

The Tourism Business Improvement Guide

for Southern NSW



Destination
Southern NSW



Contents

How to use this business and marketing toolkit	4
About Destination Southern NSW	6
DSNSW Tourism Industry partners and stakeholders	8
Developing your business	10
Determining business viability	12
Starting your tourism business	13
What does a business plan look like?	14
Seek funding opportunities: business grants and government programs	17
Running your business	18
Get the right advice and support	20
Engage with other businesses	21
Consider and understand seasonality	22
Sustainable tourism	23
Recruitment and keeping great staff	24
Know your customer	30
Customer personas	32
Customer journey mapping	34
Traveller trends	36
Marketing your business	38
Developing a marketing plan	40
Digital marketing	41
Media & PR	44
Case study: Homeaway - Influencer activity	48
Evaluation and monitoring	50
Selling and distributing your product	51
Leveraging tourism networks	53
Contacts	56

How to use this business and marketing toolkit

The Australian tourism landscape is undoubtedly complex, diverse and filled with various players – government, private business, big and small alike. With the plethora of business, marketing and tourism information available it can become difficult to source, navigate and understand what is relevant to your business.

This toolkit has been developed specifically for businesses involved in the visitor economy in Southern NSW, both established and prospective, and provides some of the best and most useful online resources that have been developed by government and tourism organisations across Australia.

The toolkit provides practical strategies, insights, tools and templates for business and tourism product development.

Legend



Clickable Link



Useful Tip



Handy Resource



Case Study



About Destination Southern NSW

[Destination Southern NSW](#) (DSNSW) is one of six Destination Networks (DN's) formed as a result of the review by [Destination NSW](#) (DNSW) into the effectiveness and structure of regional tourism industry organisations. DN's are 'administration zones' responsible for delivering on the NSW Government objective to double the Visitor Economy by 2020.

The DSNSW zone encompasses 8 local government areas being; Bega Valley, Eurobodalla, Snowy Monaro, Queanbeyan-Palerang, Yass Valley, Goulburn Mulwaree, Upper Lachlan and Hilltops.

The role of DSNSW is to coordinate tourism related strategies and projects that will promote and achieve growth and prominence of the visitor economy across the DSNSW Region. These will be in line with the objectives, strategies and commitments of the NSW Government and in particular DNSW. This will be achieved in partnership and with support of other State and Australian Government agencies; industry and business associations; and tourism and allied business operators throughout the DSNSW Region; in addition to the councils and DNSW.

Learn more about [DSNSW on our website](#).



DSNSW Tourism Industry partners and stakeholders

The DSNSW stakeholder map has been included to provide insight into the range of destination tourism players there are:



DSNSW Tourism Industry partners and stakeholders

To make it a little easier to navigate the tourism industry we've selected a number of organisation's that may be relevant to your business. Click on the organisations below to access tourism and business resources.

Australian Government

- [Tourism Australia \(corporate site\)](#)
- [Austrade](#)
- [Tourism Research Australia](#)
- [Parks Australia](#)

State/Territory/Local Government

- [DNSW](#)
- [NSWNP](#)
- [DSNSW](#)
- [Hilltops Council](#)
- [Goulburn Mulwaree Council](#)
- [Yass Valley Council](#)
- [Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council](#)
- [Bega Valley Shire Council](#)
- [Snowy Monaro Regional Council](#)
- [Visit Canberra \(corporate site\)](#)
- [Eurobodalla Shire Council](#)
- [Upper Lachlan Shire Council](#)

Industry Associations and collaborative groups

- [NSW Business Chamber](#)
- [Canberra Business Chamber](#)
- [ACT Tourism Industry Network](#)
- [Canberra Region Joint Organisation](#)
- [CDWIA](#)
- [NSW Wine Industry Association](#)
- [Sapphire Coast](#)
- [Your local Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Sydney Melbourne Touring](#)
- [Tourism Snowy Mountains](#)

Developing your business

Whether you're in the early phases of starting your business, or your business has been established for a number of years, this section of the toolkit provides useful insights on:

- Research and planning
- Tips for operating your business
- Tips on understanding and delivering quality customer service

Useful tools and templates

For all you need to know about starting your business, including business planning, registering your business, understanding the law and preparing your finances, visit [the Australian Government's Business website](#).

For specific pages relating to various aspects of business, visit the following:

- [Business plan and template guide](#)
- [Register your business](#)
- [Make key decisions](#)
- [Setup operations](#)
- [Know the law](#)
- [Prepare for tax](#)



Handy Resource

Other useful business setup resources include:



[Destination NSW's 'Develop your tourism business' guide](#)



[Destination NSW's Business Development Resources](#)



[NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment: Supporting business in New South Wales](#) for information on starting your business, growing your business and frequently asked questions.



[The Australian Business License and Information Service \(ABLIS\)](#) is a free service that streamlines the process of identifying which license your business may need.



If you wish to operate within a National Park you must obtain formal approval and authorisation from the National Parks and Wildlife Services, before you're legally able to conduct any business activities, see Director of National Parks, [Parks Australia Commercial tourism operator permit guidelines](#)

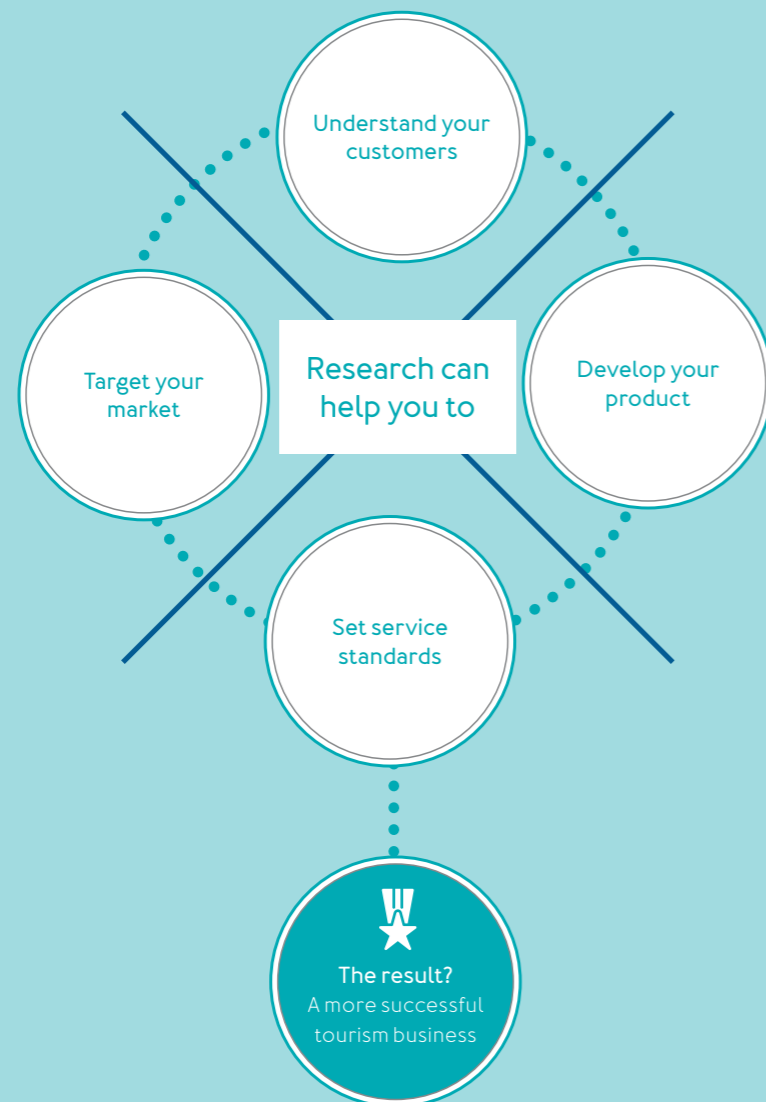


Determining business viability: market research and planning

Research and planning should always be the first step in developing a business. A plan gives your business direction and helps you prepare for a lot of what you may need to overcome in the future.

Taking the time to research and plan will allow you to:

- Establish a solid **vision for your business**.
- **Understand the market** (competitors and complimentary businesses in the industry).
- **Identify potential opportunities**, while also increasing chance for your business to be positively reactive in the ever-changing market that is the tourism industry.



Starting your tourism business


Before you commit to starting up or buying a tourism business, you should consider how well suited you are to owning and operating your own enterprise. Before you dive in headfirst, take some time to consider the following:

- 1 What is your main reason for getting into business?**
There needs to be an underlying passion to succeed.
- 2 Would you describe yourself as risk averse?**
Working for yourself is generally noted as being riskier than working for someone else.
- 3 Do you have effective ways of coping with stress?**
Self-employment can be stressful, so you'll need strategies to cope.
- 4 Do you sometimes put off making big or hard decisions for fear of getting it wrong or upsetting people?** Business owners need to make important decisions and unfortunately, they won't always please everyone. You need to be confident in yourself and assertive in executing your decisions.
- 5 Do you get discouraged easily when things go wrong?**
If you get easily discouraged, the sometimes-unpredictable rollercoaster that is owning a business may not be for you.
- 6 Are you able to focus your energies on a project?**
Focus and a clear sense of direction are key traits of a successful tourism business owner.
- 7 Do you adapt well to change?** One of the certainties in business is change, how you react and respond to changes can significantly dictate the ultimate success of your business.
- 8 Do you have a strong support network (i.e. family, friends and/or colleagues)?**
Many business hurdles can be overcome with a strong support network, whether it be for advice purposes or simply to support your wellbeing in times of stress.
- 9 Are you prone to taking time off from work because of illness?** You'll need to be at the top of your game to ensure your business reaches its potential.


Reference: Tourism Connect, Industry Action Kit, "First things first", p 11

What does a business plan look like?


As part of your business planning process, try and set down the following:



Goals:
be specific about what you want your business to achieve. Your goals could refer to overall revenue or profitability, new products you want to launch or customer service standards you want to achieve.



Values
your values reflect the experience you offer. Decide what your business stands for then establish the philosophy and values that guide your activities, both internally and externally.



Vision
a vision is a clear statement of your organisation's purpose. guides everything you do, why you do it and what you want to accomplish. Example: [Tourism Australia's vision statement](#)

To help you get started on your business plan, we've outlined the key components that should be considered as part of your [business plan](#) document.

Category	Details
The business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Business name ■ Business structure ■ Location ■ ABN / CAN ■ Domain names ■ Licenses ■ Insurances
The market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Market research ■ Competitor Analysis ■ Target audience – understanding your customers
The future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vision statement: what is your ultimate future plan for your business ■ Business goals – short and long term
The finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Financial objectives i.e. sales or profit target ■ Sales vs operating costs ■ Do you have enough money to get started? ■ Do you need to obtain funds?
The team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Management / ownership ■ Key staff ■ Recruitment
Products and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What are you offering? ■ What is the price point? ■ Is there growth potential?
Risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Risks and potential impact to your business
Legal considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is there specific legal requirements i.e. food operation legislation
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Production process ■ Suppliers i.e. accounting, marketing
Marketing & sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Marketing objectives ■ Unique selling proposition ■ Distribution channels



Seek funding opportunities: business grants and government programs

There are several grant and funding opportunities that may be available, to support the growth and development of your tourism operations and/or business.

[DSNSW lists a variety of funding and grants opportunities that are currently available.](#) There are also a range of start-up [support grants offered by the NSW government](#)

Tips for applying for government funding

- Read the criteria carefully to ensure that you meet the guidelines.
- Be mindful that many grants are highly competitive with short application timeframes. To make sure you can develop the best application with ease, the Tasmanian Government has written a [useful guideline surrounding the fundamentals of grant writing](#). You can also [contact us](#) for basic advice and support, in developing your grant application.



Tip

Before you start your tourism business, we encourage you to do your research, develop your business plan and seek help through the resources available.

Running your business

Running a tourism business requires excellent time-management skills, the ability to stay on top of market trends and insights, being prepared for seasonal fluctuations, risk management planning and ensuring you have the right people around you on the right tasks.

For detailed information on operating your tourism business, take a look at [Destination NSW's "Develop your tourism business" guide](#). We've highlighted some of the important aspects related to running your business.



Get the right advice and support

Ensuring your business' success does not have to stop with you. There are a range of business advisory and support programs, networking opportunities, as well as various grant and funding options, that may help to further streamline the success of your tourism business now and into the future. Seeking help and advice from experts will allow you to focus on what you do best and save you time and money on the long run. It is worth considering outsourcing or employing external advisors and contractors - to either reinforce your own tourism expertise, or simply assist you in areas of business that you may not be professionally trained in. Some examples of these areas could be:



Accountant, financial advisor or bookkeeper:

For help in financially managing your business, developing budgets and forecasting your running costs, cashflow and turnover requirements.



Legal advisor:

should be consulted in settling legal matters such as lease agreements, sale of business contracts, business set up and managing operational contracts.



Insurance company or broker:

An advisor in this field will help you to identify what cover you may need for your business in terms of public liability, property damage, loss of income and more.



Marketing consultant:

seeking the advice of a marketing consultant can help you identify your marketing goals, help tell your brand story and create awareness of your business in the market as well as web development, copywriting, photography, video, and graphic design.



Tourism consultants:

Particularly for new or developing business owners, these consultants can help to provide extensive local industry knowledge and offer a variety of skills and beneficial guidance to assist with developing and/or marketing your tourism products.



Cleaners and trades:

Sourcing a contract cleaner and trades people will allow you to focus on the key areas of business.

Before you outsource any aspect of your business, keep in mind what your budget will allow for, as well as how you specifically want a task to be completed. It's best to provide your chosen contactor/company with a strict brief outlining what your expectations are of them to ensure your expectations are met.



Handy Resource



[Mental Health for Small Businesses – Small Business Commissioner, NSW Gov](#)

Engage with other businesses

Engaging with other businesses in the region can be extremely beneficial in both developing and further streamlining the efficiency of your tourism business and relevant products for a couple of key reasons:

1

From a networking perspective, connecting with other local tourism operators in similar or complimentary businesses, can help you to obtain more useful "real-life" perspectives and insights into what's happening within your immediate region. Connecting with other local businesses in this way can also help you to establish other valuable contacts for your business, as well as creating potential for lucrative business partnerships.

2

Stay connected with what's happening within your local area and your council. Look for industry groups (eg Makers of Murrumbateman), [networking events](#), regional groups (eg Sapphire Coast Networking Events), or start your own. Organisations like these may be able to provide you with regular and up-to-date regional industry trends and location-specific advice.



Handy Resource



[Destination NSW's guide to The Tourism Industry Network](#)



Tip

Before you outsource any aspect of your business, keep in mind what your budget will allow for, as well as how you specifically want a task to be completed. It's best to provide your chosen contactor/company with a strict brief outlining what your expectations are of them to ensure your expectations are met.

Case Study
Working with other businesses
Collector Wines & Some Cafe

Consider and understand seasonality

While a simple change in weather and temperature may not seem like a big deal, for many tourism businesses different seasons may significantly impact fluctuations in visitation, demand and/or effect your product itself. Understanding when high and low seasons are likely to occur and what may influence them will significantly assist you during your business planning phase. Factors influencing this may include changes in climate, weather, school holidays, weekends, special events and more.

Ensure you have the right measures in place to respond to high demand in the busier seasons, as well as methods in place to keep your business afloat during off-peak periods.

Some considerations in maintaining your business in this sense may include:

- Hiring additional staff or more skilled staff to respond to high demand periods throughout the year.
- Introducing new products and promotions during the slower seasons to maximise business and reciprocal cash flow.
- Engage with other local businesses to investigate in hosting events during periods of traditional lower demand may be an option to increase visitor numbers.



Sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism and provision of environmentally conscious services and products is becoming increasingly prominent, within the tourism industry and broader industries alike. While remaining environmentally conscious should be an expected priority for your tourism business from the perspective of upholding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), showcasing your sustainability initiatives can be quite important for the success of your business in terms of obtaining and retaining loyal customers, with [over 90% of Australians being concerned about the environment and sustainability](#).

There are many ways that you can ensure your business is partaking in the sustainable tourism trend:



Recycling and waste management: implement and keep your waste and recycling programs up to date



Water and energy consumption: assess your water and energy usage and introduce methods to reduce this where possible



Eco-friendly products: stick to using environmentally friendly products and services in your business



Support green: support or sponsor events with an environmental focus



Staff education: educate your staff and make sustainability a business-wide effort



Communicate: share with your customers and target audience all the positive things you're doing in the sustainability space.

Handy Resource



The Australian Government provides a range of information, resources and benchmarks to consider in [making sure your business is environmentally friendly, as well as a guide on how to develop an accredited Environmental Measurement Plan and maintain relevant reporting for your organisation](#).



[Sustainable Tourism Online](#) is a free online information service that provides up to date information and data on tourism sustainability topics.



Recruitment and keeping great staff

Many businesses could not exist successfully without their employees, their expertise and the important relationships they build and maintain with customers. Hiring great people, providing training opportunities and empowering them to proudly represent your business can play a major role in ensuring overall staff retention. More importantly, if your business showcases an ongoing culture of happy staff and excellent service, this will play a major role in ensuring your customers' experiences are memorable.

While training and staff development in this sense is essential to your business' success, it can often be expensive and time consuming. It's thus important that you have a clear idea of what kind of person/s you are looking for and how you expect them to contribute to your business.


When onboarding a recruit, there are variety of operational aspects to consider, including but not limited to: wage and leave entitlements, taxes, occupational health and safety, superannuation and insurance.



Handy Resource

Handy recruitment and people management resources include:

- [Australian Government, Business: People](#)
- [Xero's recruitment process checklist](#)
- [Aus Trade's Develop your workforce information](#), specifically:
 - Advice and factsheets for recruiting both [local](#) and [overseas](#) workers.
 - Tips and case studies surrounding [how to address seasonal labour needs](#)
 - Fact sheets and advice regarding how to both [train and retain your staff](#).



Case Study Staff training

Clementine


Staff retention

It is far more cost effective to retain staff than it is to lose them and have to recruit. Once you have established a good team – it's important to hold onto them!

As an initial step upon hiring, make sure your expectations for any given role are written into a letter of appointment so there are no misunderstandings.


In general, you should establish mechanisms to employ the following important aspects of HR and employment to increase your chances of consistently retaining staff.

- 1 Build and promote a great company culture:**
any company that sets and upholds a strong set of values and aspirations to work towards from the get-go, will prospectively set a framework for success for both present and prospective staff members to consistently consider within their roles and work. It's important to consider this working culture when hiring new staff and consider if your prospective candidate will help to positively reinforce this cultural framework for your team.
- 2 Train and upskill:**
while it's of course important to train new staff members, it's also worth developing an ongoing training and mentoring program for longer-term staff. This will ensure that your employee's skillsets are always up to date, while allowing for them to develop new ones where possible. You can find a range of help and team development workshops near you via [Destination NSW's NSW First Program, Business Connect](#) and [government training providers](#)
- 3 Recognise and reward:**
when your staff do a good job or go above and beyond, let them know! If your staff feel validated and happy, they are more likely to repeat good behaviour and remain loyal to you as their employer. From this perspective, it's a good idea to conduct regular performance reviews for your staff. It's also always worth maintaining an open discussion with your staff about what they would personally like to see or learn into the future, and what you can do to better reinforce their ongoing happiness and development.



Handy Resource

- [Fairwork](#) has a range of information and templates available to help manage, support and retain staff.



Action

For training and skill development, figure out what skills you and your team need to brush up on. Do this on a regular basis and develop a whole rounded training schedule, so that this always remains a priority for you despite your otherwise busy schedule.

Internal Champions

An internal 'champion' is an employee who is an active believer in the business and its potential.

- Someone who is willing to go the extra mile when at work.
- They're eager to promote your brand.
- Often treat the business as their own – they can see the big picture and how they fit into it.
- People tend to buy from people, so you have someone or a team of people who are passionate about your brand, it will positively contribute to their experience and the way your brand is perceived.

Customer service

Maintaining excellence in customer service, for any tourism business, big or small, is one of the most important ways to develop your business and maintain a competitive advantage within this fast-paced industry.

Great service comes from a desire to exceed standard customer expectations, while cooperatively building a truly customer-focused culture throughout all levels and facets of your organisation, from front-line staff to the business owner.

As business owner and/or manager, it is crucial for your business that you lead by example. Ensure staff, processes, systems and policies are supportive of each other and focused on meeting customer needs.

Consider the following tips for good management practices:

- Provide leadership and aim to make quality customer service part of your business culture.
- Create a customer service focus across your whole business.
- Display and follow a Customer Service Charter, which clearly outlines the quality of service to be expected by your customers.
- Ensure your systems and procedures, incentive programs and feedback mechanisms support the provision of quality customer service.
- Provide quality customer service to the people you rely on to meet customer needs (internal customers) as well as to paying customers (external customers).
- Make sure there is a system to capture regular, reliable feedback from customers about their needs and your service.
- Welcome customer feedback and complaints as an opportunity to build relationships with your customers and improve your product and/or service.
- Actively encourage quality customer service and continuous improvement in everything your business does.
- Recruit staff with proven customer service skills and help them to lead by example.

Ref: NSW Government, Fair Trading, Business Guide

Developing great customer service doesn't just stop with a well-trained team and understanding the principles of customer service. It's also important to gather direct and ongoing feedback from your customers themselves. There are a range of ways to gain customer feedback including:

- Creating a mechanism for staff to note direct in-person feedback.
- Providing customer satisfaction surveys (either online or in person).
- Staying up-to-date with and responding to online reviews and feedback on sites such as [TripAdvisor](#) or [Facebook](#).

Collecting feedback will allow you to understand what you're doing well and areas of your business that may require improvement.

Case Study
Customer
service and
feedback
Birdsnest



Case Study
Customer service and feedback
Lindner Socks


 **Handy Resource**


There are a number of readily available resources to help you understand customer service and assist in developing your customer service framework and implement relevant training programs.

-  [NSW Government, Fair Trading Business Guide](#) – the fundamentals of customer service
-  [Customer Service Training Australia](#)
-  [Customer Service Institute of Australia](#)
-  [Business.gov.au – People: Customer service](#)

Work experience, internships and graduate programs

Work experience, internships and graduate programs can be a great way to find and supplement your staff base. Areas that may suit a tourism business are industry or business development, hospitality, customer service, marketing and business administration. Do your research and get in contact with educational institutions (e.g. universities, business colleges) located within the Southern NSW area and surrounding regions, to discuss potential work experience, internship opportunities or prospective graduate program partnerships.

 **Handy Resource**

-  Check out Australian Government site [Australian Apprenticeships](#)



Know your customer

There is a range of tourism visitor data and traveller profiling available on [page 33](#).

This target audience information is useful to gain a broad and even specific understanding of the type of people likely to visit the region, your town and your business.

The better you know your audience, the more effectively you'll be able to speak to them.

To truly understand your customer and what drives them you need to develop a customer persona, a very specific version of your target audience.



Customer personas

Your key to creating customised and effective content is researching your target customer (observing those who currently visit and purchase from you and analysing your online data), and then refining that information into a customer persona. It's important to consider who they are, what they're interested in and what factors are likely to attract them to your tourism product.

Consider the following when creating your customer personas:

- What is their gender?
- How old are they?
- Are they in a relationship?
- Do they have family, kids? How old are the kids?
- Where do they live?
- What is their job title?
- How much money do they earn?
- What are their hobbies and interests?
- What are their pain points your product or service can help solve?

Finally, give your persona a name. Each time you're thinking of developing content or promoting an experience, a product or your business, consider whether it is relevant to your customer persona.

Ask yourself:

- Are they likely to search for your service individually, or are they likely to book with you as part of a tourism package?
- Are they likely to travel alone or will they likely be booking for others as well, such as family, children or friends?
- What is their purpose for travelling? Is it for a special event, business or general family holiday?
- Will there be an expectation of provided services or need for specialised provisions (e.g. eating or disability requirements)?

An example of customer personas is shown to the right:

Target	Who are they?	What are they interested by?
 <p>Formal Target Audience True Travellers Persona Sophie & partner/friends</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late 20s to mid 40s • Lives within a 3 hour drive from the Tablelands • Childless and social • Professional • Mid to high income earner • Digitally savvy • Likes to travel often on short trips with her partner or friends • The planner - plants the seed and coordinates the group • Enjoys spending disposable income on quality experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and wine - dining and tours • Romantic escapes • Festivals and events • Shopping
 <p>Formal Target Audience Wanderers Persona Barry & Margaret older couple</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 years + • Close to retirement - time rich • Middle to high income/affluent • Live interstate • Travel regularly and take the time to explore and discover • Digitally aware • Enjoy luxury/comfort • Spends savings on quality experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tours and trails • History and heritage • Arts and culture • Food and wine
 <p>Formal Target Audience Compatriots Persona Nick, Anne + Jack and Olivia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents with primary school aged kids • Middle income earners • Live in regional NSW • Plan trips around school holidays • Seeking affordable experiences • Want a variety of experiences to suit their own kids' interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interested in food and wine but keeping the kids entertained is a priority • Nature/adventure/outdoors • Festivals and events • Family fun - attractions
 <p>Formal Target Audience International Chinese & Indian - significant and emerging markets Visitation by the Chinese and Indian market is strong. Growth predicted from the Indonesian market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International visitors • Primarily Chinese and middle-class Indians • 45-59 years old, followed by 15-29 years • 15-29 years are the biggest spenders • Seeking interesting offerings and attractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food and wine • Nature



Handy Resource



You also don't have to begin with a completely blank page, Destination NSW has identified broad market segments. [Start your customer persona creation here.](#)

Customer journey mapping

A customer journey is a roadmap detailing how a customer becomes aware of your brand, their interactions with your brand and beyond. It documents the full experience of how your customer became a customer and the interactions they had with your business during that journey. Without a complete understanding of your customer and their purchasing journey – from research, to consideration, to booking - there's no way to completely determine which marketing tactics you should implement to reach them.

Why do you need to map out your customers' buying journey?

- A better understanding of your customer = better marketing = more sales.
- To gain an improved understanding the touchpoints your customer goes through within your business.
- It will allow you to see your organisation from a customer's perspective rather than from the business' (or your) perspective.
- Help to create a more streamlined process between touchpoints including customer service, sales and marketing.

How to create a customer journey map

To create a customer journey map, start by:

- Speaking to your staff and team to gauge their experience with customer interactions and touchpoints.
- Seek feedback from your customers.
- Put yourself in your customers' shoes or ask a friend or family member to do so. For example,
 - Search for your business online to make a booking.
 - Did they find the information they were looking for online?
 - What channels did they use to find information about the business? Website, social media.
 - Was the booking process seamless?
 - Did they use mobile or desktop and what was their experience like?

Draw out a map (or timeline) that details every stage of the customer experience. These stages are [customer touchpoints](#) - any time a customer comes in contact with your brand. (You can get as granular as you'd like. The more granular the detail, the more effectively you will be able to customise your offerings and marketing to your customer personas' needs.

Think about every stage and process of the customer experience from the customer's perspective.



Handy Resource



Survey monkey's easy to follow [customer journey mapping](#) and [identifying customer touchpoints](#)



[Visit Canberra's Customer Journey Mapping for tourism presentation](#)



[Tourism e school, Customer Journey Mapping for tourism brands](#)

Traveller trends

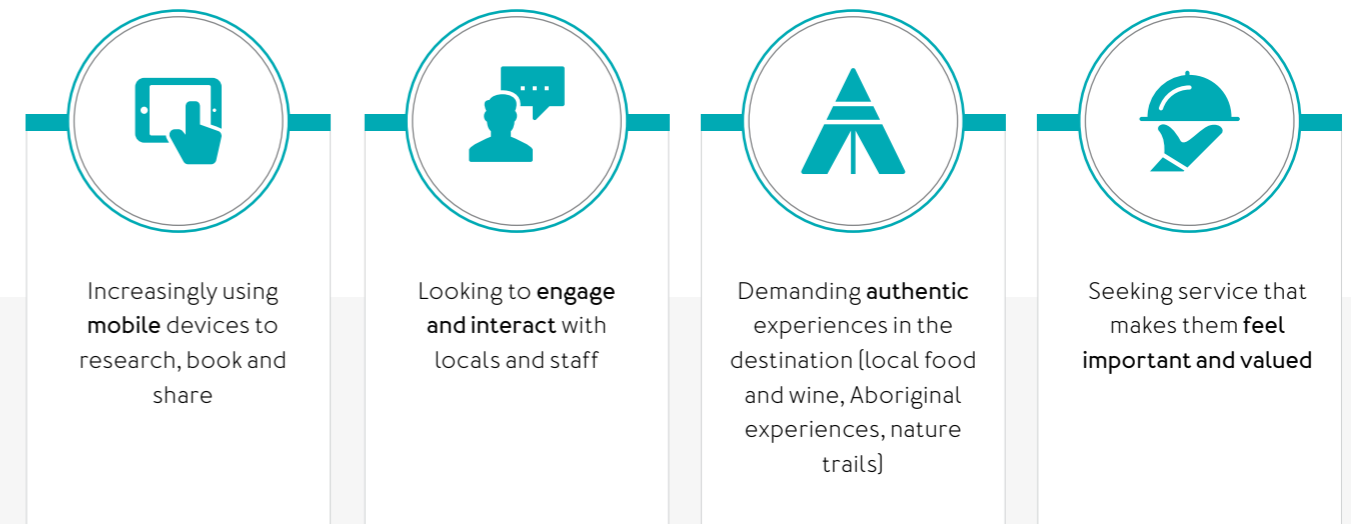
While knowing who your customer is a critical aspect of your tourism business, it's just as important to stay on top of traveller data and tourism industry trends, as means of helping your business remain relevant in such a fast paced, competitive environment.

As a tourism operator you will observe travel trends regularly – perhaps you are welcoming more youth travellers or have identified an increase in last-minute mobile bookings. Make sure you regularly look at your offered product and experience and see if there are any new measures you can employ to cater to the ongoing needs of relevant customers. And while you may notice trends specific to your business, it's important to conduct wider research.

Handy Resource

- ▶
[The AFTA Travel Trends report](#). Monthly inbound and outbound travel information, provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)
- ▶
[Tourism Australia's Tourism Statistics](#).
- ▶
[Destination NSW's market segment facts and figures](#)
- ▶
[Tourism Research Australia](#) provides statistic and research on international, domestic and regional tourism in Australia.

Today's travellers are:



Research current consumer trends and, from your customers' point of view, think about:

- Does your experience reflect your customers' values and interests?
- How can you add some more local flavour to your experience?
- Is the timing, length and frequency of your tours right?
- Are your hotel rooms a good fit for the market?
- Can you offer a more personal, interactive experience?
- Is your customer service personal, efficient and engaging?
- Your website - is it modern, fresh, mobile friendly and easy to find?
- How easy is your product to book? Do you have an online booking option and work with distribution partners?
- Your social media profile - are you posting regularly and engaging with your customers?
- Are your marketing materials current with recent images, videos and present an attractive contemporary design?
- Do your marketing materials meet the needs of your ideal customers?

Once you have considered ways to refine your business and customer experience, make a plan and set a timeline for how these will be implemented into your business.

Marketing your business

Marketing your business – finding and keeping customers – is one of the most important aspects of your business. Marketing can help you reach your target audience, increase your customer base, and ultimately increase your bottom line. It is much more than advertising campaigns and attractive logos. It's a vital part of your business operations and needs to be addressed from the beginning of your business journey.


The first step is to create a simple marketing plan.



Developing a marketing plan

Marketing your brand and sharing your brand story not only comes through the written words, photos and videos that are shared, the appearance of your physical business, the way you interact with customers and the way you and your staff appear all impact the story you're telling. Having a marketing plan in place will allow you revisit the key areas developed as part of your business plan, encourage you to identify SMART marketing goals and determine which activity is most relevant to reach your customer personas/target audience.

There are many templates available online and business.gov.au is a good place to start.



Handy Resource

Destination NSW has developed a [Promote your Tourism Business guide](#) that covers marketing tools such as:

- Unique Selling Proposition – what it is and how to create one
- Developing a brand
- Creating Content – written and visual
- Marketing activities – online and offline
- Online reviews – Google My Business and TripAdvisor

[Promote your Tourism Business guide](#)

Digital marketing

With the ever-increasing digital world, it is important to ensure you are reaching out to your ideal customers in a way that they can relate to. Almost [40% off all tour and activity bookings are made online](#) so making sure your digital marketing strategy is right is such an important step. There essential digital marketing channels and tools to help your customers find your tourism business online are: (all covered in the Destination NSW Promote your tourism business guide)

- Website
- Social Media (outlined in the Promote your Tourism Business guide)
- Online reviews – Google reviews, Trip Advisor (outlined in the [Promote your Tourism Business guide](#))
- Online listings – third party and partner websites (outlined in the [Promote your Tourism Business guide](#))
- Digital Ads – social and Google Ads

Website development

Your website is the home of information for your customers, it is your online business and often the first marketing touchpoint a potential customer will have with your business, therefore it is must provide them with a positive experience. It is possible to develop a simple website yourself, however, if you are not confident, it is best to engage a web developer or marketing professional to help build your website. It may seem costly up-front, but it is more cost effective in the long run. Recommended platforms include WordPress and Squarespace.


 [Wordpress](#)

 [Squarespace](#)

Things to consider when developing your website:

Make sure it is **user-friendly**:

- Easy to navigate – users can quickly and easily find the information you need.
- Clear call to actions e.g. Book now button, Sign up.



Handy Resource

[Smart Insights Digital Marketing Strategy Resources](#)

[Destination NSW's Connect your tourism product – list your business](#)

Visually appealing – select a design and layout that is simple, modern and reflects the looks and feel of your business

Mobile-optimised – a large percentage of potential customers will be searching on a mobile device [phone, tablet]. A mobile responsive website not only provides users with a better experience, it can be handy for travellers on the move.

Search-engine optimised – It is important to understand how Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) can increase the traffic to your website. By utilising keywords and quality content, Google will prioritise your website over a competitor and allow customers to find your website easier. Insert

High quality – videos, images, text. ‘A picture is worth a thousand words’ so make sure your website is visually powerful by using high-quality images and video. Your website representative of your business online. Make sure that your content fits with your overall goal.

Book now / enquire now buttons – a clear call to action such as a bookings button at the top of every page to make it easy for your customers to book online or contact you to enquiry.

Site links – make sure that you correctly link any media articles or external websites as this build’s website trust and authority whilst also providing customers with additional information they need.

Conversion goals – to track PDF downloads such as menu downloads, booking buttons clicked.

Social media

Interacting with consumers on social media is an important marketing strategy for small businesses. Using social media helps you build brand awareness, increase your customer base, and connect with current customers. It provides a relatively low-cost way for your tourism business to reach your target audience. Although using social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram may seem simple, it is important to have a social media strategy or a planned approach to content development and distribution.



Tips

- Think about key content themes that are relevant to your business i.e. produce, place, people.
- Post consistently i.e. 3 times per week is ideal.
- Utilise Facebook and Instagram (primary) insights and platform reporting.
- Community management is just as important as posting to your own channels. To do this, like and engage with like-minded businesses, complimentary products or businesses you like in your area and further afield.

Case Study Social media

Four Winds
Vineyard

Online reviews

With so many review sites available for consumers, it is important to regularly monitor your online reputation. Online review sites such as Google My Business and Trip Advisor are covered in detail in the [DSNSW Promote your Tourism Business guide](#).

Tip: Responding to reviews

Responding to a positive review is easy, however when it comes to negative reviews, it can be challenging. There is a right and a wrong way to go about it.

The ‘good’ response

- Responding in a timely manner.
- Addressing the reviewer by their name and all issues that have been mentioned, in a constructive way.
- Well-worded and heartfelt.
- Write offline first and re-read.

The ‘bad’ response

- Rushing the response.
- Writing in an impersonal manner.
- Posting a generic response.
- Being insincere – you want to try your best to resolve any issues that come up in the future.
- By immediately on the defensive – not everyone will love what you do.
- Doing the bare minimum – make sure you really think about your response, is it something that could have been avoided? Is it something that was out of your control?



Handy Resource



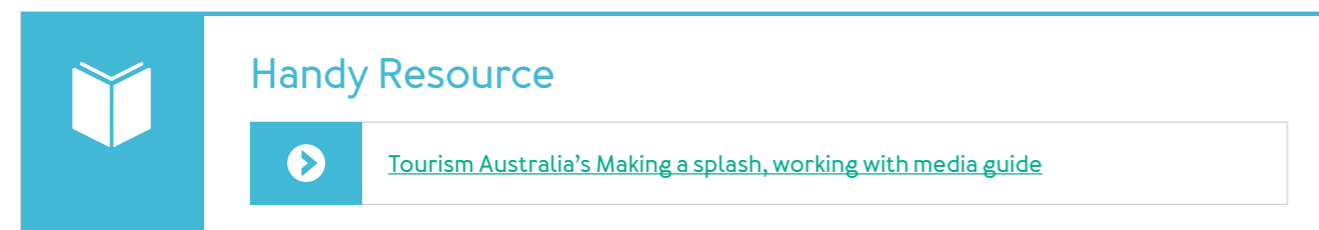
The [Complete TripAdvisor Review Express Guide: How Reviews Help Your Business](#)

Media & PR

“Advertising is saying you’re good. PR is getting someone else to say you’re good”

Jean-Louis Gassée

Media and PR for the tourism industry is covered in detail in the [DSNSW Promote your Tourism Business Guide](#).



A graphic with a blue background on the left containing a white book icon. To the right, the text 'Handy Resource' is displayed in blue. Below this, a white button with a blue right-pointing arrow contains the text 'Tourism Australia's Making a splash, working with media guide' in blue.

Influencer marketing

“Influencer marketing uses top content creators, specialised in their respective niches, to help you improve brand awareness, increase traffic, and drive your brand’s message to your target audience.” [HubSpot]

Online influencers are people with a significant and influential presence online. They often have thousands or tens of thousands of followers across social media. Tourism businesses can benefit from partnering with credible influencers that are relevant to their brand, with many tourism businesses now utilising bloggers, Insta-influencers and photographers to boost brand awareness and promote products and experiences:

Some of the benefits to engaging influencers are:

- Produce high quality content.
- Reach your target market.
- Provide a sense of credibility.
- Bring trust to your brand.

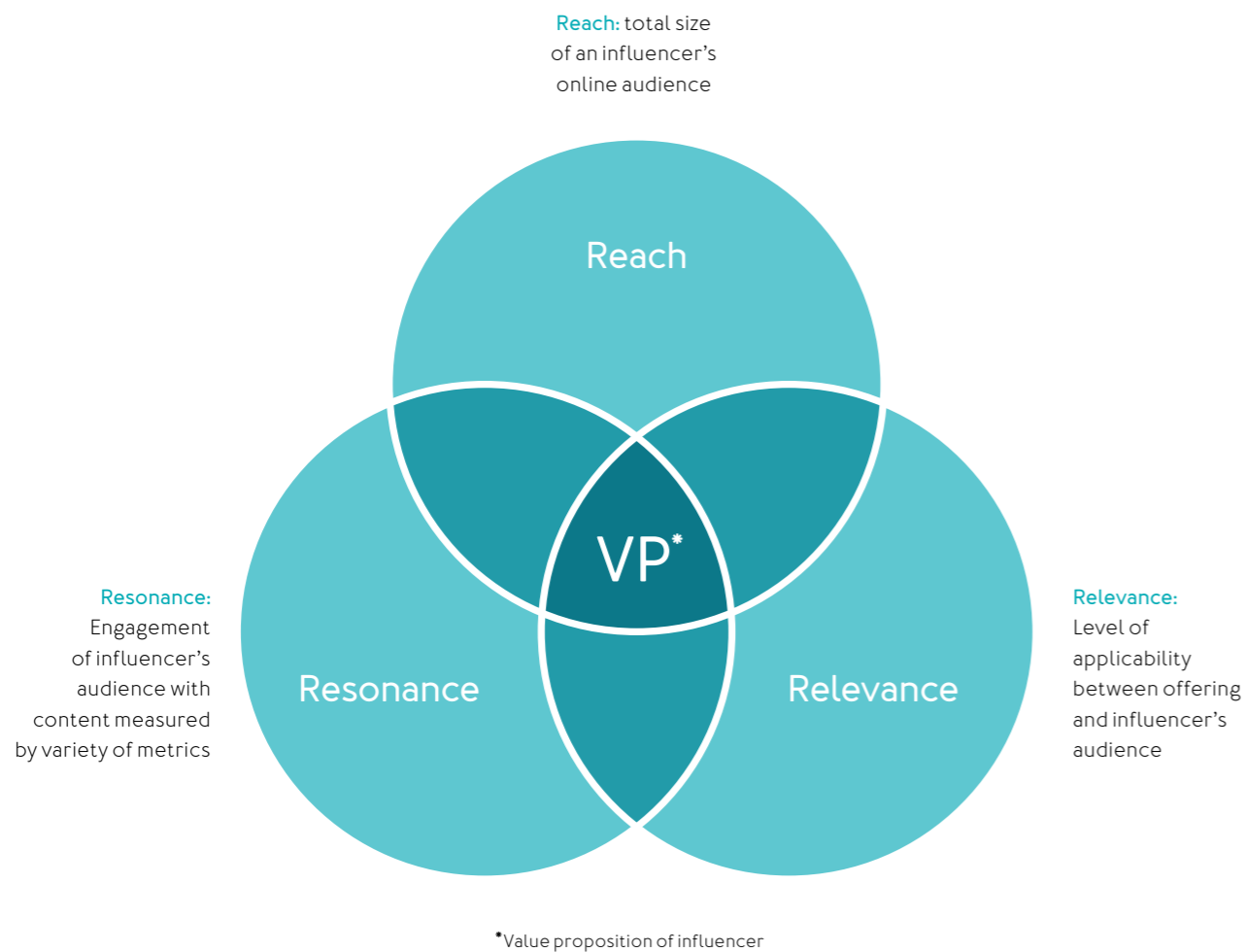


A graphic with a blue background on the left containing a white book icon. To the right, the text 'Handy Resource' is displayed in blue. Below this, five white buttons with blue right-pointing arrows are listed, each containing a resource name in blue: 'Facebook for business', 'Instagram for business', 'Facebook blueprint – training tool', 'Destination NSW Social Media Guidelines', and 'Business.gov.au social media guide'.

Things to consider before engaging an influencer

- **Do your research.** There are many influencers in the market, with more popping up each day, so it's important to understand who is out there, what their niche is and how they can positively impact your business.
- **Understand who their followers are** and calculate potential reach.
- **The influencer should align with your product,** experience and target audience so that the content they produce is authentic and relevant to reach the viewer effectively.
- The content they produce should match your brand.
- Develop a simple influencer plan that includes:
 - Objectives of the campaign/program – what do you want to get out of this?
 - Establish deliverables in return for the experience they're receiving i.e. number of Instagram posts, story, a blog post, trackable links used to their website.
 - What you're willing to offer in return for promotion – money (based on influencer level) vs experience or product.
 - How you will reach out / invite them to participate.

The three R's of influencer marketing: Relevance, reach, resonance - critical to the success of an influencer campaign:



Handy Resource

- ▶ [HubSpot, The Ultimate Guide to Influencer Marketing](#)
- ▶ [Influencer marketing hub](#), Tourism and Travel Instagram influencer rating tool

Tip

If you'd like to consider an influencer campaign but not sure how to get started, it is worthwhile seeking help from marketing and PR professionals who have access to contact list and can assist with developing a campaign plan, invites and monitoring activity.

Case study:

Homeaway - Influencer activity: Eurobodalla and Sapphire Coast – The Quinn Girls

@thequinn girls – 84k followers – 13-17 November 2018

The Quinn Girls aka Eleesha Quinn is a Queensland-based mum of three daughters loves fashion, lifestyle and travelling with her family.

She was sent on a trip to Eurobodalla and Sapphire Coast regions, staying at the beachfront You, Me & The Sea in Lilli Pilli for 2 nights and the luxury beachfront Villa Del Mare in Tura Beach for 2 nights. It was a multi-generational trip with her father and 3 girls accompanying her.

The results

Instagram post

x3

Reach

113,924

Likes

8,200

Comments

688

Instagram stories

x20

Impressions

217,775

Learnings

- Content was an authentic, visual narrative of their trip, showcasing the areas visited, local attractions and their holiday rentals beautifully and on brand.
- They surpassed their deliverables in terms of visual story content.
- Over 300k reach and impressions across static and video content
- Over 1.2k clicks on the @homeawayau and @visitnsw tags



Evaluation and monitoring

To truly know whether an activity or a campaign has produced results, it must be measured. Using data will allow you to make informed marketing decisions – continue to do what is working and change what is not.

The key metrics for both online and offline channels are:

Channel	Metrics
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sessions Page views – most popular pages Goal completions i.e. form completions, bookings
Facebook - content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach, engagement, actions, video views, results & resonance
Facebook & Instagram ads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on objective i.e. Page Likes Campaign = increase in page likes for
Instagram - content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach and engagement, video views
Media, PR and influencer activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stories published Likes, comments, shares, reposts, interactions with the post, Results/ Resonance (how many people took action based on the post)
Print/offline activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always include a measurable call to action, such as an offer

Handy Resource

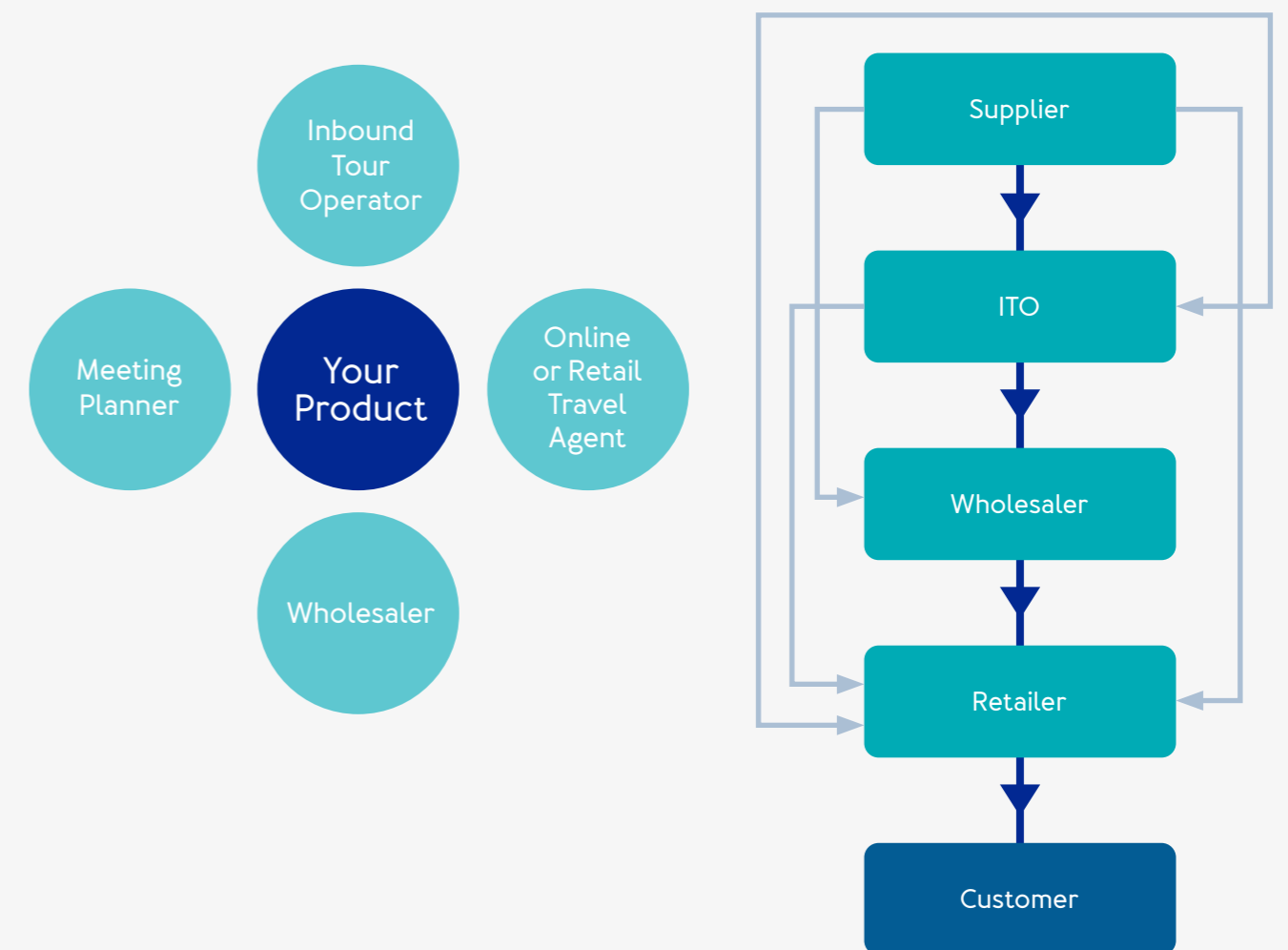
[Google Analytics Academy](#) - learn Google Analytics: free courses

Selling and distributing your product

Distribution channels: how do they work?

It's important to have a whole-rounded understanding of the distinct ways your product can be sold to potential consumers – both within Australia and internationally. While a significant proportion of your customers may discover you by themselves, through other marketing or their own online research, it's important to understand the different tourism related distribution channels, and how they may affect the success of your product and overall viability of your business.


The distribution system



Source: *The Travel Distribution System* – Tourism Australia

Utilising available distribution channels in the right way can boost your business by significantly enhancing the visibility of your product, allowing you to broaden your customer base far beyond the reach of your personal marketing activity.

In ensuring you have a 'trade ready' business, you must consider whether your offering is **produced, packaged, priced and promoted** in a way that is both easily accessible and an attractive proposition for prospective customers, as well as establishing links with the mentioned national and international distribution channels. This means understanding the way the tourism trade works – including the different commission rates of different players and pricing your product accordingly. It also means having a solid understanding of what prospective customers are looking for in a tourism experience, and reciprocally partnering with other companies to build attractive packages. For example, an accommodation provider may partner with a local restaurant and vice versa, to offer a packaged experience.



Handy Resource

- ▶ Destination NSW's '[Distributing your tourism product](#)' information sheet
- ▶ Tourism Australia's '[The Tourism Export Toolkit](#)'

Leveraging tourism networks

Working with Tourism Providers – the benefits of working together and how to do it

Working and partnering with other tourism operators in your area can provide many benefits to your business. Seek out and align your business with operators in your region who target the same type of customer and think of ways in which you can partner to grow your relationships and success to not only your business but those you partner with. Partnership opportunities include:

- A packaged tourism experience that brings the customer to both locations.
- Shared marketing and promotional costs of promoting the experience.
- Gaining access to the partners business' customer database and networks.
- Shared opportunity to review, analyse and determine ROI.

For example, a hotel and an attraction might decide to co-promote an experience where a visitor to the area wants to visit the Bega Pioneers Museum and books their stay with the Bega South Town Motor Inn. As part of a co-promotion strategy, the two businesses could come together to decide on a fair offer, e.g 10% off your first night at the hotel and 10% off tickets to the museum when booked together.

Co-promotion provides the ability to cut down the cost of promotion for each business and allow each to use promotional techniques that might be too expensive to implement alone.

How to network

One of the most powerful and rewarding low-cost marketing activities is networking. You will experience more business success if you work with your peers rather than working alone.

Destination NSW's information sheet on the [Tourism Industry Network](#) contains information about understanding the tourism industry landscape. It outlines Federal, State and Regional and Local networks that are available to research further.

Some networking groups that are available to you are:

- Destination Networks such as Destination NSW and Destination Southern NSW
- Chamber of Commerce
- Attending tourism events in the local area
- Visitor Information centres
- Local Governments

For more information on who to connect with, refer to the partner and stakeholders map on page 8.



Connect with us – industry e news and social media channels

Stay up to date and involved with the latest in the region and your industry by connecting with industry social media and signing up to industry e newsletters such as [Destination Southern NSW's e news list](#).

It's also worthwhile signing up to other tourism operators e news and following their social channels to stay up to date with what other operators are offering and engage with them and show your support for their business online. It may lead to a partnership or networking opportunity.

Product Clusters – the benefit to your business and area

A cluster is geographical concentration of interconnected companies in fields that compete and compliment with one another. Clustering companies with mutually beneficial supplies, products or services together is a common element of community planning and development and offers the one-stop shop convenience that consumers increasingly desire.

For example, a winery in a regional area is going to benefit being close to other business operators such as restaurants, accommodation and other wineries, which is going to attract more people to the area and will keep them there for longer.

Tip: research and identify the businesses in your area that will allow the development of product clusters.



Handy Resource


- [Regional Development Australia](#) produce clusters.

Trade events

Familiarisation visits, trade events and education are just some of the opportunities provided by destination networks and governments agencies such as Destination NSW and Tourism Australia.

For example, industry operators are invited to assist in supporting these familiarisation visits by sponsoring accommodation, tours, transport, transfers and other ground costs. In return they have the opportunity to convert the experience into sales opportunities with front line operatives and make valuable business connections.

Also look for local trade events where you can showcase and promote your business or new products to the wider industry.



Handy Resource

- [Destination NSW's industry opportunities - trade](#)
- [Destination Southern NSW event listings](#)
- [Tourism Australia](#) industry events for various areas.

Contacts

For further information and to get connected with key tourism industry organisations

Destination Southern NSW
dsnsw.com.au/contact-us/

Destination NSW
destinationnsw.com.au/contact-us

Direct email
info@dsnsw.com.au

Local Government Areas

- [Goulburn Mulwaree Council](#)
- [Hilltops Council](#)
- [Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council](#)
- [Upper Lachlan Shire Council](#)
- [Yass Valley Council](#)
- [Snowy Monaro Regional Council](#)
- [Bega Valley Shire Council](#)
- [Eurobodalla Shire Council](#)

If you're an owner / operator and would like to share your experiences with industry, please get in touch via info@dsnsw.com.au

