

## TIP SHEET #17

# TRAVEL TRADE

How do visitors from the United States of America, United Kingdom, Germany, or China find out about your experience? The further away a visitor is travelling, the more likely they are to buy through the travel trade. The travel trade is a network of businesses that make up the international travel distribution system, including travel agents and tour operators.<sup>1</sup> International markets are growing and typically these visitors travel for longer periods and spend more money than regional markets.

Tourism Nova Scotia (TNS) team members attend international trade shows, showcasing Nova Scotia to the world. We also help facilitate partnerships between travel trade partners and Nova Scotia businesses and tourism operators. Tourism businesses that work with the travel trade are often referred to as 'suppliers' by travel agents and tour operators, as they play the role of supplying product (i.e. visitor experiences) for the travel trade to sell. When working with the travel trade, the following key players can help connect with international markets to sell your experience:

- 1. Receptive Tour Operator (RTO):** An expert in the products and experiences Nova Scotia has to offer. They offer your product and sell to inbound tour operators and travel agents. Most overseas trade business comes through RTOs.
- 2. International Inbound Tour Operators:** Coordinate travellers from one country to travel in another country. Often working with RTOs to access products and experiences.
- 3. Retail or Online Travel Agencies:** Retail travel agencies provide hands-on services to travellers when planning and building their trips abroad. Online travel agencies like Expedia carry a very wide range of products that travelers can book online in pieces or build packages.<sup>2</sup>

### TRAVEL TRADE:

Travel Trade means working with partners, such as tour operators or travel agents, to extend your market reach and sales.



### Benefits of working with the travel trade:

- 1. An expanded distribution network:** Extend market reach and open access to new, further away, targeted markets. A diversified audience strengthens your ability to weather travel trend changes as you're less reliant on any one market.
- 2. Opportunity to build repeat business:** When tour operators and travel agents receive positive feedback from their clients (visitors) about the experience they had with you, they are more likely to recommend your business because they can rely on your quality product.
- 3. More predictable bookings:** The travel trade often books tourism offerings and experiences for clients well in advance of the visitor's arrival.

<sup>1</sup> Atlantic Canada Travel Trade Toolkit. Module One: Am I Ready for the International Market?

<sup>2</sup> Atlantic Canada Travel Trade Toolkit. Module Three: Working in the Travel Distribution System

Having visitors on the books in advance helps better predict cash flow and business demand, especially once you have established strong partner relationships and a positive reputation with your travel trade partners.

**4. Potential product and service expansion:**

As your products appear in more travel trade channels, your business will gain awareness and recognition as a known supplier. This can

create the opportunity to increase your visitor capacity or develop new products for other visitor markets you're planning to attract.

- 5. Extended travel periods:** Not all travellers plan their trips around weekends or our province's traditional peak season. Working with the travel trade can help you attract visitors during off-peak months and days of the week.



**Is working with the travel trade the right fit for your business?**

It can take two to three years for your experience to gain traction and to see business results when working with the travel trade. Working with the travel trade is a business decision. You will need to consider if it's the right fit for you. If you're a new business or want to sell new experience through travel trade, it's recommended that you test and fine tune your product offering for a couple of years before selling through this channel. This will ensure you are offering and delivering a well-oiled visitor experience.

Check out the Atlantic Canada Travel Trade Readiness Toolkit to learn more about developing and expanding your business through the travel trade at [tourismns.ca/travel-trade-toolkit](https://tourismns.ca/travel-trade-toolkit).

Learn more about our international market opportunities: [Northeastern United States](#), [United Kingdom](#), [Germany](#), and [China](#).