

# Trade and Media Familiarisations

## *Familiarity creates buyers and bookings*



## Takeaways

- How to prepare your product for trade and media famils
- Understanding of the processes behind famils
- How to make the most of every famil opportunity
- How to prepare your product information to make a positive and lasting impression

# FAMILIARITY CREATES BUYERS AND BOOKINGS

## Introduction

The best way to convince anyone about the quality of your product is to have them try it, right? Hopefully, having lived and loved the experience, they will come again and spread the word to others about how great it was.

Third-party referrals and testimonials are a fantastic endorsement of your product and strong reinforcement of your formal marketing activities. Generally, people trust word-of-mouth or third-party recommendations because they are seen as untainted. That's why sites like [TripAdvisor](#) are highly valued and popular.

Familiarisations (famils) target three key groups:

- **Trade** – includes wholesalers, travel agents and inbound tour operators (ITOs)
- **Media** – includes journalists and writers for print, broadcast and online media outlets
- **Digital Influencers** – bloggers, Instagrammers, popular Facebook or Twitter users

In the tourism industry, trade and media are key third-party proponents of your product and story. Famils offer trade and media a taste of what's on offer. It's your chance to educate and win over the people who influence consumers in making their holiday decisions. If trade partners and travel writers know your product and like it, they can do a lot to sell it through their respective channels.

Tourism and Events Queensland's communication about Queensland convey that it is made for holidays. As an operator, you can play a major part in spreading that message, particularly in your region, through participation in trade and media familiarisations.

Building trade and media relationships is an essential part of doing tourism business. After all, your product competes not just on a regional level, but with tourism destinations and products across the globe. And famils are a relatively low-cost way to promote your product to larger networks of trade and media.



## Hot tips

- Get to know the organisations that either organise or heavily sponsor famil programs
- Become business ready to host famils. Your operational and management systems will need to be up to scratch
- Think about and plan how to show off your product and experiences in creative fun and memorable ways
- Sell more than your product – sell the other great things about your destination and Queensland, and if you're working with an international guest, Australia too

## How to host a successful famil

Vying for the attention of the travel trade and media can be challenging at the best of times. To make the most of every opportunity and leave your famil guests with a positive lasting impression, you need to be prepared and professional in everything you do.

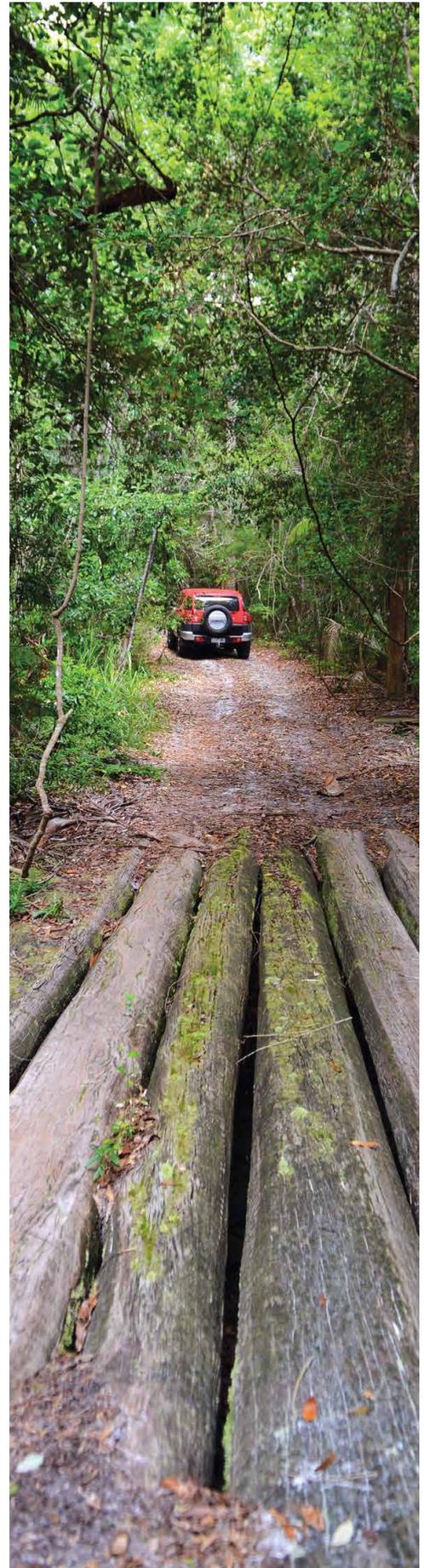
Let's go back to first base, your starting point for everything is understanding your target markets and how they align with your marketing plan. This will help you decide if your product is best suited to the domestic market or if it will attract international markets too. For more information on target markets refer to [Introduction](#) section of this guide.

Being prepared for famils and gaining returns on your investment largely depends on knowing who you want to attract to your business, then targeting the trade and media that work in those markets because they'll have the greatest interest in selling your product.

If there's still a question in your mind about your product's suitability for the international markets, the [International Marketing](#) section of this guide talks at length about preparing your product to be internationally ready. While there are differences in how you gear your product to meet either domestic or international market needs, or both, there are three stages to hosting a successful trade or media famil:

1. **Prepare (before)**
2. **Host (during)**
3. **Follow up (after)**

And here's the breaking news – hosting famils is never just about you. Sure, your focus should be to educate famil participants on your product and experience, but just as importantly, your region too. You are imparting on them all the reasons why your product is preferable to others and that means talking up the destination as whole.



## How to host a successful famil

This diagram from Tourism Australia’s [Planning for Inbound Success](#) can be used as a practical checklist. Print this page as a guide to train your staff on how to host a succesful famil.

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <p><b>Before</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the participants in the group – who are they, where they are from, what is their position, do they sell your product or have the potential to sell your product?</li> <li>• Know their itinerary and obtain contact details – when do they arrive and depart, where the group has been and where they are going, have they experienced a competitor’s product?</li> <li>• Consider the available time and present your product as the customer would experience it</li> <li>• Brief staff, making sure all staff are aware of the group</li> <li>• Prepare information for each participant, tailored to their needs</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>During</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure that participants are welcomed – introduce yourself and exchange business cards</li> <li>• Outline the program while at your property or on your tour</li> <li>• Escort the group during the famil and be a gracious host</li> <li>• Give time and attention to questions and make a note to follow up any requests</li> <li>• Provide an information kit and offer to post to participants</li> <li>• Ask the group for feedback on your product</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>After</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add the participants to your contact data base</li> <li>• Send a thank you email and follow up any requests for additional information</li> <li>• Follow any sales lead opportunities presented by the famil</li> <li>• Keep participants informed of any relevant changes or updates on your product</li> </ul>   |



# The Who and How of Famils

## Domestic trade and media famils

On the domestic front, requests to be involved in trade famils will come from a number of sources such as your Regional Tourism Organisation, wholesale distributors and travel agents. Tourism and Events Queensland doesn't organise domestic trade famils but actively promotes domestic product by organising media famils. If you're interested in hosting domestic media famils you can let Tourism and Events Queensland know through [media@queensland.com](mailto:media@queensland.com).

## Inbound tour operators

Tourism and Events Queensland works closely with the [Australian Tourism Export Council \(ATEC\)](#) to organise and run ITO famils, often as joint ventures. They pull together the programs and invite the delegates from different markets based on particular marketing needs, strategies and activities. You will need to be a member of ATEC to be involved.

## International trade and media famils

Tourism and Events Queensland and Tourism Australia have international office networks that focus on international trade and media famils. The key objective for the famils program is to match tourism product with the interests and needs of the international famil delegates. The international trade and media famils program plays an important role within Tourism and Events Queensland marketing activities.

## Trade

Travel trade representatives come to Queensland to assess product, compare rates, see attractions and inspect local accommodation. Their itineraries cover many more operators than media in a single visit and are much more regimented. They need to know what they are selling and identify other product suitable to their market. Famils can also help the travel trade to:

- Enhance their product knowledge and motivate the retail trade to sell Queensland tourism product

- Demonstrate to wholesalers and inbound operators that Queensland has a broad range of saleable product

## Media

Media come here to experience our lifestyle and to discover what is special about Queensland. They then help sell our tourism assets to the world through publications, television programs, online, social media channels and images. Media need facts and a clear idea of what the state has to offer their audiences. They will be inquisitive and ask many questions. Their itineraries need to be flexible to allow times for interviews and other story leads that may arise during their stay. Media famils help to:

- Generate favourable publicity about Queensland as a tourism destination
- Create positive attitudes towards Queensland as a tourism destination in the hearts and minds of key decision-makers or opinion leaders

Tourism and Events Queensland's international offices do the ground work to bring together the right mix of delegates for each famil. They then work hand-in-hand with the International Media and Trade Relations (IMTR) team based in Tourism and Events Queensland's Brisbane office who organise the famils. The IMTR team has expertise and relationships with Regional Tourism Organisations and tourism operators. They play a strong role in coordinating these international programs at their respective regional levels.

Tourism and Events Queensland also works in partnership with Tourism Australia to assist with the coordination and hosting of trade delegations through its [Aussie Specialist Program](#), as well as the [International Media Hosting Program](#) (IMHP).

### Hot tips

- Make sure Tourism and Events Queensland, your RTO and the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) are kept up to date with information on your product and experiences
- Foster close relationships with [TEQ team members](#) including Partnerships, Publicity, IMTR (famils) and International. Keep in touch with them on a regular basis.

## Ready, Willing and Able

There are some nuts and bolts you'll need to have in place before you sign up for any famils programs. As well as being prepared to host famils free of charge (FOC) or at a discounted rate, your product should be:

- in excellent order and perform to high standards
- accessible and safe
- commissionable
- a member of your RTO – highly recommended
- registered with the ATDW – highly recommended

Before you commit to hosting a famil, you should also make sure you do your homework:

- Does the famil link to your target market?
- What organisation do they come from?
- What position do they hold in their organisation?
- What opportunities do they offer?
- Do they have real potential to sell your product, e.g. trade – are you already included in their program or is there potential to be considered?
- What value can they offer you, i.e. media – what coverage might you receive in return?

Tourism and Events Queensland provides you with much of the above detail when sending out the 'Trade Famil Request' or 'Media Assessment Details and Request'. However don't be afraid to ask questions and find out more if you're unsure about anything.

If you're planning for international famils, depending on which markets the participants are coming from, you may also need:

- Translated marketing and information collateral e.g. in Chinese, Japanese, German, Korean, etc.
- To provide services, facilities and menus that cater for differing needs be they dietary, cultural or religious. For instance, gluten free options, foods prepared according to Kosher or Halal traditions
- Policies and practices in place that observe cultural sensitivities, e.g. many cultures forbid the consumption of pork. If you serve a buffet, keep pork and its serving utensils separated from the other dishes

Once you're ready, you need to contact Tourism and Events Queensland or your RTO to let them know you are interested in hosting famils. If either Tourism and Events Queensland or the RTO doesn't know your product already, they'll want to meet with you to discuss your operation and experiences to gain a clear understanding of how and where you fit the market. They'll point out any areas you might need to strengthen before you begin and they can brainstorm with you to come up with good story angles for media famils.



**Don't be afraid to ask questions if you're unsure about a trade or media famil request**

## Hot tips

- Gather as much detailed information about the famil and the participants
- Provide commentary with your experiences so delegates can really get to know your product and its best attributes
- Your delegates will have a busy itinerary. Help them to relax and enjoy the time spent with you by being on time and staying on schedule
- Find out what other products are on the itinerary and if any of your competitors are on the list so you can focus on your points of difference and highlight your advantages

## The tell and sell of famil success

You want to blow the socks off your media and trade guests because if they love your product, they'll tell others about it and nothing sells better than glowing referrals and recommendations.

To give your product a leading edge, look for points of difference that will make your famil guests feel special. For example, if you're hosting a German famil and you have a German chef, introduce them and give them time to chat.

Media are constantly on the lookout for a good story. To make the most of your media opportunities it's important to know what journalists will need during their stay. Below, we've listed a few points to help make each famil worthwhile:

- Do your research on the outlet and what the media is looking for, i.e. what is their story angle, story style or areas of interest
- Plan an interesting and relevant itinerary
- Allow time for interviews and filming/photography
- Allow time for the media to fully experience your product – schedule breaks and time to themselves
- The best stories highlight authentic and unique experiences. Profile Australian personalities or characters or teach the audience something new about the destination

## Operator insight

"We are committed to accepting as many famils as we can, and offering them at no charge, subject to availability. We have seen time and time again that the cost of hosting a famil is returned many times over in the free publicity they generate, or the increased bookings we see from agents who are more familiar and enthusiastic about our products. While we want the experience to be as authentic as possible so that media and trade see the product through the eyes of an everyday traveller, we either supply a dedicated host (for VIP famils), or ensure our crew are fully briefed about the famil. We always ensure we supply a trade or media kit so that they have everything at their fingertips after the experience."

**Danielle Krista, PR Manager, Cruise Whitsundays**



## Information and communication

The success of your familis largely depends on your ability to communicate to the delegates as well as having them experience the product for themselves.

Be mindful that your famil participants usually have a full schedule and are constantly on the road, meeting new people, trying new product and soaking up new information. Great customer service always pays off and if you are organised it will be well appreciated and noted.

Put yourself in their shoes. Think about how you can impress your famil guests without going over the top. In all instances:

- Meet and greet your famil participants
- Ensure all staff who come in contact with them know who they are, why they are there, and what they are doing
- Be accessible – always have someone on hand to look after their needs
- Be authentic – give them the real deal when it comes to your experiences
- Do your ground work, e.g. pre-empt timings, weather conditions, transport schedules, seasonal fluctuations or changes to your offerings, traffic conditions and operating hours of other local services such as restaurants, clubs, galleries, speciality stores and attractions
- Be receptive to additional requests but remember to maintain the schedule
- Exchange business cards – keep in touch and follow up with them after they have left
- Provide a trade or media kit with information about your business. Include high-res (high resolution) images and language-specific material on a USB or as a hard copy
- Offer to mail bulky or heavier items
- Make your product gifts compact, relevant and functional
- Impressions count – remember to follow up and see if there is any additional information they require regarding your product

### Hot tips

- Spend time getting to know each media and trade guest. If it's a larger group, request the assistance of your colleagues
- Compile media and trade information packs which are interesting, comprehensive, compact and light weight
- Be the perfect diplomat. Avoid raising or commenting on topics that could be contentious such as religion, politics, and animal and human rights
- When English is a delegate's second language, be considerate of their language and communication needs



### Operator insight

"I attribute a large percentage of my client base to media familis.

I find them extremely beneficial. The journalists who come and visit AI40 and Mission Beach really comprehend the beauty that we tend to take for granted. I do ask my clients where they found me and the reply is uniform, 'we saw the article in the Sunday Mail, Sunday Telegraph, Financial Review, Gourmet Traveller etc'. The media does play a vital role in increasing interest for bookings as does TEQ who brings us to the attention of the media."

**Shane Hunter, Altitude ONE40**