

WHAT IS A PACKAGE

- A package is a group of products and services presented as a unit and sold for one fixed price. Products and service may include accommodation, transportation, sightseeing, and meals. Some packages may even include helicopter rides, theatre tickets, picnics, community events, and hands-on learning experiences. There are no limits to what can be included.
- Packages are operated for a specific duration. Most packages in British Columbia are less than two weeks in length, while some are as short as one night. Some last only a few hours. (Please see the example in the Appendices.)
- A tour may be packaged for one or two people traveling as individuals, or for a coach-load of people traveling as a group.
- Packages make it easier to travel into a region, through prearranging and prepaying for services needed while en route to, or while visiting, a destination.
- Packages may offer a benefit to the customer by including advantages he or she would not normally receive if they were to purchase the travel arrangements on their own.
- Packages often provide better values than customers can get on their own.
- Packages create a perception of value and security.
- Packages assist in attracting new markets and give existing customers value-added reasons to buy products and services.
- Some packages are operated by seasoned tourism operators, as well as by businesses and individuals who are not directly operating a tourism business. For example: in BC, a cheese factory, wineries, pulp mills, forestry reserves, and hydro-electric dams conduct tours of their facilities and produce their own print materials.

A package is created when:

- The restaurant on the corner and the theatre down the road get together and produce one “total-price” offering.

A package is created when:

- A large international travel wholesaler arrives in a small community and buys components for inclusion in the wholesaler’s own package.

TYPES OF PACKAGES

The greatest distinction in types of packages is between **packages for groups** and **packages for individual travellers**. Purchasers of both types of packages seek as complete an experience as possible, at a reasonable price.

Packages For Groups

A **Group Inclusive Tour** (GIT) is a prepaid tour for a specified minimum number of people, traveling as a unit. Most group tours in British Columbia are comprised of 10 to 35 people (standard coach size is 47 passengers). GITs are usually travel-escorted on chartered transportation and generally include all baggage handling, entrance fees, taxes, and some meals.

Group packages popular in British Columbia include the following tours.

- City Tours
- Destination Resort Tours
- Rail, Coach, and Cruise Tours
- Garden Tours
- Environmental Tours
- Cultural and Educational Tours
- Industrial Tours

Packages For Individual Travellers

A Fully Inclusive Tour (FIT) is a prearranged and prepaid tour, for one to 10 people traveling without an escort or tour guide. Most typically, an air carrier originates the booking. The customers usually travel by public transportation or U-drive. FIT generally includes accommodation, transportation and sightseeing. The traveler is issued a “voucher” for each component of the package. Taxes and baggage handling are usually the responsibility of the individual traveler.

These FIT packages are popular in British Columbia

- U-Drive Circle Tours
- Destination Resort Tours
- Outdoor and Adventure Tours
- Hotel and Motel packages

Packages for Groups and FITs

- Packages accommodation and meals
- Packaging area attractions, entertainment and lodging
- Packaging with events in a community and lodging
- Packages with complimentary services, e.g., a lodge providing a shuttle vehicle for excursions
- Special-interest packages and lodging

- Conference and meeting packages
- Packages for special customers, e.g., executive rooms for business travelers

Businesses providing service that is enthusiastically performed, exactly as contracted, will ensure repeat visits from the tour operator.

Programming For Packages

Programming is the process of increasing the appeal of a product by holding special events or by arranging special activities to provide extra selling features for an area or product.

For example: a motel in Chase that wants to draw business from Kamloops or Lake Shuswap over-nighters may decide that arranging for their guests to enjoy an educational tour of local ginseng and corn farms would result in increased market share from the family market.

WHO PACKAGES THE TOURS

Tourism businesses will often create an in-house package to provide a value-added product to regular offering. For example, a hotel or resort could provide a “Honeymoon Package” featuring a superior suite, champagne, roses, and breakfast-in-bed.

Independent **business operators** from around British Columbia may offer one component or service for sale to tour operators, thereby becoming a “supplier” to a tour operator. For examples, and amateur live-stage theatre company in Vernon may sell evening show tickets to a tour operator (FIT) selling U-drive Okanagan packages.

A **professional tour operator** offers a variety of tours (comprised of many products and services) to more than one market.

Tour operators are always seeking new products and services to include in their packages. The innovative features of their tour components give them “unique selling points” over their competition.

THE FIRST STEP IN PACKAGING

What To Do Before Contacting Anyone

1. Analyze Your Business

Before contemplating entering new avenues of business, it is suggested that a **Business Plan** be developed. It need not be complicated, and may be completed in point form. Research for your plan may come from reports, articles, and interviews within the industry.

Here are two points to consider.

- Mission Statement (the internal environment)
 - a) Decide what your company stands for.
 - b) What does your enterprise do that gives everyone involved pride?
 - c) Address why you are in business, and what your purpose is.
- Situation Analysis (the business environment)
 - a) Take stock of your business, the community, the region and your country.
 - b) List strengths, weaknesses, trends, and possible influences on your business.
 - c) Write down how your mission statement coincides with your desire to package tourism products and services. A review of the situation will help you recognize what you have to offer to the target markets you wish to attract.

2. Take An Inventory

Whether contemplating a single component of a package or a series of packages, an inventory is required. The inventory assists in identifying possible opportunities and pinpointing gaps in services or products.

- Regional Analysis
Regional natural resources, community resources and services (the infrastructure) need to be recorded. The list may include the following.

The regional setting

- a) History, cultural and heritage resources
- b) Topography, waterways, flora and fauna, climate
- c) Regional and community image

The community

- a) Annual events and festivals
- b) Regional services (hospital, phones, post office)
- c) Associations and government support offices

The tourism infrastructure

- a) Accommodations (fixed-roof and camping)
- b) Food services
- c) Sightseeing opportunities
- d) Transportation and access
- e) Commercial attractions
- f) Recreational opportunities (by season)

3. Analyze The Competition

- **Competitive Analysis**
 - a) Compare what each competitor offers for produces, services, prices.
 - b) List strengths and weaknesses.

- c) Analyze the corporate and product image of the competition.
- d) List ways your products are different or unique. NB: This analysis may encompass the community, the region or neighbouring regions.

4. Opportunity Identification

- **Define your assets.**

Identify the image you wish your company, community, or bank to portray and draw an outline of the service expectations of the customer you wish to attract.

5. Set Objectives

- Decide what you want to accomplish.
- Set a specific time frame and a specified percentage or dollar figure to be achieved. Objectives provide a focus and will assist in measuring success at the end of your time frame.

These objectives would include the following goals.

- To attract new markets
- To increase market share by 10%
- To increase shoulder or off-season business by 5%.

WHO WILL BUY A PACKAGE

Market Research

Drawing a profile of the needs and wants of your targeted consumers will help you identify the markets most likely to find your product or service appealing.

Once you have identified your markets, you will use direct marketing efforts to reach:

- a) The consumer, through your company advertising plan,
- b) The industry tour operators, who will market your product to their clients, and
- c) A combination a) and b).

A marketing plan will guide your approach to selected markets.

Consumer Markets

The size and nature of the consumer market (and projected growth) must be tabulated. Statistics available on consumer profiles include the following.

- Geographical home-base of the consumer
- Age range
- Means of travel used to reach BC
- Purpose of trip (business, VFR, etc.)
- Type of trip (touring trip, city trip, outdoor trip, resort trip)
- Length of stay in BC
- Amount of money spent
- Preferred activities

Using publishing statistics such as the Visitor '95 report, break the market into segments. Determine the numbers of travellers who have interests similar to the activity categories you are offering.

Match the markets that seek activities closely related to your activities. Decide if demand outweighs supply.

DETERMINE IF:

- The business analysis is complete,
- Research on resources is concluded,
- Market demands (needs and wants) have been identified,
- The nature and scope of your package will adequately meet market demands, and
- needs of targeted consumer markets can be realistically served.

Industry Markets

Industry markets include: tour operators; wholesalers; travel agents; air carriers; coach, rail and cruise companies; car and RV rentals agencies; public sector agencies; and private sector tourism businesses in BC.

Tourism British Columbia will provide published lists of possible contacts and will suggest avenues to reach the markets targeted in your marketing plan. Materials that may assist include:

- a) The British Columbia Receptive Services list of operators currently operating tour packages in BC,
- b) The north American Trade and Consumers Shows for the BC Travel Industry list of recommended market specific shows, and
- c) The North American Group Travel Operators list of operators currently bring business to BC.

Have you determined if the expectations of the tour operator can be met?

BC tourism industry involves over 17,000 enterprises and agencies including: accommodation; food and beverage; transportation; adventure tourism; events and conferences travel trade; attractions; and tourism services. Tourism is a major generator of foreign exchange and employs over 110,000 people in BC.

DESIGNING THE TOUR

Standard Inclusions and Components

As noted in the Types of Packages section, standard inclusions may vary between group and FIT tours. “Typical” inclusions and “expected” services on a traditional tour may include many of the following.

Meet & Greet

Generally conducted at an airport, port of entry point into a region. A professional local guide or company representative meets and greets members of the group and gives them a brief run-down on what activities, transportation, lodging, etc. to expect while in the care of your company. The fee for this service is built in to the overall package cost or may be included in baggage-handling charges.

Lodging Welcome

Conducted for groups by local hotel/resort staff. While the group escort goes to the front desk to do administrative chores (i.e., update rooming lists, check special needs, ensure rooms are ready, and get room keys), the welcome person uses the bus microphone (ask the driver’s/escort’s permission) and gives a brief welcome announcement to the group. The welcome person then leads the group off the coach into a small gathering area/room. No fee is charged for this service.

Welcome Reception

Provides groups with basic lodging information. This includes location of ice machines, nearest drug store, bar and pop service, etc. Fruit punch and cookies (or something inexpensive and simple) are served. This reception is kept brief (i.e., 10 – 15 minutes) and allows for the smooth delivery of baggage to each room while the reception is taking place. The minor cost of the refreshments is born by the hotel or motel.

Baggage-Handling

Often not included for FIT. The charges, based on a per-bag-in and per-bag-out, are charged to the package organizer.

Extra Services

Extra services are low-cost or no-cost complimentary services that ensure you get repeat business in the future. Here are some suggestions.

- A full ice bucket in each room
- A photo film pick-up and delivery service to a local film-developing shop
- Fresh-up towelettes distributed on arrival/departure or during the day
- Shoe-polishing service
- Self-help coffee, late night/early morning, in the lobby
- A discount coupon from local/in-house gift shop
- A display of local aboriginal art
- A locally crafted farewell gift upon departure

Meals

Often, groups are made to feel like inferior customers. This can be avoided. Preplanning will show that added effort was made to celebrate their arrival.

- Print restricted or single-item main course meals on a letterhead sheet that includes a special greeting for the group, and the day's date.
- Arrange for the group to set at regular-size tables (not group tables).
- Allot a set dollar value for each meal and let group members order from the regular menu, accordingly (Note: Always include staff gratuities in quotes.)

Entertainment

Set up a specific area for the group. You may wish to provide them with a few complimentary activities.

- Playing cards and card tables
- Travel films
- Bingo
- A talk about tomorrow's tour
- A scavenger hunt

Community entertainment for members of coach tours will hold more appeal if it is not too far from the accommodation base.

Sightseeing

Select your tours with your target markets in mind. For example, keep in mind that seniors find it difficult to walk on uneven ground, require assistance getting in and out of boats, and enjoy the fresh air but need to keep walking to a minimum.

Groups enjoy the "grass-roots", local community perspective. Allow time for shopping and for getting the group back to the evening lodging. Include time for resting and refreshing before dinner.

Farewell

A representative from each place of lodging and the local tour operator should be on-hand as the group loads for final departure. A simple "thanks for coming" can be enough, but a treat of candy or some fruit for the day's journey is a nice touch.

Creative Inclusions

Creative inclusions are components that add a perceived value to the tour. Suggestions

- An evening presentation on aboriginal history
- A slide show of regional highlights
- An aboriginal carving demonstration
- Local food specialty display

The Duration of a Package

Once target markets (please see Who Will Buy A Package) have been pinpointed, you will see a travel pattern emerge. For example: German visitors, to a large extent, travel on FIT packages or independently, by recreational vehicle (RV), and will stay in a region for up to three weeks. Japanese tend to travel by groups into areas providing superior accommodation and remain only one night, and sometimes only a few hours. The BC resident visitor is often only in an area for a weekend and frequently travels to visit friends and relatives (VFR).

Tour operators have an ongoing need to locate product offerings of less than one day to incorporate into established travel patterns. Businesses and communities are encouraged to participate in packaging by programming products or events to fill these needs. (Please see Regional Success Stories.) Other examples include: one hour interpretive walks through a local garden; a guided, half day nature hike through local meadows; a half day four-wheel-drive excursion to the local fire lookout.

You may establish the appropriate side trip duration by:

- Researching target market travel patterns,
- Reviewing tours already established in the area, and
- Studying packages and programs sold in other areas of the province.

HOW TO COST AND PRICE PACKAGES

Cost versus Price

Calculation of the cost is an operational function of totaling the actual **cost** of each component. These include all direct out-of-pocket expenses resulting from operation of the package.

The **price** is the final selling amount, reached by adding necessary commissions and desired company profit to the out-of-pocket costs.

Standard and Not-So-Standard Inclusions

It is the responsibility of both the packager and the supplier to ensure that the selling price states **what is included** and **what is not included** in the quoted price. A package should not hold any hidden costs for the traveler while en route, nor should a tour operator be required to pay for items not originally quoted.

Not-so-standard inclusions may include such items as: airport or harbour pick-up fees; hotel housekeeping charges. Once again, these items must be handled by either including them in the package, or clarifying their exclusion. (Please see designing the package.)

Commissions and Markups

Travellers expect tours to cost the same, or less than, the price of the components if purchased independently. Therefore, price negotiations with suppliers are necessary to obtain rates that are lower than published rates. At this point, cooperative sales plans may benefit both parties. Good net rates will keep the selling price of the final package at a marketable level.

Markup (added on) amounts vary. There is no right or wrong amount. Variations occur due to: the amount of commission a seller requires; the volume of advertising and promotion needed to sell the package; and the profit a company wants. It has been noted that European Community operators require higher commission, while operators from other markets are more moderate.

Once the tour is costed and a price decided, it is necessary to review competitive tours in the marketplace to see how pricing compares. While you are not obligated to match competitors' prices, it is wise to keep in line with them.

It is standard to plan for the following expenses.

- Sales agent (retail trade) commissions (10%)
- Wholesale (tour operator) commissions (10%)
- Incentive overrides for volume sales agents (2 – 5%)
- Operational costs for reservations
- Promotional costs for advertising and brochures
- Profit

Markup Formula

The following formula is a calculation guideline to show how markups are mathematically divided (rather than added).

Example One: assuming a **25% markup**

- a) The net cost of the product is \$70.99
- b) 10% commission is needed for a travel agent
- c) 15% commission is needed to cover company marketing costs and desired profits

\$70.00 = Consider this to be 75% of desired total and work with .75
\$70.00 / .75 = \$93.00
The selling price is \$93.00
Minus 10% commission paid out
Total net = \$83.70 (including profit)

Example Two: assuming **40% markup**

The net cost of the product is \$70.00
25% commission is requested from a wholesaler to cover their corporate costs and the travel agent's commission
15% is needed to cover company marketing costs and desired profits.

\$70.00 = Consider this to be 60% of desired total and work with .6
\$70.00 / .6=\$117.00
The selling price is \$117.00
Minus 25% commission paid out
Total net = \$87.75 (including profit)

- **A net rate is a wholesale rate that is marked up for resale.**
- **A net rate is the lowest possible rate at which the facility or service can still make a reasonable profit.**

What It Costs To Be Part Of A Package

Usually, there are no costs associated with being included in a professional tour operator's package. Under a cooperative sales agreement, a company may be requested to share marketing costs. Generally, costs are covered in commissions.

Commissions are only paid to sales agents once a sale is achieved and therefore no cost is incurred at the onset.

HOW TO MARKET PACKAGES

Lead Time

Organizing a successful group tour requires a minimum of one-year lead-time. This allows:

- Three months to research, plan, negotiate, book, price the tour, and produce a promotional materials,
- Six months for a promotional and sale campaign, and
- Ninety days for billing, dispatch, and wrap-up.

Tour operators packaging around a large event (e.g., Expo 86) make their plans up to five years in advance.

Many program and package offering from smaller businesses may operate on a much shorter time frame when marketing to short-haul markets. Often, a “special event” (e.g., a guided fishing excursion on a local lake timed to coincide with a community festival or event) can be successfully launched and implemented within 60 – 90 days.

The Marketing Plan

The marketing plan is a component of your overall business plan. The business plan may include: corporate plans for the coming year, operational problems and opportunities, strategies for pricing, a marketing plan, and a budget. The business plan lays the foundation of company expectations for the coming year.

The marketing plan is an objective document against which progress can be measured. Used as a yardstick to determine achievement of set objectives within a rapidly changing business environment, it is generally written every year as part of the yearly financial budget.

In larger firms, the plan is written with the input of sales staff, the finance department, and a marketing manager or a company committee assigned to the task. Smaller firms find “brain-storming sessions” with staff to be a productive means of getting ideas down on paper.

The process of producing a marketing plan demands objectivity and realistic evaluation of service capabilities, and helps the company “see the forest and not just the trees.”

Topics covered should include:

- Where Are You Now? (situation analysis)
- Where Would You Like To Be? (objectives)
- How Will You Get There? (marketing activities including: packaging, positioning [i.e., superior, standard, or budget, market niche you will cater to}, advertising, promotions, and pricing strategies).
- How Well Did You Do? (market evaluation)

Deciding If A Brochure Is Needed

The decision on brochure production is based on what you know about your target market (i.e., consumer or industry) and what materials are needed to get sales.

A tour operator will often produce a brochure in a foreign language and will merely require a price sheet, product description, and possibly photographs from you.

Sometimes a brochure is not necessary. A well designed, graphically pleasing information sheet, that can do double-duty as a mail piece or poster, may be more effective.

Generally, advertisements and promotions require support from some manner of printed material. A well-thought-out marketing plan will assist with decisions such as cost and benefit of a brochure versus cost and benefit of an information bulletin (sometimes called a “flat sheet”).

IMAGE

Travellers buy not so much on the actual information presented to them, but on how they perceive this information.

Establishing Selling Partners

Selling partners in tourism include: travel agents, air carriers, coach lines, car and RV rental firms, travel associations, government agencies, and other businesses.

Tourism operates on a “vertical” marketing system. The task of raising awareness of a destination lies largely with federal, provincial, or civic governments interested in receiving the benefit of taxes generated by the industry. The private sector business operators based in an area frequently “partner” with governments to share marketing costs.

The suppliers of products and services generally find it cost-prohibitive to market to long-haul markets (markets based far away), therefore it may be best to work through a tour operator. (Please see Who Will Buy A Package, Industry Markets.)

Regional Tourism Associations supply members with assistance in identifying operators most likely to be interested in package offerings.

Due to the large number of travel agencies based in North America, it is difficult for the small operator to market to all of them. Travel agencies generally receive destination information from tour operators and transportation companies, and advertisements may be placed in trade magazines distributed directly to travel agents (e.g., Agent Canada, Travel Weekly, TravelAge West).

Other tourism businesses within your region should be viewed as selling partners, rather than competitors, and should be approached to establish interest in cooperating with a joint advertising plan to extend limited budgets.

Close-In and Long-Haul Markets

A blend of marketing to both close-in and far-away markets is ideal. Alternatives to traveling overseas to market in distant regions include the following.

- Distribution materials through (member system) Travel Infocentres and Chambers of Commerce, tourism and non-tourism businesses in the area, and businesses in neighbouring areas. These should include; airports, ferry terminals, train stations, campgrounds, and RV and car rental companies.
- Promoting your product with staff in local and neighbouring areas, such as gas station attendants, baggage-handlers in hotels, restaurant employees, and scheduled-bus drivers. A complimentary “fam trip” or reduced staff rate on services works well to raise awareness of your products, making it easy for referrals.
- Offering cooperation to your Regional Tourism Association for the supply of services at “no cost” (or complimentary) to assist in bringing travel editors in to test the products and generate positive media coverage.
- Contacting coach-tour escorts currently bring groups through the area and offering them a promotional “trial offering” of your product or service.
- Providing your product to a tour operator to incorporate into overseas and travel agency sales materials. The tour operator will absorb all costs and recover expenses through commissions on completed sales.
- Advertising in regional, provincial, and federal tourism collective fulfillment brochures, produced for market-specific segments and distributed by public sector sales staff at overseas trade and consumer shows.
- Attending tourism and hospitality sales conferences such as the Rendezvous Canada Trade Show, National Tour Association Trade Show, American Bus Association Trade Show, Canada’s West Marketplace and outdoor recreation consumer shows. Your costs include booth and travel costs as well as commission on any trade sales.
- Advertising directly to the potential traveler in newspapers or market specific consumer magazines. Advertisements must be placed frequently to be effective, may be costly to produce and expensive to place.

WORD-OF-MOUTH

Information from personal sources is usually considered more objective and trustworthy, and often is the sole reason a product is selected.

ADMINISTERING PACKAGES

Reservations

Procedures administering reservations vary among companies.

If there is enough time between the initial reservation and travel commencement, it is suggested that a deposit be secured. Final payment should be received prior to the product being used. Companies providing volume sales may negotiate less strict requirements and use rollover deposits. (Please see Glossary.)

Travel agents, tour operators, suppliers, and consumers rely heavily on 1-800 numbers to make reservations. The cost of a 1-800 line has decreased recently, making this service more affordable for small business operators.

Operations

Terms and Conditions spell out company payment and cancellation policies. Cancellation policies are often flexible to promote positive public relations with repeat clients. Examples of terms and conditions can be viewed on the back of better travel brochures.

Tour operators generally receive advance payment for travel arrangements and therefore can be accommodating in meeting payment schedules of product and service suppliers.

Confirmation and travel documents are sent directly to the booking agent, who, in turn, sends them to the client.

Vouchers and Travel Documents

A voucher or travel coupon will include these details.

- Name of Tour Operator
- Tour Name
- Passenger Name
- Supplier Name
- Dates and Services to be Supplied (coupon value)
- Official Validation Stamp

Travel documents require a step-by-step itinerary. For a group, the itinerary may be incorporated into a tour operator's materials to provide the escort with a daily activity schedule.

For the FIT traveler, a precise itinerary will ensure the client can conduct his or her own tour with confidence, and can easily find local points of interest along the way.

Regulations

Provincial Travel Agents Act

The Travel Agents Act, administered by the Registrar of Travel Services, regulates the operation of tour operators, travel agents, and travel wholesalers resident in the province of British Columbia.

The Act established the Travel Assurance Fund to compensate a traveler who has not received the travel service for which he or she has paid, i.e., in the event a Registered Agent or their supplier has failed to provide service.

A license is not required if you own or hold long-term lease on that which you sell. For example, a motel may package a fishing, accommodation, and breakfast weekend. If the fishing boats are owned by the motel, there no need for a license. If the boats are subcontracted for the weekend, the motel is categorized as a tour operator and must be licensed to collect funds on behalf of the tour operator.

Details of the Travel Agents Act are available from the Registrar of Travel Services. (Please see Contacts Appendix.)

Regional and District Requirements

Jurisdictions that require investigation include:

Business licenses; motor carrier requirements; health and safety standards; food, liquor and accommodation requirements; harbour activities; and natural resources management guidelines.

It is recommended that regional and district agencies be contacted for details.

European Community (EC) Directive

As of December 1992, the European Community Directive on Package Travel, Package Tours, and Package Holidays came into effect. This Directive imposes strict requirements on tour operators and travel agents in the provision of minimum standards on brochures, travel arrangements, financial guarantees, and for repatriation in the event a supplier goes out of business.

This Directive makes tour operators and travel agents liable to their customers for everything contained within the package they are selling. Should a brochure have incorrect information or is in any way misleading, the company can be prosecuted for a criminal offence.

A complete copy of the Directive may be obtained from Tourism British Columbia.

Here are some key points of the Directive.

- Descriptions of the package in the brochure cannot be misleading. Brochure particulars are binding unless the client is aware of changes prior to commencing his or her trip.
- If a tour departure requires a minimum number of passengers to operate, the client must be aware of this. There must be a deadline given for informing the consumer in the event of cancellation of the trip.
- The level of accommodation, type of transportation, and itinerary inclusions must be honestly described in the brochure.
- The published prices shall not be revised unless it is for variation in dues, fees, exchange rates, or transportation costs. Prices cannot be adjusted within 20 days prior to departure.
- Compensation must be made to the client if a significant proportion of the services contracted are not provided to the client. Compensation must also be made for disappointment and inconvenience.
- If something goes wrong at a hotel, or if there is an accident in a coach, delays at airports, or anything else causing a complaint or damage, the client has the right to claim against the tour operator even if the tour operator cannot claim against the supplier.

For example: Due to a mechanical problem, an RV rental firm was unable to supply two EC travellers with the 23 foot motor home they had reserved. The firm, with all good intentions, upgraded the travellers to a 28-foot RV. The EC travellers accepted the substitution and completed their holiday but, upon returning home, filed a complaint and requested a refund. They received a refund, based on the fact that the driver experienced undue stress in handling the larger vehicle once they were on the highway.

It is suggested new suppliers to the tourism industry package through seasoned tour professional until confidence is gained in serving the EC market.

To assist tour operators meet this Directive in a professional manner, BC suppliers' need to:

- Communicate everything to the operator in a factual manner,
- Advise operators of minimum passenger requirements at reservation time (in writing),
- Provide all the services outlined in your agreement with the operator, and
- Be willing to assume part of the responsibility for claims or damages related to the package.

PACKAGING SUCCESSES IN BC's TOURISM INDUSTRY

Regional Success Stories

LLAMA-ASSISTED BACKCOUNTRY PACK TRIPS

Staging area: 20 km east of Prince George on Hwy. 16
Season: June through September (28 scheduled trips)
Operator: Strider Adventures

Offer:

- a) Nature walks, complete with picnic, brunch or barbecue
- b) Day Hikes
- c) Two 7-day backcountry trips
- d) Scheduled and custom trips

Provide:

Circuit trails from 20 minutes to three hours. Easy nature walk on gentle, groomed trails. Llamas pack a delicious picnic. Picnic site with beaver dam, pone, and lodge. Senior encouraged. Hiking groups of 4 – 12 people.

Target markets:

- Families – young and old
- Clubs and groups
- Corporate clients
- Novice to expert individual travellers

Marketing and Promotional focus:

Advertising: Northern BC travel guide, Tourism BC fulfillment brochures
Direct Mail: Adventure tour operators, RV rental companies
Editorials: In regional newspapers
Promotions: Senior and school group visits to view the llamas, use of llamas in regional work projects such as – using llamas to pack seedlings in to reforestation sites, using the llamas to assist in cleaning park trails on Earth Day Community Days.

LADYSMITH FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Staging Area: Ladysmith, Vancouver Island
Season: Last week of November through first week of January annually.
Operator: A community festival.
Offer: The whole town is lit up. Businesses and private homes all participate. There is an official “turning-on ceremony”, as well as a parade.

Marketing:

Advertisements were placed in the North Shore News and Richmond News. The Festival cooperated with the Inn on the Sea hotel to package rooms and the festival together. The hotel offered a 25% “festival special” discount, gleaned additional business, and plan to support the festival in coming years.

APPENDICES

PACKAGED TOUR EXAMPLE

RESERVATION REQUEST:

Two retired British travellers will be visiting British Columbia to stay with friends and relatives. During their month here they wish to take a one-week tour. They don't mind some driving, but prefer to travel by bus as the terrain is too mountainous. They wish to avoid larger cities and have a passion for museums.

This packaged tour in the Kootenay's has been created to meet their needs. This example is based on two travellers (FIT) and is suitable for conversion to a group tour. The total number of kilometers traveled will be 525 (327.5 miles) and the tour will take seven days/six nights to complete.

CASE STUDY:

You may wish to look through the itinerary selections on a case study basis and attempt to recreate the itinerary based on:

- a) An escorted group of travellers (i.e., calculate single, double and triple rates on the same tour/using chartered coach and selecting sightseeing inclusions);
- b) An alternative special interest focus (i.e., historic/ethnic/mining);
- c) Adjusted inclusions (i.e., kitchen each day) to be more cost effective; and
- d) Added items to create additional "unique selling points" for the region (i.e., add wildlife viewing options to the itinerary; cost in a small travel cooler as a surprise inclusion).

The following points show how the itinerary was created and why and what is not included in the cost of the tour.

Accommodation

- Properties were selected on the basis of moderate rates, available facilities (dining room, pool, etc.), and locations in downtown areas.
- All properties selected have kitchen units so travellers have the option of preparing some meals.
- All of the properties have single, double, triple and additional person rates; allowing for calculations on possible additional travellers.

Transportation

- This package contains two modes of transportation: coach and rental car.
- This itinerary starts in Kelowna because the city has an airport (Air Canada Regional and Westjet). However, the coach transfer to Grand Forks can begin anywhere Greyhound Lines of Canada has scheduled pick-ups.
- Castlegar is the only city in the Kootenay's where a Tilden rental car outlet is located so the rental pick-up and drop-off location must be the same.

Sightseeing

- All of the sightseeing sites are merely suggestions for the travellers to go if they wish.
- Travellers are free to spend as much time at each site as they wish.
- All admissions to sightseeing sites are paid by the travelers at arrival.

Meals

- Breakfast is included on Days Two through Seven, lunch is pax (passenger's) own cost, and dinner is included on Days One through Six.
- Breakfast is full American (coffee/tea/juice/eggs/hash browns/toast/jam and bacon/ham or sausage).
- Dinner is regular or deluxe menu (roll/butter/soup or salad, vegetables/potatoes, rice or noodles, fish/poultry or beef, dessert).
- Meals are vouchered for a specific amount. Additional amounts are pax own responsibility.

Meet & Greet and Baggage-Handling

- A meet & greet and baggage handling will be done at every property on the itinerary.
- The meet & greet on Day One will include an information kit (brochures, maps, etc.), a short video and a complimentary coffee or tea.
- The meet & greet on Day Five will include a complimentary mini-towel from Ainsworth Ho Springs Resort.
- The voucher for accommodation properties have "baggage in/out included" written on the voucher.

NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR ITINERARY

- Government Taxes: GST not included. Allows pax to obtain receipt to apply for own refund.
- Tips/gratuities
- Incidentals of a personal nature