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Maximising educational & familiarisation trips

“Do some research on the companies that you are hosting before they arrive on their familiarisation trip. What works for one company who look after big groups is very different from a company who look after fully independent travellers. Make sure you give agents or buyers the experience their customers would want.”

Rebecca Clay, Marketing Manager, Roman Baths

What are trade educationals and media fam trips?

In the tourism industry, trade and media are key third party proponents of your product and story. Trade educationals and media fam trips provide a taste of what’s on offer by experiencing your product first hand. They are your chance to educate and win over the people who influence consumers in making their holiday decisions.

- **Trade educationals** - includes your distribution partners, for example wholesalers, inbound tour operators; their product buyers and sales teams
- **Media fam trips** - includes journalists and writers for print, broadcast and online media channels

If trade partners and travel writers know your product and like it, they can do a lot to sell it through their respective channels. Building trade and media relationships is an essential part of doing tourism business. After all, your product competes not just on a regional level, but also with tourism destinations and products across the globe. Educationals and fam trips are a relatively low cost way to promote your product to larger networks of trade and media.

Many local DMOs are proactive in organising these trips. VisitBritain/VisitEngland also runs media visits on an ongoing basis, and trade educationals as an add on to ExploreGB. You can also build your own programmes and invite delegates directly.



Saltburn-by-the-Sea, North Yorkshire ©VisitBritain/Sabina Trojanova



Tips for hosting a successful educational/familiarisation trip

Before

- If you are approached to participate in a familiarisation trip/educational, find out as much information as you can before committing to host the group. Determine if they are part of your target market and what the benefits of hosting the visit are for your business. Don't be afraid to say no to a request if you don't think that your product is suited to the group.
- Generally, support for these trips is requested free of charge (FOC) or on a comp (complimentary basis), in return for the benefits for your business via the exposure. If you are unable to offer complimentary services you may consider offering a reduced rate. Discuss options with the organiser to try and create a "win win" situation.
- Know their itinerary and obtain contact details – when do they arrive and depart, where the group has been and where they are going, have they experienced a competitor's product?
- Consider the available time and present your product as the customer would experience it
- Be culturally sensitive. Be aware of the cultural sensitivities such as religious dietary requirements, appropriate conduct and greetings. If you aren't sure ask the trip organiser.
- Brief staff, making sure that all staff are aware of the group

During

- Professionalism – be on time, well presented and groomed, offer refreshments if required
- Make sure that participants are welcomed – introduce yourself and exchange business cards
- Ensure the product is at its best
- Outline the programme while at your property or on your tour
- Escort the group during the familiarisation trip and be a gracious host
- Give time and attention to questions and make a note to follow up any requests
- Present an information kit and offer to post information to participants
- Ask the group for feedback on your product

After

- Add the participants to your contact database
- Send a thank you email and follow up any requests for additional information
- Follow any sales lead opportunities presented by the fam visit/ educational
- Keep participants informed of any relevant changes or updates on your product





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