

MAINE OFFICE OF TOURISM
**“Getting Started with
Motorcoach”**

Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce
March 28, 2013

Why Care About Coaches?

- The daily expenditure for each person traveling on a **one-day tour in North America is \$74.93**. This figure includes what the tour traveler spends and what the tour operator spends on behalf of the tour traveler. **For a multi-day tour traveler the daily expenditure per person is \$156.16.**
- **One motorcoach spending one night at a destination generates as much as \$11,660 for that local economy in meals, lodging and other spending.**
- Motorcoach traveler and tourism demand generates more than \$55 billion annually in economic transactions nationwide.
- Motorcoaches account for 751 million passenger trips annually, moving more people in some years than commercial airlines.

Androscoggin County Opportunities

- Positioned on emerging Motorcoach tour routes between Portland & Bethel
 - Regional lodging properties are already investing in marketing to Motorcoach
 - On Maine Motorcoach Network's 2013 FAM Route!
 - Unique attractions: Franco Culture, Industrial Heritage, nearby Agritourism Sites, etc
 - Well-position for Hub & Spoke Tours of Southern Maine
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Learn From Farmington's Success



*"Emily Hartung, Shelby Childs and Paul Mills from the Downtown Association welcome a bus tour from Arkansas to downtown Farmington on Wednesday. The red carpet was rolled out and greeters met the 45 visitors who stopped for lunch and shopping."
- Sun Journal 9/26/11*

http://m.sunjournal.com/news/franklin/2012/09/26/downtown-farmington-rolls-out-red-carpet-bus-tours/1256854?utm_source=Sun+Journal+List&utm_campaign=9692873faf-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email

Industry Definitions

Motorcoach Operator

Operators own motorcoaches and provide services such as charters, tours, sightseeing, scheduled service, school bus service, special operations, and/or local receptive operations.

Industry Definitions

Tour Operator

A person or company that contracts with suppliers, such as transportation, accommodations, restaurants and attractions, to design and market a tour.

Industry Definitions

Receptive Tour Operator

A multi-faceted destination specialist whose company provides some or all components of a tour package for resale by a motorcoach/tour/wholesale operator; or sells directly to a preformed group.

Industry Definitions

Group Leader

An individual who arranges packaged travel and tours
for a pre-formed group

Pre-formed Group

Senior citizen centers, a church, a club (Red Hats)
or individuals who work together or share a common interest
such as skiing, history or sightseeing

Industry Definitions

Tiered Pricing

A graduated rate structure designed to offer professional operators (Buyers) percentage discounts based on volume, production and/or their position in the distribution channel from wholesaler, motor coach/tour operator, receptive operator and travel agent. Sellers providing tiered rates protect the Buyer relationship with customers and Group Leader. Each Buyer in the distribution channel must mark-up the price to realize a profit, and be able to present the traveling consumer a cost-effective tour product.

Group Tour Business Chain

YOU ARE HERE → TOUR SUPPLIER/SELLER

(Lodging, attractions, restaurants, etc)



RECEPTIVE TOUR OPERATORS

(Contract with you for 20 – 40% off rack rate)



MOTORCOACH OR TOUR OPERATORS

(Contract with you for 15 – 20% off rack rate)



GROUP LEADER/TRAVEL AGENT

(Contract with you for 10% off rack rate or earn a commission on the sale)



VISITOR/TRAVELLER

(Should never pay more than your published rates!)

*In the cruise industry...
InterCruises = Receptive
Tour Operator*

*Cruise Line = Motorcoach
or Tour Operator*

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Universal Standards

- Motorcoach drop-off, parking and turning space must be adequate.
 - Overhead wires, tree branches that can scratch the paint or parking surfaces that “drag” the bottom of the coach should be addressed.
 - This should be a paved or graded parking lot with good drainage that does not get soft and mushy when it rains.
 - It should allow passengers to unload and load safely, away from main road traffic. Groups consist of a variety of ages and needs requiring unobstructed, level pathways that aren’t muddy, wet or rutted.
 - It should be easy to turn a coach around.

Universal Standards

- The facility must have clean and accessible public restrooms that can accommodate multiple members of the group.
 - Motorcoaches carry as many as 55 people, and while it is unlikely that everyone will need to use the restroom, the possibility exists that they will.
 - A single restroom with one toilet is not adequate.

Universal Standards

- A representative from the business should board the motorcoach prior to the group unloading and provide an overview of the site.
 - This might include a history of the location, what the group will experience during their visit or offer benefits that the general public does not receive.

Universal Standards

- Have enough staff to handle the impact of up to 55 guests all arriving and departing at the same time.
 - Staff should be specially trained to handle your group tour business.
 - Operators have resold your product to their customers with the expectation you will deliver as sold.
 - This industry requires strict attention to their timetable. Be ready to move the group through your property as described to the operator when they booked with you.

Attractions

- Attractions are expected to provide complimentary admission/tickets to the driver and group escort.
 - Attractions charging more than \$20 should be prepared to offer tiered pricing to receptive operators.
- Have enough staff to handle the impact of up to 55 guests all arriving and departing at the same time – guides, gift shop, snack bar, etc.

Attractions

- Consider a special tour, something individuals would not normally see or do. Groups like things to which individual travelers may not have access.
 - Free samples, free cookies and cider or samples of cheese and crackers or other products sold at the business are a good draw.
 - Educational tours and demonstrations are of great interest to groups.
 - Have benches/seats/golf carts available to rest if the attraction requires a lot of walking.
 - “Hands-on” experiential and interactive programs are far more interesting than a simple guided tour.

Lodging

- Your property should include at least 30 rooms. A minimum of 25 double/doubles and 2 singles (1 complimentary for driver and 1 for escort) is required for each tour.
 - A room with a double bed and a pull-out sofa is not adequate. Travelers need equal accommodations.
 - Several non-smoking and first-floor double/doubles are required.
 - Indoor corridors are preferred, but not always required.
 - Make sure your elevators are working properly.
 - A tiered pricing and flexible deposit policy are required.
 - Greet groups as soon as they arrive. A reception with cookies, juice and coffee is a nice touch and allows time for luggage delivery while guest are relaxing in the lobby or reception area.
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Lodging

- Pre-registration is a necessity. Keys should be in envelopes for the escort upon arrival so guests can proceed directly to rooms without waiting at front desk.
 - Make sure phones are turned on and do not ask guest for credit card. Guest are most likely on their own for incidentals and will take care of charges upon check out.
 - Baggage handling upon arrival and departure is required. Make sure baggage handling is swift and accurate.
 - Consider bringing in evening entertainment such as musicians, storytellers or craftspeople demonstrating a skill. If you have a lounge or bar, keep it open for when the group returns from dinner.
 - Some type of on-site breakfast is preferred, or “package” with a local restaurant to provide breakfast.
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Restaurants

- The facility should be large enough so group dining can be accommodated during regular hours in addition to the usual day-to-day business.
 - Ask about the group's seating preference. Some prefer seating in small groups (four or six tops) in the regular dining room with other guests, while others may prefer having a meeting room to themselves.
 - A customized menu or limited regular menu is helpful. For instance, give a choice of entrees but serve all with the same side dishes.
 - In general, groups expect to each lunch within 1 hour, dinner within 1 ½ hours.
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Restaurants

- Consider if your location is convenient for group tours (do most tours go by in the early morning or mid-afternoon?) Remember the old saying: "Location, Location, Location."
 - Accessibility: If steps are involved and there is no elevator, share that information with the operator in advance.
- Restaurants are expected to provide complimentary meals to the driver and group escort.

Motorcoach Marketing

Profile Sheets: A color-printed, two-side, three-hole punched sheet of paper that tells a tour operator everything they need to know about you.

- Your business name
- Contact information
- Photos of your business
- Description of your business & why a group would want to visit
- Amenities of your business
- Group rates & rate policies
- Location of your business
- Other nearby group-friendly events & festivals, hotels and restaurants



Motorcoach Marketing

Leads: A list of operators generated by the Office of Tourism each year after attending major group tour industry sales events.

- Email Margaret.Hoffman@maine.gov to request the current Motorcoach leads.
 - When using the list be sure to read the notes and only send information appropriate to that operator. For example, a tour operator specializing in seniors is not going to be interested in receiving information about a youth dormitory.
 - Send information via email when possible. Attach a PDF of your profile sheet!
 - Don't harass – an email once or twice a year is appropriate. Do not just add leads to your regular e-news list.
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Motorcoach Marketing

www.VisitMaine.com/group-tour: Private section of the VisitMaine website just for the Motorcoach market.

- Includes an optimized search for Group Tour Friendly Businesses.
 - When you add or update a FREE business listing on www.visitmaine.com be sure to complete the Group Tour section of the questionnaire (page 3.) This information is what becomes a searchable listing for your property within the Group Tour section of the website.
- A work in progress.
 - The microsite will be updated in Spring/Summer 2013.

Travel Trade Sales Events

- American Bus Association (ABA)
Marketplace
 - National Tour Association (NTA) Travel
Exchange
 - Ontario Motorcoach Association (OMCA)
Annual Marketplace
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Membership Associations

American Bus Association (ABA)

www.buses.org

- Founded in 1926, ABA represents approximately 800 motorcoach and tour companies in the United States and Canada. Its members operate charter, tour, regular route, airport express, special operations and contract services (commuter, school, transit). Another 2,300 member organizations represent the travel and tourism industry and suppliers of bus products and services who work in partnership with the North American motorcoach industry. ABA has a total membership of more than 3,000.
 - Marketplace, GroupConnect online member directory, Destinations magazine, annual Motorcoach Marketer directory, e-newsletter, ABA Top 100 Events

Membership Associations

National Tour Association (NTA) www.ntaonline.com

- NTA is an association for professionals serving travelers to, from and within North America. Since its founding in 1951, the association has served a broad and diverse membership and helped them expand market reach with innovative business tools, strategic relationships and collaboration within the industry. NTA membership represents more than 40 countries: 1,500 tour operators, 600 destinations, 1,500 tour suppliers
 - Travel Exchange, Contact, Partner2Partner online member directory, Courier magazine, e-newsletters

Motorcoach Marketing

Maine Motorcoach Network: grew out of a grassroots effort by the Maine Office of Tourism and tourism vendors to engage the tourism community in capturing more Motorcoach business to all regions of the State.

Maine Motorcoach Network

Mission Statement

*"Increase the revenue to Maine businesses
through Motorcoach travel."*

External/Outside Maine tactics:

- Create and execute targeted FAM tours
- Coordinate presence at industry trade shows and events
- Conduct targeted sales missions
- Support Maine Office of Tourism's development of tour operator tools

Internal/Inside Maine tactics:

- Member education on group friendliness
 - Networking
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Maine Motorcoach Network

- Membership is open to any Maine businesses committed to serving the Motorcoach market or wanting to learn more about how to work with the Motorcoach industry.
 - To join, simply complete a Volunteer Application
 - It's free!
 - Currently have 120 members from approximately 80 organizations or businesses

Maine Motorcoach Network

- Meets during even months at locations throughout the State.
 - Members take turns hosting meetings
 - Executive Committee meets during the odd months
 - There are several sub-committees that volunteers work on including FAM, sales mission, development and membership that meet at other times as well

Maine Motorcoach Network

- Is all volunteer and not incorporated. No staff. No office. No EIC or bank account.
 - Executive Committee leads the Network
 - Format includes Chair, Co-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Committee Chairs and at-large positions
 - Elections in June
 - Group Tour person at MOT will always have a seat ex-officio
 - Funds come from program fees
 - Portland CVB acting as fiduciary agent

Maine Motorcoach Network

- Sample Past Projects
 - Updated MOT website for Tour Operators, 2009-2010
 - Defined Group-Friendly Standards with MOT
 - Two FAMs completed, Spring 2011 & 2012
 - Maine Profile Binder, 2012
 - Meeting with Peter Pantuso, President of ABA, January 2013
 - MMN referenced in best practices at panel discussion at ABA Marketplace 2013
 - Two sales missions completed
 - Pennsylvania, January 2011
 - Atlantic Canada, December 2012

Maine Motorcoach Network

- Current Projects
 - Maine Binder for 2013
 - FAM, May 1 – 5
 - Sales Mission to Quebec, May 13 – 17
 - MOT is paying our contractor in Montreal to provide planning and language assistance to make this happen faster and allow the Network to focus on Ontario
 - Sales Mission to Ontario, Fall 2013
 - Starting a new committee to measure ROI of activities
 - Growing Membership
 - Concentrating on development of sponsors and binder participants
 - Facebook page
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MOT Workshops and Presentations

- **MOT “On the Road” Presentation–** MOT Team
 - Working with the International Market - Carolann
 - PR or Social Media – NMC
 - Working with the Motorcoach Industry - Margaret
 - Tap Into Maine Tourism – Margaret
 - VisitMaine.com 101 - Margaret
 - Packaging: Tips & Techniques to Put in Your Marketing Toolbox – Margaret
 - Putting It Together: How to Build Itineraries & Packages- Margaret
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Thank You!

*Amanda Theberge, Hilton Garden Inn Riverwatch
&
Scott Riccio, Northeast Charter & Tour*

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