

Step 3: Prepare, Develop and Manage

Exercise: Developing Theme Tours



Step 1. Distribute the following scenario to four groups:

The state tourism office just called. A group of travel buyers will visit the area tomorrow to discuss potential business. In preparation for the meeting, the state asks that you have available a half-day tour itinerary, full day itinerary, overnight itinerary, a three-day itinerary, and a seven day/six night itinerary for the region.

The travel buyers represent the full spectrum of the group tour market. One operator is traveling from England and plans to bring international visitors into the region before sending them on to the southern USA. Another operator represents a number of specialty groups, particularly interested in local culture, architecture and crafts. Another tour operator is from the mid-west and conducts a number of tours in and out of Chicago for mostly senior citizens (primarily women.) The last member of the group is actually a receptive operator based in the state capital, seeking ideas that he can pitch to wholesale tour operators worldwide.

Ask each group to create a specific length tour for each of the travel buyers:

GROUP 1:	International Tour	Seven day/six night tour
GROUP 2:	Specialty Tour	Four day/three night tour
GROUP 3:	Tour from Chicago	Three day/two night tour
GROUP 4:	Receptive Operator	Full day tour, half-day tour, overnight tour

Step 2. Compile a profile report for each tour operator. Identify what you need to know about each tour operator and his/her customers.

Step 3. Identify assets, attractions and services to create specific itineraries for tour operators.

Map out route, schedule of activities and time for each tour. As you plan, ask:

- Where can the motorcoach park?
- Is there a place(s) for motorcoach to turn around?
- Are there drop-off points under cover?
- Which are the best roads to use – with regard to scenery and accessibility?
- What attractions can accommodate groups of 20, 40 or 60? If attractions cannot accommodate large groups, are there ways to split up the group without compromising the experience or schedule?
- What value-added elements can be provided at no charge?

Step 4. Price each tour based on itineraries. Identify fixed costs, variable costs, price-per-person. If the tour has its own escort, the escort and driver typically are provided free admission, meals, etc.

TOUR ELEMENTS	
Attractions: admission tickets, parking,	\$ _____
Food: meals, snacks	\$ _____
Transportation: ground, parking, other	\$ _____
Services: tour guide, guidebooks, other	\$ _____
Accommodations: lodging	\$ _____
Other fees: tolls, taxes	\$ _____
TOTAL – price per person, minimum of () people	\$ _____
Less incentive, discounts, concessions	(\$ _____)
Value-added components	No Charge
TOUR OPERATOR COST:	\$ _____

Step 5. Create an inviting tour description including:

- Highlights of the tour – activities and attractions
- An overview of the destination (region/corridor), nearby attractions/destinations
- Time of year offered
- List of amenities, services
- Requirements: minimum/maximum number in group, advance deposit, cancellation policy, liability, etc.
- Net price
- Contact information

Step 6. Prepare list of questions to ask each tour operator.

- Number of tours to be booked?
- Number of persons traveling on each tour?
- Profile of tour customers?
- Incentives desired for each tour? Free meal, accommodation, attraction ticket for driver?

