



# Challenges in Marketing Sustainable Tourism Products

**NaTour**

COMMUNICATIONS

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[www.NaTour.us](http://www.NaTour.us)



## General – Know Your Audience

- a) Basic demographics: current visitors and reasons why they visit your destination
- b) Fully meet current demands before expanding
- c) SPECIFIC EXAMPLE: Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan
  1. **134M visitors to state; only 1M visit region**
  2. **80% arrive by car; only 6% by air**
  3. **Expand to international market after successfully capturing existing market**

**WEBSITE: [www.greatwaters.net](http://www.greatwaters.net)**



## General – Seek Outside Views

- a) “Grass is Greener” syndrome – universal
- b) Every destination has unique story; needs discerning “outside” eye sometimes
- c) SPECIFIC EXAMPLE: Belize
  - 1. Landowner cutting down rainforest to mimic U.S. golf courses and parks**
  - 2. Property had tropical birds, rainforest**
  - 3. Market what makes your company or destination unique – not what others have**

## General – Market the Marketable

- a) Too many destinations think the world is interested in what they offer
- b) Be realistic – must offer something unique to compete in world travel market
- c) If not next “big” destination, accept might just be “small” or “medium” destination
- d) Ecotourism is only a tool – not a savior, and other options might be more practical for sustainable economic development





## General – Know the Nomenclature

- a) Know what your terminology means to your target market
- b) SPECIFIC EXAMPLE: Saskatchewan
  1. **Marketing “ecotourism” to German market for several years, without success**
  2. **Finally asked German buyers about it**
  3. **“Ecotourists” are environmentalists who won’t fly internationally because of fuel**
  4. **Changed terminology to “adventure” and “nature” tourist**



## General – Get Quality Representatives

- a) Sustainable/Eco tourism different than mass tourism; must be promoted differently
- b) Reps need understanding of product and market; use reps specific to target market
- c) SPECIFIC EXAMPLE: Mexico
  - 1. **Sent Press Trip participants to Cancun mega-resorts, when they wanted sustainable local lodging and outdoor opportunities**
  - 2. **Press rep demeaned local people and conditions, rather than promoting positive**



## General – Preparation is Key

a) Need adequate time, resources and staff for effective promotional campaigns and events

b) SPECIFIC EXAMPLE: Mexico

1. Conducted online promotional campaign
2. Developed 3 great FAM/Press Trips around country promoting ecotourism activities
3. However, gave potential participants only 3 weeks notice; result: one attendee
4. Need 8 to 12 weeks to set up effective FAMs

**WEBSITE:** [www.natour.us/mexico](http://www.natour.us/mexico)



## **Specific – Use Online Tools Effectively**

- a) Short online campaigns (8-10 issues) can be very effective for “unknown” destinations
- b) Promote destination (as general information) instead of specific operator (considered an “advertisement”)
- c) Interest foreign press and operators in destination first; they’ll then talk to operators and other tourism providers



## **Specific – Online Tools (continued)**

### **d) SPECIFIC EXAMPLE: Venezuela**

- 1. Negative impressions about country to North American media and tour operators**
- 2. Conducted 3-month online campaign to change attitudes of media and operators**
- 3. Promoted country's natural attractions and activities to 2300 media, 8000 professionals**
- 4. 24 international media & operators attended FAM Trip; turned people away**

**WEBSITE: [www.natour.us/expo/e1.html](http://www.natour.us/expo/e1.html)**



## Specific – Use FAM Trips Effectively

- a) Tie FAM/Press Trips to existing or new events, which serves as the “base” activity
- b) Especially good for “unknown” destinations to showcase opportunities
- c) Tour providers should collaborate with tourism board to help sponsor and support
- d) Ensure qualified participants – NO LEECHES wanting free trips!!

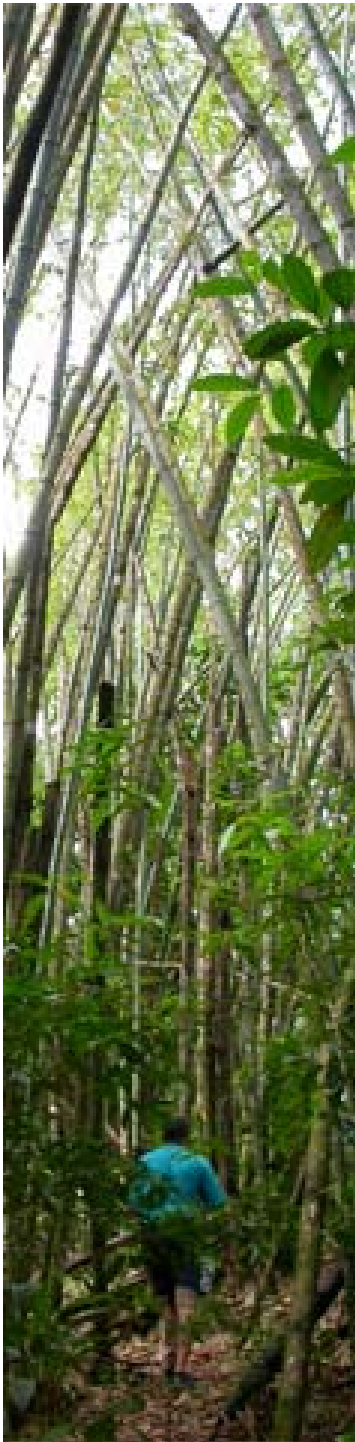


## **Specific – FAM Trips (continued)**

### **d) SPECIFIC EXAMPLE: Trinidad**

- 1. Known for Carnivale and Tobago's beaches  
-- not for adventure/nature tourism**
- 2. Base Event: 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Shandy Carib  
Adventure Festival**
- 3. Festival used as focus for 1-week FAM/  
Press Trip for media and tour operators**
- 4. Trip showcases island's "unknown"  
adventure, natural and cultural attractions**

**WEBSITE: [www.natour.us/trinidad](http://www.natour.us/trinidad)**



## **Specific – Use Trade Shows Effectively**

- a) In U.S., fewer consumers interested in strict adventure/eco tourism tradeshow
- b) These experienced travelers are comfortable buying online and won't waste time at show
- c) May be different in Europe, where consumers treat shows as “day out” and more accustomed to walking downtown
- d) However, in general mass tourism shows in U.S., adventure/eco tourism stand out



## Specific – Trade Shows (continued)

- e) EXPECTATIONS: probably won't make sales, but will learn about market, make connections, achieve consumer legitimacy
- f) To lower expenses, recommend alliance among destination's providers -- tourism boards, operators, lodges -- in support of destination, not individual companies
- g) Expenses: lodging & dining (\$200/night), airfare (\$400-1200), materials (\$500), booth fee and setup (\$2000-3500) = ~ \$6,000



# U.S. Trade Show Specifics

## *New York Times Travel Show*

- 25K in 2004; most-qualified attendees
- BOOTH COST: \$2650 for 3 days (\$883/day)
- **WEBSITE:** [www.nytimes.com/travelshow](http://www.nytimes.com/travelshow)

## *Travel Show Chicago* (formerly IATOS World Congress / The Outside Show) -- broader focus

- 20K in 2004; 70K expected in 2005
- BOOTH COST: \$2000 for 5 days (\$400/day)
- **WEBSITE:** [www.travelshowchicago.com](http://www.travelshowchicago.com)

A vertical photograph on the left side of the slide shows a person in a blue shirt and shorts climbing a waterfall. The person is reaching up with their right hand to grab a rock. The water is cascading down the rocks, creating a misty spray at the bottom.

## U.S. Trade Shows (continued)

### *Adventures in Travel Expo*

- New York City: 25K in 2004
- San Francisco: 8K in 2004
- Least-qualified attendees of these shows
- Washington, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles
- BOOTH COST: \$2650 for 3 days (\$883/day)
- **WEBSITE:** [www.nytimes.com/travelshow](http://www.nytimes.com/travelshow)



# Cost/Benefit Analysis

*Most cost-efficient to least cost-efficient*

1. **Develop webpage**      COST: \$800 to \$8K  
REACH: potentially millions
2. **Online campaign**      COST: \$5K to \$12K  
REACH: 10K media & professionals
3. **FAM/Press Trip**      COST: \$15K to \$30K  
REACH: thousands of travelers (media)
4. **Trade Shows**      COST: \$6K to \$10K  
REACH: potentially thousands



**For More Information:**

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