking process online and mobile ready it must be easier, better and faster than any offline method.

## Key Takeaway .....

Reinforcing the commerciality of your products and services to be offered to the travel trade and to international markets can be achieved by including consistently positive reviews, offering booking options (including mobile phone booking) and demonstration of links to e.g. peer-to-peer tours or activity providers.



# GETTING STARTED WITH THE TRAVEL TRADE



## 1. Know your customer

You must know who your target customers are and how your product or service can satisfy their needs better than the competition. This relates to both the end consumer and the tour operator who will sell on your behalf:

- To understand the needs of the end consumer, familiarise yourself with VisitBritain's research and statistics about the markets you are targeting.
- Take time to understand the structure and relations of the distribution channels in the market you are targeting by reviewing the tour operator's website and other sources of information about them.
- Find out what motivates your customer to buy. In order to make a successful pitch, you must understand your customer and their motivation for buying. Is it economic? Is it because you can offer a unique product or proposition? If they are open to change, is this due to previously poor service from a competitor?

## 2. Know your product

- You must understand your product or service intimately. You should know its benefits, values and unique selling points and how it can satisfy your customers' needs better than the competition.
- You should also know about complementary products and services in your area and the access points into adjoining English markets, including other National Parks.

## 3. Know your pricing and allocation policy

- Depending on the tour operator's requirements, you will need to give them net and / or commissionable rates as appropriate for groups or FITs (Frequent Independent Travellers) for the current and forthcoming year.
- Within your pricing structure, be able to demonstrate how your price represents value for money, based on what the product or service delivers relative to your competition and be specific about the ways you add value.
- Be clear about how you manage your allocation for individuals and groups.

## 4. Before you contact potential travel trade partners

- Research your international markets. Determine which markets are most suitable for your product using the information available on the VisitBritain website.
- Get in touch with VisitBritain; they can help with useful information and advice on working with the travel trade.
- Develop a sales and marketing strategy including key activities and timelines to meet the needs of your target markets.

## Key Takeaway .....

There are more than 152 million blogs on the internet, with a new blog being launched every half-second. Think about reaching out to travel influencers and travel media; Reiseblogger Kollektiv and iambassadors are two sites that work with many brands and blog to their German followers.



## NEXT STEPS?

This toolkit provides you with the basics of selling through the travel trade. It is now up to you to evaluate if working with the travel trade is for you and to implement an appropriate travel trade strategy for you and your business. As you do this, remember the following points:

- Make sure you are **market-ready for travel trade** business.
- Make sure your products and experiences are **“bookable”**.
- **Respond to enquiries from tour operators within 24 hours** (on business days) and be aware of time differences with source markets, year-round.
- **Follow up on leads** and keep in touch by an agreed arrangement – email, phone or mail.
- **Research** - do your homework on each tour operator/ wholesaler/ DMC / OTA you want to work with.
- **Think about the types of operators that you want to target** - for example, there are plenty of sustainably minded operators who want to look after and enhance our environment.

- **Prepare a travel trade sales kit** that has been professionally translated into the local language, include details on your business, key contacts, rates, terms and conditions.
- **Develop a sales presentation** for the travel trade, making sure it is different for each tour operator and offer something exclusive if you can.
- Have a gallery of **high quality digital photography** available.
- Keep your pricing arrangements with tour operators **confidential**.
- Understand that working with the travel trade is a **long-term partnership**, not just a quick solution to getting more business.



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

For more information on the National Park Experience Collection email [experiencecollection@nationalparks.gov.uk](mailto:experiencecollection@nationalparks.gov.uk) or find out more on our website [www.nationalparks.gov.uk/discoverengland](http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/discoverengland) or contact your nearest National Park.

National Park	Web Site
Peak District National Park	<a href="http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/">www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/</a>
Northumberland National Park	<a href="http://www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk">www.northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk</a>
Lake District National Park	<a href="http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/">www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/</a>
North York Moors National Park	<a href="http://www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/">www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/</a>
Yorkshire Dales National Park	<a href="http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/">www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/</a>
Broads National Park	<a href="http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk">www.broads-authority.gov.uk</a>
South Downs National Park	<a href="http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/">www.southdowns.gov.uk/</a>
Exmoor National Park	<a href="http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/">www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/</a>
Dartmoor National Parks	<a href="http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/">www.dartmoor.gov.uk/</a>

## Organisation Websites

VisitBritain / VisitEngland	<a href="https://www.visitbritain.org">https://www.visitbritain.org</a> <a href="https://trade.visitbritain.com">https://trade.visitbritain.com</a> <a href="https://www.visitbritain.org/markets-segments">https://www.visitbritain.org/markets-segments</a> <a href="https://www.visitbritain.org/inbound-tourism-trends">https://www.visitbritain.org/inbound-tourism-trends</a>
European Tourism Association	<a href="http://www.etoa.org">www.etoa.org</a>
Independent Tour Operators Association	<a href="http://www.aito.com">www.aito.com</a>
UK Inbound	<a href="http://www.ukinbound.org">www.ukinbound.org</a>

Sources: VisitBritain; Rezdy; Skift

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