



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund

Experience Training

Working With the Travel Trade

August, 2022



AGENDA

- **Part 1:** Mapping the Tourism Value Chain
- **Part 2:** Understanding the Market and Buyers
- **Part 3:** What are Stakeholders Looking for?
- **Part 4:** Is my Experience Ready to be Sold?
- **Part 5:** How to Communicate?
- **Part 6:** Templates
- Takeaways



PART 1

Mapping the Tourism Value Chain

Travel Trade Structure



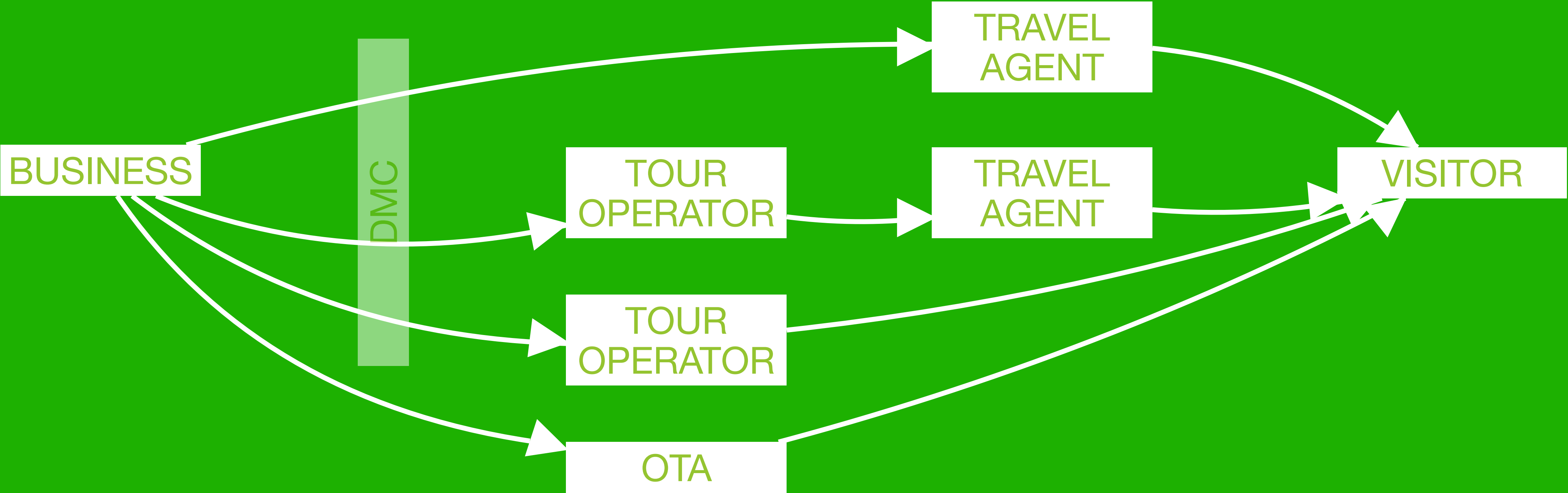
There are six main elements in the travel trade sector.

Businesses and visitors are at the centre.

Then there are four types of intermediary stakeholders: DMCs (Destination Management Companies), Tour Operators, Travel Agents and OTAs (Online Travel Agents).



Travel Trade Structure



Tour Operators



Tour operators are located in the country or region they are selling to.

They put travel components together to create packages. They may sell directly to the consumer or through travel agents.

Examples:



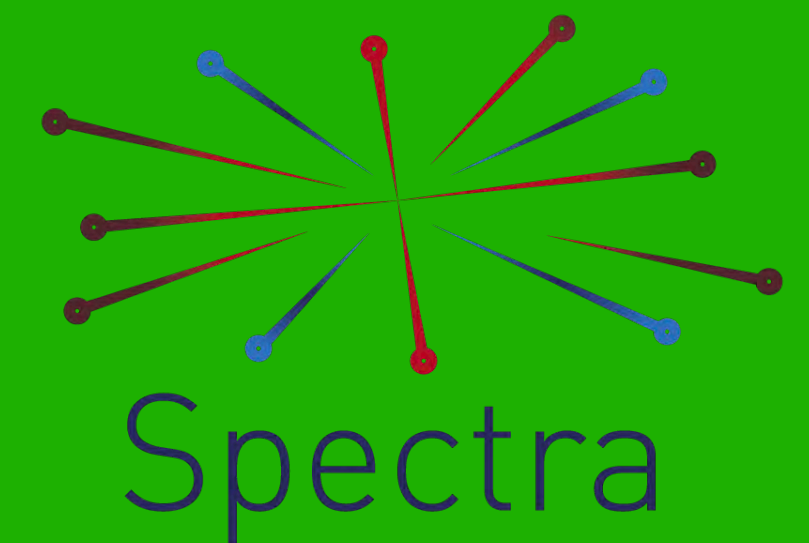
DMCs



Destination Management Companies specialise in packaging and bundling programmes and itineraries for marketing and selling to overseas travel trade. They always have expertise in specific destinations.

The programmes and itineraries are then sold by tour operators and travel agents.

Examples:



OTAs



Online Travel Agents act as a bridge between visitors and businesses, sell products exclusively via the web and have a global reach.

OTAs can sell airline tickets, attraction tickets, rent a car, but their top product is booking of hotel and other accommodation.

Examples:

The logo for Booking.com, featuring the word "Booking" in white sans-serif font on a blue rectangular background.

Travel Agents



Travel agents have a direct link with consumers and are based in the consumer's country or region of origin.

They sell holiday products (from a Tour Operator or wholesaler) through a storefront or home-based locations.

Examples:



Travel Trade Variants



Online vs. Offline distribution

The product can be distributed using either online or offline channels.

Social media and websites are examples of online channels.

A travel agent desk is an example of an offline distribution channel (the same for hotels or information centres).



Travel Trade Variants



Vertical vs. Horizontal integration

Vertical integration: when two or more organisations at different stages in the supply chain merge, such as tour operators and travel agents.



Example of TUI, a leader in vertical integration:

TUI holidays put together their holidays via their tour operations and then sells them via their travel agents. Tourists then fly on aircraft owned by TUI.

TUI is one of the world's leading tourism groups. The broad portfolio gathered under the Group umbrella consists of strong tour operators, 1,600 travel agencies and leading online portals, five airlines with around 150 aircraft, over 400 hotels, 16 cruise liners and many incoming agencies in all major holiday destinations around the globe. It covers the entire tourism value chain under one roof. This integrated offering enables us to provide our 27 million customers with an unmatched

Travel Trade Variants



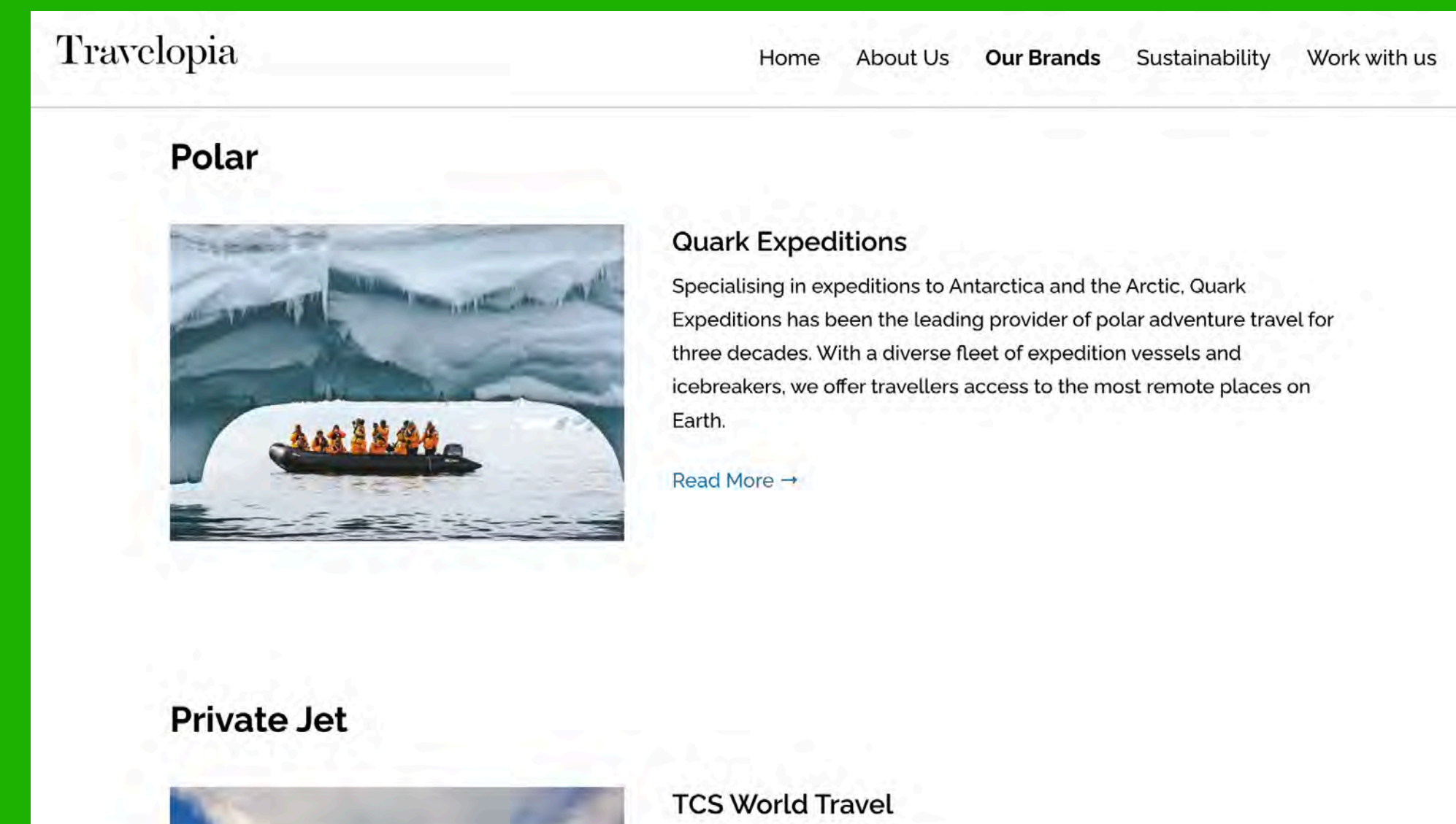
Vertical vs. Horizontal integration

Horizontal integration: when two or more organisations in the same distribution chain merge, such as a travel agent buying another travel agent.



Example of Travelopia, a leader in horizontal integration:

Travelopia is the world's largest collection of specialist tour operator brands. Travelopia products are at the same level in the chain of distribution - tour operators.



PART 2

Understanding the Market and Buyers

Why Work With Travel Trade?



- To access new markets
- To have specialised support
- To better predict bookings
- To offer consumer protection for the traveller



Why Work With Travel Trade?



- To access new markets
- To have specialised support
- To better predict bookings
- To offer consumer protection for the traveller

Travel trade can help your business leverage its presence in new markets, considering their experience and knowledge.

You would need significant resources to achieve that alone.

This strategy may also allow you to easily enter niche markets.

Why Work With Travel Trade?



- To access new markets
- To have specialised support
- To better predict bookings
- To offer consumer protection for the traveller

Travel trade can provide support to your sales and marketing team to deliver a better customer service.

It is also relevant to highlight the support travel trade provides your clients during their trips.

Why Work With Travel Trade?



- To access new markets
- To have specialised support
- To better predict bookings
- To offer consumer protection for the traveller

Any accurate forecast helps businesses to be more profitable and to better answer potential challenges ahead.

The benefit of working with the travel trade is that they usually book well in advance, unlike visitors who book directly.

Why Work With Travel Trade?



- To access new markets
- To have specialised support
- To better predict bookings
- To offer consumer protection for the traveller

Booking through the travel trade offers consumer protection for the traveller.

For instance, when things go wrong (e.g. flight delays or cancellations), travel trade is responsible for rebooking all travel for the consumer.

How Relevant is Data in this Sense?



It is key to have relevant information about the market.

If you define the market and segment you want to reach, the best thing to do is to **collect information on their habits, behaviour and interests.**



What Intermediaries Value?



Understanding the travel trade sector by defining what intermediaries value the most. In that sense, empathy is key.

- ROI: the first aspect is the Return on Investment. So it is important to assure them that the product is a success in the market
- Seasonality: it is also relevant that the product remains attractive throughout the year
- Growth forecasts: a product that is trendy will see its attractiveness to grow in the near future



The Role of DMOs



DMOs are key in connecting with the travel trade, because of the relevant industry contacts they have.

Tour operators and travel agents see DMOs as a reliable source for new ideas and information.

DMOs are also important in promoting your business in trade shows or familiarisation trips.



What to Consider About Pricing?



Prices need to be competitive if you want to succeed working with travel trade.

Even if you have a different or tailored experience, tour operators and travel agents will always value the costs involved.

So look at how experiences are being priced on travel agents' websites, consider commission fees and then you can better understand what it would involve.

Creating Personas



Creating a profile or persona is important to better understand their needs or motivations.

So try to create a persona for someone working at a travel agent or tour operator.



Creating Personas



There are 4 steps to take according to Buffer that could help you in the creation of personas.

1. Check your website analytics
2. Involve the whole team in creating profiles
3. Social media research
4. Ask questions to your audience



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Checking Google Analytics of your website is actually a very accurate solution to find out who are the average visitors, where they come from, what keywords they use to find you and which content they browse on the website, which also gives you a rough estimate of their interests.

Creating Personas



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Gather the team and work together in the definition of the characteristics of personas.

The ultimate goal is to create a customer persona card.

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Most social media platforms have an analytics section that lets you discover data about your users, such as age, gender, interests, etc.

Gather all that information and add it to the list for the final representation of your personas.

Creating Personas



There are 4 steps to take according to Buffer that could help you in the creation of personas.

1. Check your website analytics
2. Involve the whole team in creating profiles
3. Social media research
4. Ask your audience questions

Use surveys and interviews to find precise insight about your customers.

Surveys are an easy way to gather data quickly, if you already have a good list of people to contact.

Interviews can reveal deeper insight into goals, motivations and frustrations which help to get the picture of the persona.

PART 3

What are Stakeholders Looking for?

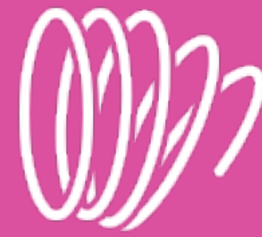
What are Stakeholders Looking for?

What are B2B Buyers Looking for?



1

**A Product Ready
to be Sold**



2

Flexibility



3

Good Margins



4

Informative Materials

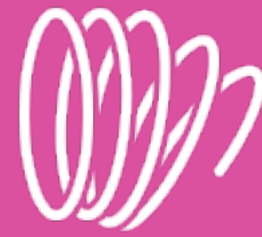
What are B2B Buyers Looking for?



1

A Product Ready to be Sold

All about accessibility, organised transport (private, bus), languages, tour package (accommodation, food, tours, etc.).



2

Flexibility

Travel trade prefers to work with businesses that can rapidly adjust their offer - the market is becoming increasingly volatile.



3

Good Margins

Profitability is one of the key criteria for any travel trade members. Make sure it's a good deal for both parties. The lesser the intermediaries, the better.



4

Informative Materials

It is very important that businesses have informative and promotional material, to share at a trade show for example.

What are Stakeholders Looking for?

What are Final Consumers Looking for?



1

**To Have Their
Expectations Met**



2

**To Get a
Reasonable Deal**



3

Flexibility

What are Final Consumers Looking for?



1

To Have Their Expectations Met

It is key to meet or overcome visitors' expectations. Transparent and honest communication is a key aspect.



2

To Get a Reasonable Deal

Even if you don't owe a commission fee to a travel agent or tour operator, visitors expect a good price.



3

Flexibility

Visitors expect that you are flexible in terms of price and cancellation policy, especially after the pandemic.

PART 4

Is my Experience Ready to be Sold?

Is my Experience Ready to be Sold?

6 key Questions to Address



1. Is it Easy to **Access**?

2. Did you Already Talk With **DMOs** and/or **DMCs**?

3. Do you Have **Feedback** From Other Customers?

4. Is it Combined With **Other Products/Partners**?

5. Is it Associated With a **Market Strategy**?

6. Do you Have **Defined Policies** for the Operations?



6 key Questions to Address



1. Is it Easy to **Access**?

Can any travel trade member reach you? Is there information on the experience available on several channels?

2. Did you Already Talk With **DMOs** and/or **DMCs**?

3. Do you Have **Feedback** From Other Customers?

How can visitors get to your place? Are there valid transport choices?

4. Is it Combined With **Other Products/Partners**?

Is the information available in the languages the market speaks? And maps?

5. Is it Associated With a **Market Strategy**?

6. Do you Have **Defined Policies** for the Operations?

6 key Questions to Address



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6. Do you Have **Defined Policies** for the Operations?

DMOs play a key role when starting to work with travel trade - they understand the market and the product and can help match both.

DMCs have close relationships with tour operators and travel agents and are easier channels to get your experience to the market.

So before you contact travel agents or tour operators, reach DMOs and DMCs.

6 key Questions to Address



1. Is it Easy to **Access**?

2. Did you Already Talk With **DMOs** and/or **DMCs**?

3. Do you Have **Feedback** From Other Customers?

4. Is it Combined With **Other Products/Partners**?

5. Is it Associated With a **Market Strategy**?

6. Do you Have **Defined Policies** for the Operations?

For travel trade, it is critical that your experience is available for some time so that they understand if the market is giving positive feedback.

Testimonials are important tools to give proof of concept (e.g. reviews on dedicated).

6 key Questions to Address



1. Is it Easy to **Access**?

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5. Is it Associated With a **Market Strategy**?

6. Do you Have **Defined Policies** for the Operations?

It would be great if the experience is already combined with other services - accommodation, catering, transport, among others.

This is a good way to increase the value of your experience and deliver a final product to the travel trade.

6 key Questions to Address



1. Is it Easy to **Access**?

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5. Is it Associated With a **Market Strategy**?

6. Do you Have **Defined Policies** for the Operations?

Is there already a marketing strategy, which clearly identifies the segments to reach, the channels to use and the messages to prioritise?

Travel trade organisations will prefer to work with businesses that follow a long-term marketing strategy.

Is my Experience Ready to be Sold?

6 key Questions to Address



1. Is it Easy to **Access**?

2. Did you Already Talk With **DMOs** and/or **DMCs**?

3. Do you Have **Feedback** From Other Customers?

4. Is it Combined With **Other Products/Partners**?

5. Is it Associated With a **Market Strategy**?

6. Do you Have **Defined Policies** for the Operations?

To be successful with travel trade, start by clearly defining pricing and cancellation policy, booking mechanisms, contracts, inventory, and timing, among other key things.

All these aspects will help when you try to make a deal with a travel agent or a tour operator.

PART 5

How to Communicate?

How to Communicate With Tour Operators & Travel Agents?



- By using personas, understand what they value most and what they expect from a service provider like you
- Set meetings in person, if possible
- Prepare a sales kit containing information on the experience, the company and the destination, terms & conditions, booking details, etc.
- Highlight the experience is ready to be sold
- Demonstrate your flexibility in your daily routine
- Demonstrate why your experience would be a beneficial fit for their portfolio - for that, you need to understand their challenges and strategy

How to Communicate With Final Consumers?



- Communicate in a transparent, clear and honest way to get consumers' trust
- Tell consumers that it is easy to book directly with them and that you won't pay any commission fee - e.g. you can start a fund-raising campaign for charity to show where that money is going
- Show you have and follow clear and strict policies in terms of their rights (delays, cancellations)



PART 6

Templates

Creating Customer Personas



Template for creating customer personas

- Creating the persona (name, age, provenance, etc.)
- Characterise the persona (demographics, behaviour, attitude, needs, goals)
- Target the persona (which channels?)

[Link to Mural](#)

Creating Customer Personas

Create the Persona Thinking about your target audience, decide 4 Personas and identify their name, age and country of residence followed by their interests. It can be a single person or a couple or a family.

Persona 1

Name: _____
Age: _____
Country: _____
Interests: _____

Persona 2

Name: _____
Age: _____
Country: _____
Interests: _____

Persona 3

Name: _____
Age: _____
Country: _____
Interests: _____

Persona 4

Name: _____
Age: _____
Country: _____
Interests: _____

Characterise the Persona For each of your 4 Personas write a quote that reflects them and use the sticky notes to identify their characteristics such as behaviour, attitudes, needs and goals and how you can help them achieving them.

Name: _____
Quote that reflects the persona: _____

DEMOGRAPHICS

BEHAVIOUR

ATTITUDES

NEEDS / CONSUMER

GOALS / MOTIVATIONS

HOW CAN WE HELP?

Name: _____
Quote that reflects the persona: _____

DEMOGRAPHICS

BEHAVIOUR

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NEEDS / CONSUMER

GOALS / MOTIVATIONS

HOW CAN WE HELP?

Name: _____
Quote that reflects the persona: _____

DEMOGRAPHICS

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Name: _____
Quote that reflects the persona: _____

DEMOGRAPHICS

BEHAVIOUR

ATTITUDES

NEEDS / CONSUMER

GOALS / MOTIVATIONS

HOW CAN WE HELP?

Target the Persona For each of your 4 Personas identify a type of content, the channels, an ambassador and an experience at the destination that would suit them for promotional campaigns.

Type of content: _____
Channels: _____
Ambassador: _____
Experience: _____

Type of content: _____
Channels: _____
Ambassador: _____
Experience: _____

Type of content: _____
Channels: _____
Ambassador: _____
Experience: _____

Type of content: _____
Channels: _____
Ambassador: _____
Experience: _____

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Creating Customer Persona Card



Template for creating customer persona card

- This template can be used to visualise and illustrate findings and preferences a bit better
- Preferred channels, the goals in life and the frustrations or challenges they are facing, the motivations and the brands they interact mostly with

[Link to Mural](#)

Name of the persona

picture of the persona

"Quote of the persona"

AGE: 43
WORK: Housewife
FAMILY: Married, mother of 2
LOCATION: South East UK
ARCHETYPE:

adjectives to describe the persona: energetic, sociable

Bio
Write a description of the life of this Persona, including ambitions and preferences, information about his/her habits over the week or weekend, free time hobbies, etc.

Personality

| | | |
|------------|--|-----------|
| Introvert | | Extrovert |
| Analytical | | Creative |
| Loyal | | Fickle |
| Passive | | Active |

Preferred Channels

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Chrome | |
| Mobile | |
| Email | |
| Traditional Ads | |

Goals

- ✓ Spending quality time with her family
- ✓
- ✓

Frustrations

-
-
-

Motivations

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Price | |
| Comfort | |
| Convenience | |
| Exciting adventures | |
| Word of mouth from friends and family | |

Brands

Icons representing brands: a camera, a shopping bag, a person, a house, a car, a dog, a cat, a plant, a flower, a star, a heart, a star, a heart.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Use personas to better understand the members of the travel trade
- Don't work exclusively with intermediaries - diversify the risk
- Work closely with your DMO
- Ensure your product is ready to be sold before approaching travel trade





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