Bringing Buses to Your Town

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• Business of motorcoach travel
• Power of group travel in Ohio
• Group travel trends
• Building relationships with your local convention and visitors bureaus
• Designing group tour experiences
• Where and how to market
What is Group Travel?
The Basics
A Very Simple Explanation

**Group Travel** means multiple people traveling to your community

**Independent Travel** means people who visit your community solo, with friends, or with family

The most important thing to remember is that buying process is different
The Process

Destinations, hotels, restaurants, shops and attractions “sell” opportunities for experiences

Buys a “packaged tour” from a tour operator

Tour operator selects destinations and experiences and offers “packaged tours”
An Example
Tour Operators

- Large and small companies
- May sell directly to consumers, group leaders, travel agents, etc.
- Some own buses, others do not
- Good source of repeat business
- Difficult to tell legitimacy, which is why marketplaces (such as Heartland) pre-qualify
Group Leaders

- Bank clubs, church groups, garden clubs . . .
- The more complicated the trip (overnights, etc.), the more likely they’ll use the services of a tour operator
- Difficult to access
Power of Group Travel in Ohio
Group Travel in Ohio

$1.14 billion in direct sales

$3.66 billion total economic impact

17% Ohio overnight marketable trips booked as an escorted group travel trip in 2012

12% increase since 2011

SOURCE: Office of Tourism Ohio Fall Town Hall Meeting Presentation, 2013
92% of tour operators reported more customers in 2013

What Ohio businesses benefit when a group rolls into town?

Fuel & transportation services
$407 million spent

Lodging
$243 million spent

Dining
$174 million spent

Museums, Attractions & Entertainment
$276 million spent

Retail
$41 million spent

1 motorcoach = 23 double rooms booked + 46 tickets sold + 46 meals served
Group Travel Trends
Group Experiences Most Sought After

- VOLUNTEERISM: 12%
- FILM, CELEBRITY, TV, NOVELS: 13%
- HEALTH/SPA: 15%
- SPORTS: 15%
- GAMING: 24%
- SOFT ADVENTURE: 39%
- CULINARY: 43%
- SHOPPING: 45%
- FESTIVALS AND EVENTS: 51%
- CULTURE AND HISTORY: 63%
What Operators are Seeking

- Price and Value . . . 91%
- Previous Experience . . . 69%
- Uniqueness . . . 64%
- Reputation . . . 64%

At least 82% begin researching itineraries at least six months in advance
Market is Changing

More choices, more options

Entertainment later in the day

Experiential, active

Niche

Smaller-sized groups
Designing Group Experiences
Feet on the Street
Don’t forget “Potties for the Bodies!”
Industry Standards

Front door service

Comps for drivers and escorts
Greet and Meet

Add a personal touch by greeting the motorcoach when it arrives!
Profile Sheet

- Location, location, location
- Put a face with a contact
- List your group tour amenities
- Highlight your attractions, events and unique experiences
- Pictures speak volumes
Follow up
Collateral
Creating a destination for your downtown
Where and How to Market
Your DMO is your best resource
Heartland Travel Showcase

Collaboration and Partnerships
Ohio Has IT! is an industry-led marketing partnership created to showcase the endless experiences that Ohio has for motorcoach groups. Whether you are looking for something educational for students, a experiential adventure for seniors or even a custom itinerary for your group’s unique needs, Ohio Has IT! will provide you with the tools to reach out and create a memorable trip that is sure to be a hit with your group.
Media Outlets for Groups

Group Tour Magazine

Group Travel Leader
Working with your partners
Incorporating Experiential Tourism

Meet Mr. Bennett, Miss Mitchel and Elva Voltz
National Museum of Cambridge Glass

Get your Cowboy On!
Hopalong Cassidy Museum and Festival
Memories to last a lifetime
Create Customers for Life!