

# International Marketing

Setting your sight on the global stage



## Takeaways

- Everything you need to prepare your product for international business
- An understanding of Queensland's international target markets
- How to work effectively with international distribution systems
- Making the most of international trade and consumer shows
- Utilising international marketing opportunities

# SETTING YOUR SIGHT ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

## Introduction

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

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

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

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

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



## Inbound target markets

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

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

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

### Hot tips

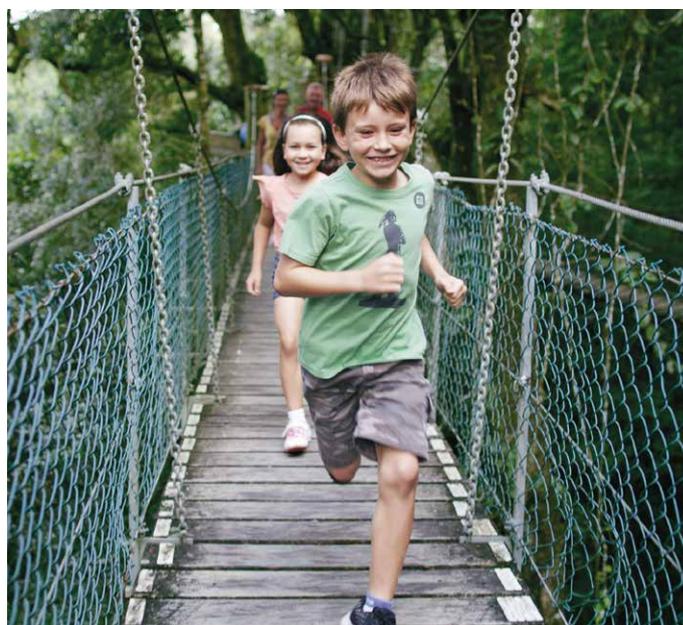
- Do your research – identify the needs and expectations of each target market and which of these are most compatible with your product and experiences
- Take a good look at your competitors. Visit their product and learn as much as possible about their international operations and their target markets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

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

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

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

Subscribe to Tourism and Events Queensland research updates  
[teq.queensland.com/eNewsletters](http://teq.queensland.com/eNewsletters)



# Planning for International Markets

## The strategy basics

Tourism and Events Queensland works in many different markets. What really counts is having support in place from your Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) to assist in driving numbers of international visitors directly into your region.

Tourism and Events Queensland, Tourism Australia, RTOs and relevant airports partner together to develop sustainable direct international and domestic airline services, and to increase aviation capacity into the state. Queensland has a big advantage over other states because it has five international airports, including – Brisbane, Cairns, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Townsville – which all offer enormous growth potential. Secondary feeders are cruise shipping, drive and touring routes also play important roles in attracting visitors to Queensland.

For product that isn't located close to an international airport, the ability to expand into international markets is reliant on having frequent and reliable transfer systems in place to collect and deliver visitors door-to-door at their convenience. Another good strategy is to either package or work with other product in your region to create a strong and united force to promote your products and destination.

If these basics are in place, you will need to think long term about the resources it will take to break into the markets you're going to target. Consider how much you're prepared to invest and set realistic expectations for a return on that investment.

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

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

## The benefits

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

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

## Global travellers

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

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

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

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

## Travel styles

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

<b>Group Inclusive Tour or Travellers (GIT)</b>	<b>Fully Independent Travellers (FIT)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-purchase the bulk of their holiday before leaving home via distributors</li> <li>• Prefer structured itineraries</li> <li>• Have highly organised and pre booked tour arrangements</li> <li>• Use distributor's preferred products</li> <li>• Common in less mature markets and with certain segments such as educational groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Like the freedom of planning their own arrangements</li> <li>• Arrange some core holiday components prior to arrival</li> <li>• organise the bulk of their itinerary independently often after their arrival</li> <li>• Rely heavily on word of mouth, the internet and social media when planning their trip</li> </ul>
<b>Partially packaged travellers</b>	<b>Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-book 'skeleton package' of airfares, transfers and accommodation prior to arrival</li> <li>• Search for competitive rates</li> <li>• Optional themed extras such as car hire and tours are offered at the point of sale to appeal to different segments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cite friends and relatives as the primary reason for travel</li> <li>• Often travel beyond the family base to other destinations</li> <li>• Rely on the recommendations and advice of their Australian-based friends and relatives when planning their trip</li> </ul>
<b>Youth</b>	<b>Education Travellers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spend at least one night in a backpacker hotel or youth hostel during their stay</li> <li>• Traditionally 18 to 25 year olds but often people aged 30 and beyond travel this way</li> <li>• Prefer a highly independent and unstructured approach towards travel</li> <li>• Rely heavily on the internet and social media for information</li> <li>• Often include voluntourism in their travels - volunteering for a charitable cause</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include short course participants, long term university students, school excursions and exchanges</li> <li>• Cite study as the main purpose of their visit but there may be a tourism component to the trip</li> <li>• Have families who may visit and travel throughout the course of study</li> <li>• Often require specialised arrangements depending on the age of students</li> </ul>
<b>Business Travellers</b>	<b>Special Interest Travellers (SIT)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include delegates of a large conference or an individual on a business trip</li> <li>• Often include a component of leisure travel during their visit such as pre and post-conference touring</li> <li>• Include delegates participating in an incentive tour – a specialised business segment which rewards performance with travel experiences</li> <li>• Offer high yield as the per-head spend is often very high</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel for reasons associated with personal interests such as agritourism, health and wellness or bird watching</li> <li>• Book through agents or operators who possess a high level of expertise and can access specialised tours, guides, expert lectures and location visits that are not part of the traditional tourism infrastructure</li> <li>• Have customised itineraries</li> <li>• Offer high yield but often low volume</li> </ul>

Source: Tourism Australia, *Planning for Inbound Success, Volume 3*

## International Distribution Channels

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

### The traditional structure of the international distribution system includes:

**Inbound tour operators (ITOs)** based in Australia. Their role is to package itineraries and sell them direct to 'in-market' (overseas-based) wholesalers and distributors. For this reason, ITOs are extremely helpful in getting your product to market.

**Wholesalers:** Wholesalers are located in overseas markets and have traditionally provided a link between travel agents and ITOs or tourism product. Wholesalers purchase programs developed by Australian-based ITOs or develop their own packages and itineraries for travel agents and consumers. These packages will usually offer transport, accommodation, tours and attractions.

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

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

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

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

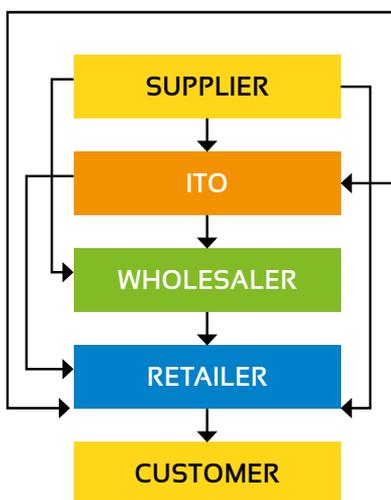
**Online travel agents (OTAs)** specialise in online distribution and have no intermediaries. They deal directly with consumers and tourism product. Consumers can purchase products or an entire holiday package from the comfort of their home. Online distribution is less structured than the traditional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

## How the distribution system works

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

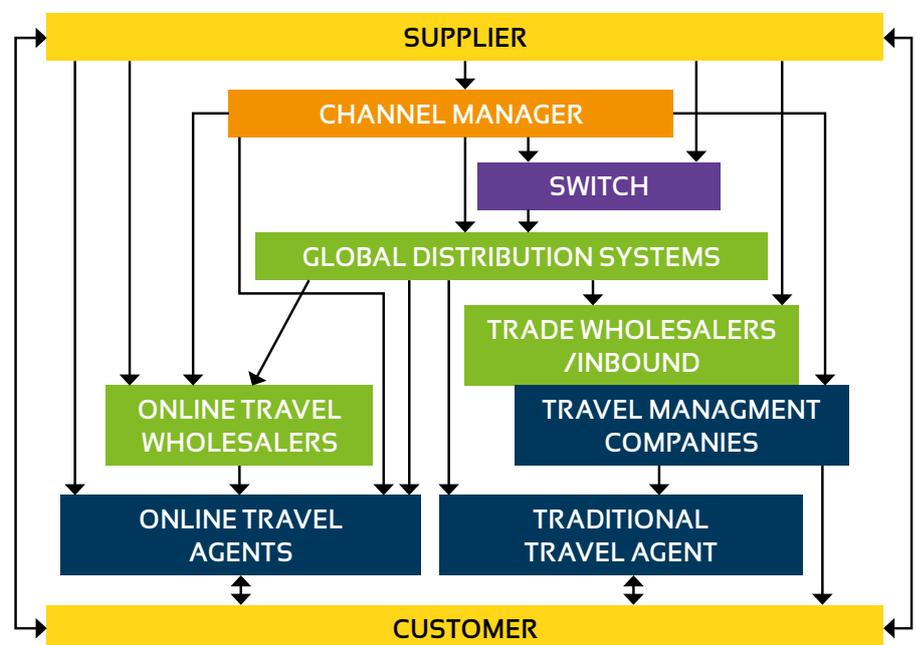
The diagram below shows the Traditional Distribution Channels chain and highlights the customer's ability to deal directly with suppliers, wholesalers or travel agents depending on their booking preference. The New Distribution Channels chain highlights that traditional distribution continues to evolve with the increase of wholesalers and travel taking an online approach. According to Tourism Australia, the chain will vary from market to market. For example it is not uncommon for an ITO to be part of a larger company that may also operate a wholesale arm in an overseas market, or for a wholesaler to also operate the travel agencies that sell its packages.

### Traditional Distribution Channels



Source: Tourism Australia, *Planning for Inbound Success, Volume 3*

### New Distribution Channels



## How the booking process works:

1. A TOURIST in the USA has seen some beautiful footage of the Great Barrier Reef on television and has been recently chatting to her friend about their amazing holiday in Queensland Australia. Australia has always been on her bucket list so she decides to find out more.
2. The TOURIST visits her local RETAIL TRAVEL AGENT in the USA to enquire about a trip to Queensland. She decides to book the holiday of her dreams, a six-week adventure including a diving trip to the Great Barrier Reef, accommodation, flights and car rental.
3. The RETAIL TRAVEL AGENT plans a Queensland Itinerary through the brochure of a TOUR WHOLESALER and then proceeds to book all tour options through them.
4. The TOUR WHOLESALER contacts an INBOUND TOUR OPERATOR to book each individual element of the tour itinerary.
5. The ITO contacts the individual LOCAL TOUR OPERATORS in Queensland to book each individual element of the tour itinerary.



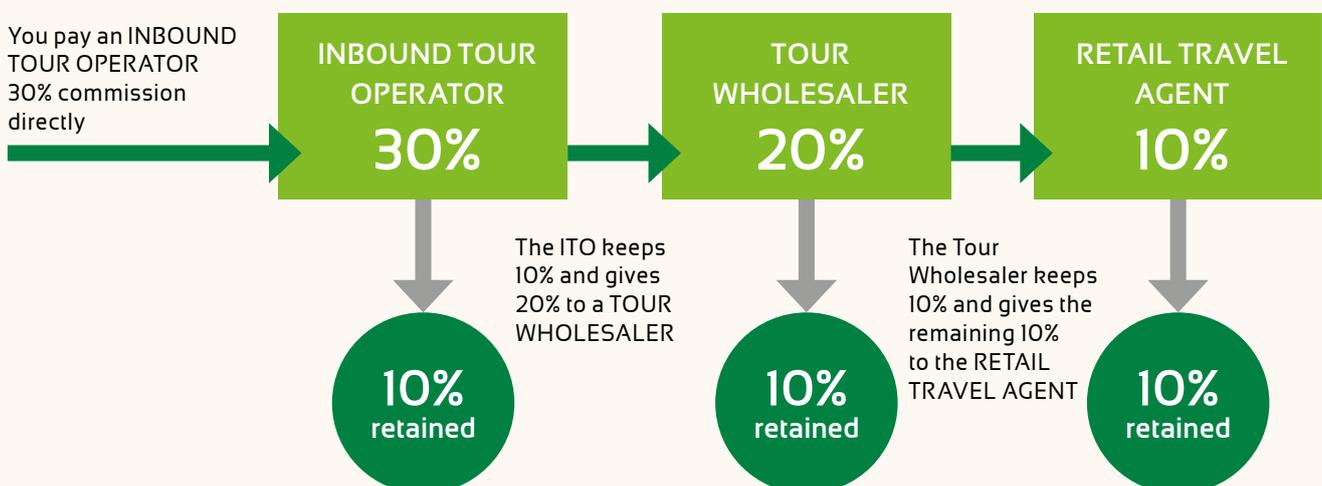
## International commission

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

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

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

### Where does this commission go?

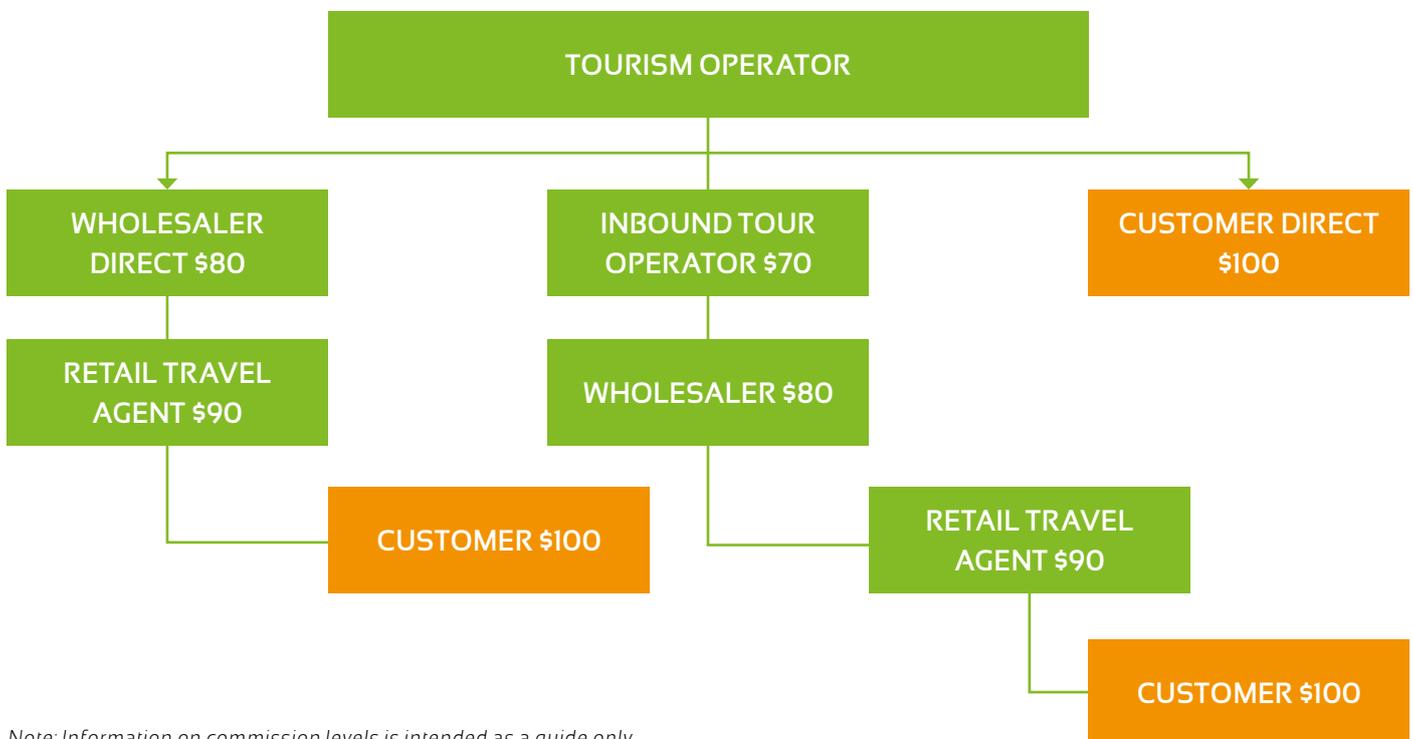


*Note: the diagram above is an example only. Many traditional travel distributors such as wholesalers and travel agents are taking an online approach and offering service from a retail store.*

**Rate parity is important – remember not to undercut your rate structures. Pay everyone their due and ensure everyone in the distribution channel offers the same gross rate.**

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

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



*Note: Information on commission levels is intended as a guide only.*

### Hot tips

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

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

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

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

### Items to consider:

- It can take many years for your product to be recognised or used by wholesalers in international markets. You need to be willing to commit to the long term
- Structure and develop your packages to suit the market you are targeting
- Visitors are often limited in the time they spend in any one location. Access is vital and a transfer strategy may be needed to overcome barriers of distance
- International visitors often have high expectations. Your standards in service delivery also reflect on your region, Queensland and Australia as a whole. Review and improve your service standards on a continual basis
- Visitors to Australia want to experience our way of life. Your product should have an Australian feel to it, offer unmistakable cultural qualities and experiences
- It's important to have an existing customer base that can back up your credibility. Not all products are ready for a stand-up start in international markets. You might start out as part of a package with other tourism products and build up slowly through your ITO and distribution networks
- Don't try to enter too many markets at once. It's better to pick your markets carefully and make them a success
- Your RTO can help you to promote your product, offering marketing opportunities as they arise. It's an excellent source of information and advice
- When producing brochures, websites and other marketing and promotional collateral, keep in mind they should appeal to both your domestic and international markets. See the tips on international marketing collateral
- It should be quick and easy to book your product no matter which distribution channels are being used, and terms should be clearly stated up front
- Maintaining regular contact with your distribution partners and providing them with updated information on your product is vital. Plan regular visits and participate in Tourism Australia and Tourism and Events Queensland trade mission shows and market briefings whenever possible

### Hot tips

- Develop an ITO sales kit with all the relevant information about your product, including rates and high-resolution images
- If international target markets are some of your primary visitors, you may wish to publish your brochure, online information and promotional material in the languages of the markets you're targeting
- Keep the ITOs, wholesalers and travel agents up to date with your product and regularly become involved in networking events, workshops and famils
- Build solid relationships, check the credibility of all your distributors, be upfront when dealing with issues and give them prompt and reliable service and turnaround times

## Are you international ready?

Not all products are suitable for marketing overseas. Some products may need to be further developed before being marketed to international customers or only suit specific or niche consumer segments.

Before investing your time and money in the international market refer to Tourism Australia's checklist, if you tick **YES** to these questions then you are on your way to becoming international (export) ready.

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

Source: *Planning for Inbound Success*, Tourism Australia

## Operator insight

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

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

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

## International marketing collateral

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

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

## Images should capture the Australian flavour



## Smart Selling

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

**Product buyer** = a retail or wholesale travel agent in overseas markets. Buyers may also be representatives of international product representation companies (PRC) or general sales agents (GSA).

**Product seller** = is an internationally-ready Australian-based tourism product.

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

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

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

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

### Do

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

### Don't

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

## What is a trade show?

Trade shows are a forum to meet key industry players and develop or enhance business relationships. They are an excellent opportunity to meet with a large number of targeted clients in the one place at the one time. Events may be more cost and time-effective than conducting individual sales calls, however often your appointment time will be limited. If attending trade events, especially those held overseas, it is a good idea to incorporate individual sales calls, pre or post the event, into the visit.

### Hot tips

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

Check out the [Working with Tourism Australia video](#). This two-minute video explains how Australian tourism businesses can benefit from the agency's campaign activity, research and market data. Its covers free resources, marketing opportunities and events.



## What is a trade mission?

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

### Hot tips

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

## What is a sales call?

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

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

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

### Hot tips

- Plan a call schedule – the number of times you visit will depend on how much business, current and potential, in-market trade partners generate for you
- You will also have an opportunity to meet with distribution partners at trade shows and workshops that you attend
- For international sales calls, the timing of your visit is also important and this will vary from market to market
- When planning individual sales calls in market for the first time, contact your RTO or Tourism and Events Queensland as they can assist with planning and introductions to key wholesalers and travel agents on your first sales visit
- Make sure you have something new and interesting to discuss or feedback to give
- Make an appointment and turn up on time

Trade missions and shows target Queensland's key and emerging markets. They are a chance to meet and get to know the movers and shakers, big and small, of tourism distribution in the markets where you operate. It doesn't matter how many missions or trade shows you attend or even how many buyers and sellers with whom you speak, what's important is that you meet with the people who are actually going to sell your product. Be selective and attend those events that offer you the best opportunities to present your product to the right people.

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

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

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

#### **Pre-planning**

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

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

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

Remember to always have your business cards with you.

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

#### **The right resources**

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

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

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

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

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

**In addition to these items, when attending trade shows you'll also need:**

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

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

**Follow up**

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

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

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

**Operator insight**

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

**Elise Wilson, Owner/Operator,  
Bestbrook Mountain Resort**

## Programs and Trade Events

### Queensland On Tour

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

Queensland on Tour aims to:

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

For information visit: [teq.queensland.com](http://teq.queensland.com)

### Queensland on Stage

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

For more information on upcoming Queensland on Stage events visit: [teq.queensland.com](http://teq.queensland.com)

### Tourism Australia trade events

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

For more information visit: [tradeevents.australia.com](http://tradeevents.australia.com)



### The Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE)

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

For more information visit: [tradeevents.australia.com](http://tradeevents.australia.com)

### Inbound tour operator workshops and famils

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

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

For more information visit: [atec.net.au](http://atec.net.au)

### Aussie Specialist Program

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

The program also offer operators marketing and promotional opportunities.

For more information visit: [aussiespecialist.com](http://aussiespecialist.com)