



Attracting Tour Operators: Sales *'Mission Accomplished'*



James Murphy
President
Art Henry Tours



Jeannie Sadaphal, CKTP
Business Development Representative
Ark Encounter/Creation Museum

What is a Sales Mission?



It is a proactive marketing effort where tourism professionals promote their destination directly to travel partners with the goal of strengthening relationships and increasing awareness of their service, product, attraction, or destination.



In short, sales missions are the most effective and personalized way to stretch your marketing dollar. Why speed date when you can build relationship?



You can tailor your sales mission to your specific budget and individual schedule so that it benefits all involved.

SUPPLIERS: Let's get started!

Purpose

- What's the Purpose of your mission? What Value are you looking for?

Message

- Make your message clear. Do you have a new itinerary, updates, upgrades, perks, contacts, etc?

Prepare

- Be prepared: Bring updated collateral, materials, and a thoughtful gift.

Respect

- Respect time: Value the tour operator's and your fellow suppliers' time.

Collaboration & Strategy

**Partner with suppliers from the same region or theme
(e.g., foodie, faith-based)**

**Consider Itinerary-Based Missions: Create and promote
multi-stop travel routes with other suppliers.**



Planning the Mission

- **Choose your target region.**
 - Each participant identifies 2-3 potential or existing tour operator contacts.
- **Research thoroughly:**
 - Understand the operator's market (seniors, students, religious, retail)
 - Understand the operator's preferences (day trips, multi-day trips)
 - Figure out the best way to get a meeting. Show you've done your homework!
 - Collect accurate information about where they work from (home or office) and who the best people to meet with are.





► Scheduling

- Use a **shared spreadsheet** to manage contacts, appointment times, and notes.
- Be **flexible**—plans may change.
- Respect operators' time: 20 minutes per meeting + 5 minutes per additional supplier.
- Account for travel time between appointments.



► Roles & Responsibilities

- Spreadsheet creator/ data entry
- Route planner for efficient travel
- Binder builder with company profiles, sample itineraries, DMO letters, and gift donors.
- Official note-taker to compile detailed post-mission notes.
- Driver & backup driver to manage vehicle rental.
- Hotel coordinator to book lodging near the first appointment.
- Timekeeper to keep on track and confirm arrival times (and any delays) with Operators (always confirm day before and as you are enroute)
- Photographer! Get a group photo!

Costs to Consider

- Binders
- Vehicle rental, fuel, tolls
- Lodging
- Meals
- Gifts (ideally donated)
- Local delicacies are always a hit!
- Banquet room/meals if applicable



► Maximizing Cost and Impact

► Share resources with your travel partners

► (examples: Hotel discounts, loyalty perks, call in favors, share all the costs)

► Also, consider Air BnB's to save on lodging costs

► Combine networking and efficiency by offering to bring bagels or donuts for breakfast or pizza and salads for lunch.

► Consider banquet-style meetings for multiple operators to reduce lodging and fuel costs while increasing reach if you are driving through an area that has a high concentration of tour operators and don't have time for individual visits





It's Meeting Time!

- Show up with snacks or a gift/tchotchke for everyone (donuts, soft pretzels, something from your area, etc)
- Introductions & business card sharing
- Take turns sharing information
- Ask for questions
- Ask when/how you should follow up



► Final Tips

- Use the mission to **bond with fellow suppliers**—share experiences and learn to represent each other. Your Company has just gained a group of travel professionals who can represent them!
- Have fun, build relationships, learn from each other, grow your network and reach sales goals together.

Why Sales Missions are Important to Tour Operators:

Knowledge

- Gives greater knowledge about a tour destination
- Gives inspiration for new tour ideas
- Helps to connect the dots between regions

Relations

- Forges new relationships, and strengthens existing ones
- Introduce a new staff member
- Small Talk-don't discount it!
- Gives Opportunity to give feedback on prior experiences

Strategize

- Gives opportunity to ask clarifying questions/clear misconceptions
- Problem-solves potential/actual 'pain points' and resolve conflicts
- Special incentives/concessions

We Like to Talk- Contact Us!

Jeannie Sadaphal, CKTP

jeannies@arkencounter.com

859-638-7350



James Murphy, President

james@arthenry.com

615-386-9301

