

Forward Together – Tour Operators and DMOs

In working with DMOs, tour operators were asked to rank the importance of various roles that DMOs play in doing business. On average, the most important role that a DMO can play for a tour operator is to assist in itinerary development, followed by providing hotel information. The least important role is a distributor of leads.

Itinerary development	#1
Providing hotel information	#2
Providing restaurant information	#3
Acting as a problem solver	#4
FAMs/Site inspections	#5
Distributor of leads	#6

Tour operators also were asked what they believe to be the most needed items in a DMO group tour manual. Topping the list were 800 and fax numbers with 95 percent. This was closely followed by attraction information at 93 percent. However, there are many items that a majority of tour operators find important, as the following chart shows.

Items Needed in a Group Tour Manual – According to Tour Operators

Group Tour Manual Items	Percent
800 and fax numbers	95%
Attraction information	93%
Restaurant information	90%
Maps	85%
Hotel information guides	84%
Receptive/Step-on guides	84%
Suggested itineraries	78%
Local history	75%
Web site addresses	75%
Tour notes	71%
Mileage/Drive times	65%
Special events	64%
Charter transportation	48%
State/Province regulatory information	48%
Other	7%

Additionally, tour operators were asked about the most important information for a DMO Web site. Topping this list again was attraction information (89 percent) and 800 and fax numbers (87 percent). Also high on this list was restaurant information (83 percent) and hotel information guides (81 percent). Again, there were a number of items that a majority of tour operators would like to find on a DMO Web site, as detailed below.

Items Needed in a DMO Web Site – According to Tour Operators

Web Site Items	Percent
Attraction information	89%
800 and fax numbers	87%
Restaurant information	83%
Hotel information guides	81%
Suggested itineraries	74%
Receptive/Step-on guides	74%
Maps	73%
Local history	69%
Weather/Climate	66%
Special events	65%
Tour notes	64%
Mileage/Drive times	64%
Charter transportation	47%
State/Province regulatory information	46%
Other	13%

Forward Together – Tour Operators and Attractions

Level of Interaction:

According to the survey, 97 percent of tour operators do business with attractions, and member attractions report 29 percent of their business is derived from the packaged travel market with the same amount (29 percent) of this packaged travel business coming from NTA tour operators. Additionally, NTA attractions report that 71 percent of their business in the packaged travel market is derived from group tours and 29 percent from independent packages. (See appendix A.)

Booking Timelines:

When asked about a preferred booking timeline for group business, 21 percent of member attractions would prefer bookings 30 days in advance with 18 percent preferring three to five months in advance.

Actual bookings for group business is varied. Nineteen percent of attractions report actual bookings for group business at both 14 days and three to five months in advance. A full 23 percent report some other timeframe for actual bookings, such as seven days in advance.

Booking Timelines for Group Tours

	Preferred	Actual
14 days in advance	14%	19%
30 days in advance	21%	16%
45 days in advance	6%	5%
60 days in advance	13%	10%
3 to 5 months in advance	18%	19%
6 months in advance	13%	9%
1 year in advance	7%	0%
Other	8%	23%

Deposits, Payments and Refunds:

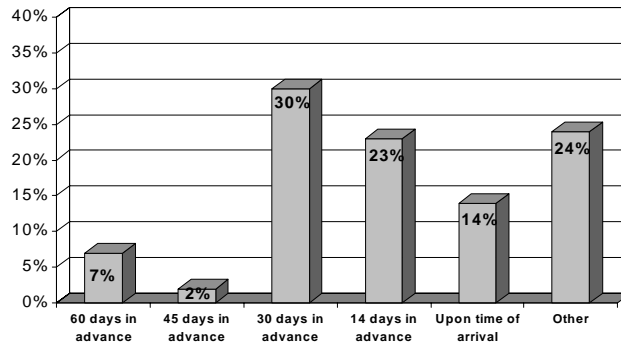
Forty-five percent of attractions require a signed contract from tour operators and 50 percent require a deposit at an average amount of \$79. Tour operators reported that reasonable timeframe for an attraction with limited seating or capacity to expect a deposit was six months in advance (54 percent). For attractions without a limited seating or capacity, that timeframe is shorter with 51 percent stating 30 days in advance. Forty-three percent of attractions who have limited seating or capacity stated a reasonable booking timeline would be 30 days while 44 percent of attractions without a limited seating or capacity stating a one week advance booking as reasonable.

Reasonable Booking Timelines According to Attractions

	With Limited Seating or Capacity	Without Limited Seating or Capacity
One week in advance	13%	44%
30 days in advance	43%	35%
6 months in advance	26%	4%
1 year in advance	5%	1%
Other	11%	15%

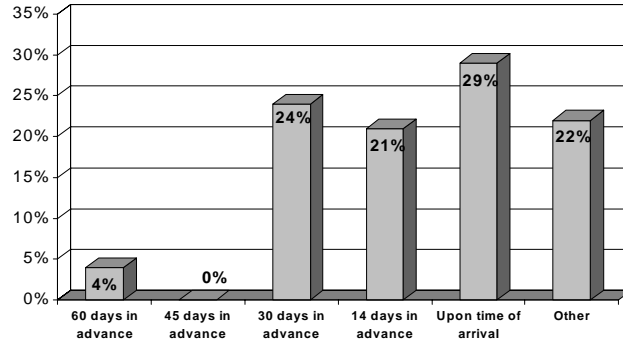
As for receiving full payment, 50 percent of attractions require payment on day of arrival. Seventy percent of attractions report providing refunds to tour operators. Tour operators report that, if a tour is not going to operate, more than half (54 percent) will cancel 30 days prior to arrival. Additionally, 56 percent of tour operators stated that a reasonable timeframe for receiving a full refund would be if the cancellation is received 30 days in advance. In line with this, 30 percent of attractions reported a reasonable timeframe for requesting a full refund would also be 30 days in advance, closely followed with 23 percent stating 14 days in advance.

Reasonable Timeframe to Request **Full** Refund (Attractions)



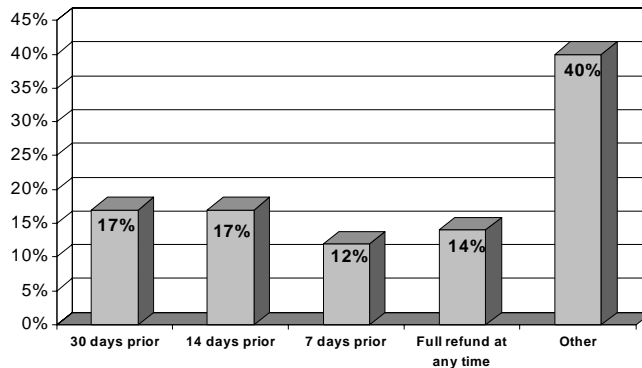
As for receiving a partial refund, 41 percent of tour operators believe a reasonable timeframe for cancellation with a partial refund would be up to time of arrival with 36 percent stating 14 days in advance of arrival. From the attraction point of view, 29 percent stated that a reasonable timeframe to expect a partial refund would be up to time of arrival with 24 percent stating 30 days advance notification and 21 percent stating 14 days notice.

Reasonable Timeframe to Request **Partial** Refund
(Attractions)



The view on when an entire deposit becomes non-refundable is split for attractions. Forty percent of attractions state other timeframes, such as 60 days in advance or 48 hours in advance. However, 17 percent say deposits become non-refundable if cancelled at both 30 days and 14 days prior to arrival of the tour.

When Entire Deposit Becomes Non-Refundable
(Attractions)



Volume/Tiered Pricing:

More than four in 10 attractions (41 percent) report volume discounts offered to tour operators. On average, the attractions report that 13 tours and/or 374 people would constitute a volume discount for a tour operator.

When it comes to group rates, tour operators believe that an average of 20 people should constitute such a rate. However, attractions stated that an average of 17 people constitute such a rate, slightly fewer than tour operators would expect. In addition, 29 percent of attractions required no advance reservation policy to obtain group rates with 25 percent requiring both a 24-hour and 14-day advance policy to obtain such a rate.

Just about half of the attractions (49 percent) offer tiered pricing with 89 percent offering such pricing to tour operators. However, tour operators receive the second best price from attractions, with receptive operators listed as receiving the best price on the tier.

To Whom Attractions Offer Tiered Pricing

	Offer Tiered Pricing	Price Rank
Professional Tour Operators	89%	#2
Group Leaders	58%	#4
General Public	28%	#5
Travel Agents	42%	#3
Receptive Operators	73%	#1

Other Information:

Other facts learned from NTA attraction members are that 63 percent do not maintain professional liability “errors and omissions” insurance, 52 percent communicate updated rate schedules whenever they occur while 37 percent report that information annually. In addition, 58 percent of attractions provide in-house training to their staff on the travel industry.

To obtain business, 83 percent of attractions list their company in city and state/provincial DMO group tour manuals.

To assist in facilitating group visits to their property, 32 percent of NTA’s attraction members offer a separate ticket window and entrance for groups with two percent of those charging a fee for this offering. Also, to make groups feel welcome, 75 percent of attractions offer greeting and briefing sessions for arriving groups.

Finally, to facilitate tour operator utilization of their attraction, 69 percent offer complimentary tickets to the tour director and driver. When tour operators were asked about complimentary ticket policies, 29 percent stated one complimentary ticket for each 15 purchased was fair and 58 percent of tour operators agreed that both the driver and tour director should receive complimentary tickets.

Forward Together – Tour Operators and Casinos

Level of Interaction:

According to the survey, 48 percent of tour operators do business with casinos. NTA member casinos report 20 percent of their business is derived from the packaged travel market with 18 percent of this packaged travel business coming from NTA tour operators. Additionally, NTA casino members report that 67 percent of their business in the packaged travel market is derived from group tours and 33 percent from independent packages. (See appendix A.)

Booking Timelines:

When asked about a preferred booking timeline for group business, 26 percent of member casinos would prefer bookings three to five months in advance with 18 percent preferring six months.

Actual bookings mirror the preferred with 33 percent receiving bookings three to five months in advance. However, 26 percent also report a 14-day advance booking, much shorter than any of the top preferred timeframes.

Booking Timelines for Group Tours

	Preferred	Actual
14 days in advance	15%	26%
30 days in advance	15%	4%
45 days in advance	4%	7%
60 days in advance	18%	4%
3 to 5 months in advance	26%	33%
6 months in advance	18%	15%
1 year in advance	3%	0%
Other	0%	11%

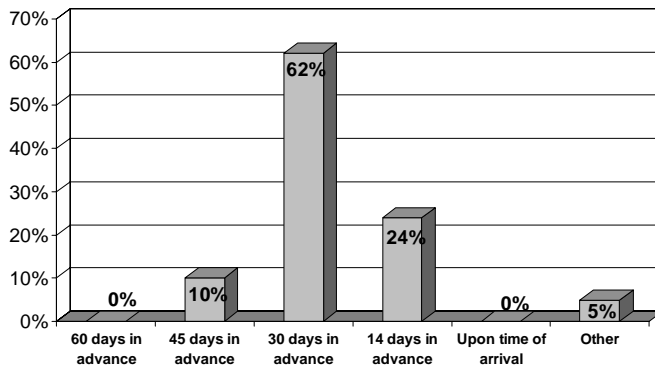
Deposits, Payments and Refunds:

Eighty-five percent of casinos require a signed contract from tour operators with 56 percent requiring a deposit at an average amount of \$276. Tour operators (34 percent) reported a preference for direct bill with casinos instead of deposits. However, 27 percent of tour operators did state that, if required, 30 days in advance of arrival was a reasonable timeframe to expect a deposit.

As for receiving full payment, 31 percent of casinos require payment on the day of arrival with only 12 percent accepting direct bill.

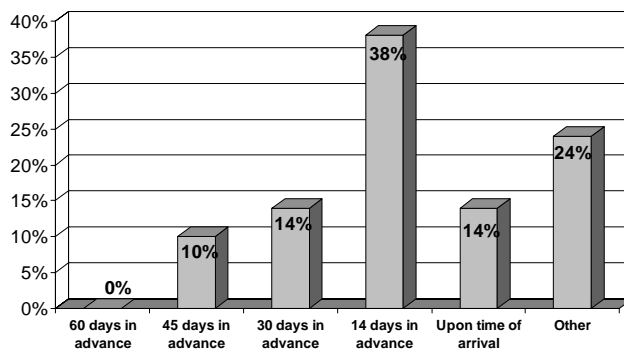
Eighty-one percent of member casinos report providing refunds to tour operators. Tour operators report that, if a tour is not going to operate, more than half (52 percent) will cancel 30 days prior to arrival. Additionally, 47 percent of tour operators believe that is also a reasonable timeframe for receiving a full refund. Sixty-two percent of casinos agree on this timeframe for a full refund as well with 24 percent stating 14-day advance notice as preferable.

Reasonable Timeframe to Request **Full** Refund (Casinos)



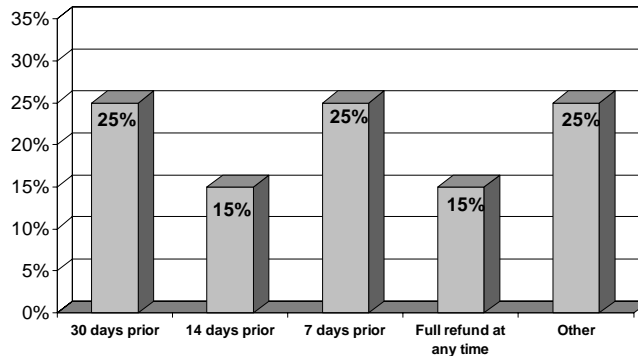
As for receiving a partial refund, 42 percent of tour operators believe a 14-day advance notice is a reasonable timeframe for cancellation with a partial refund with 38 percent stating cancellation up to the day of arrival would be fair. For the casino, 38 percent would prefer at least a 14-day advance notice with 14 percent accepting the day of arrival for a partial refund.

Reasonable Timeframe to Request **Partial** Refund (Casinos)



The view on when an entire deposit becomes non-refundable is split for casinos. Twenty-five percent state either 30 days or seven days prior to departure with 15 percent believing 14 days is fair.

When Entire Deposit Becomes Non-Refundable (Casinos)



Volume/Tiered Pricing:

Forty-eight percent of member casinos offer volume discounts to tour operators. Those offering volume discounts consider an average of 177 people as sufficient to constitute such a discount. Casinos also consider an average requirement of 22 guests to qualify for a group rate where tour operators believed that to be an average of 20. In addition, 27 percent of casinos reported that a 14-day advance reservation policy is reasonable to receive a group rate.

Forty-one percent of casinos offer tiered pricing with 91 percent offering such pricing to tour operators and providing them with the best price on the tier.

To Whom Casinos Offer Tiered Pricing

	Offer Tiered Pricing	Price Rank
Professional Tour Operators	91%	#1
Group Leaders	73%	#3
General Public	46%	#5
Travel Agents	46%	#4
Receptive Operators	55%	#2

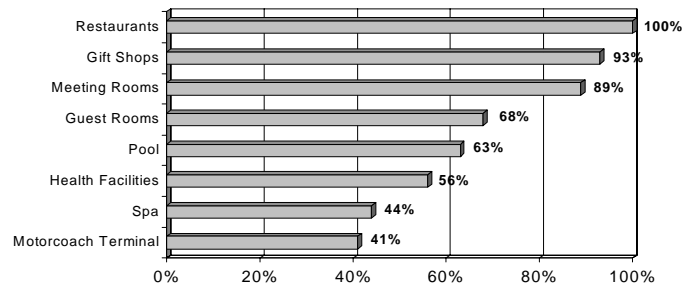
Other Information:

Other facts learned from NTA casino members are that 60 percent do not maintain professional liability “errors and omissions” insurance and 78 percent communicate updated rate schedules whenever they occur.

In order to attract business, 92 percent of casino members list their company in both city and state/provincial DMO group tour manuals and 48 percent have in-house training for their staff on the travel industry.

Casinos also offer tour operators a number of amenities. Tour operators stated that it was somewhat important for a casino to have a gift shop (32 percent), health facilities (29 percent) and a pool (28 percent). Tour operators also found it extremely important that a casino have guest rooms (46 percent), a motorcoach terminal (37 percent), and a restaurant (76 percent). All NTA member casinos reported having a restaurant with a variety of meal options offered to tour operators through the casino’s restaurant.

Amenities Offered by NTA Casino Members



Meal Options Offered by NTA Casino Members Who Have a Restaurant

Meal Type	Percentage
Breakfast (full American)	70%
Breakfast (continental)	26%
Lunch (buffet)	82%
Lunch (pre-set)	44%
Lunch (a la carte)	30%
Dinner (buffet)	78%
Dinner (pre-set)	48%
Dinner (a la carte)	37%
Special menu for groups	33%

To better serve international guests, casinos also offer a number of services in other languages.

Services Offered in Languages Other than English

