

DOMESTIC & GROUP TRADE FY 10 MARKETING PLAN

OBJECTIVES

- * Revitalize the group tour market in Mississippi and educate our group tour industry partners on the changing trends.
- * Develop and implement new system for determining the increase/decrease of the escorted domestic tour business to Mississippi.
- * Increase awareness of Mississippi as a vacation destination to domestic tour operators, travel planners and the group trade industry
- * Increase the frequency and duration of Mississippi tours developed, tour visits, number of motorcoach passengers and number of retail agents selling vacation packages to Mississippi.

STRATEGY I

- * Secure available data on motorcoach travel in Mississippi for in-house database, economic impact trends, tracking and benchmarking.

ACTION PLANS

- * Recognize the key group tour leaders in Mississippi and work with them to develop a benchmark tracking system for domestic group tours
- * Develop benchmark tracking system for motorcoach reporting with Mississippi Convention and Visitors Bureaus, tourism organizations, and tourism entities servicing the escorted tour market.
- * Submit quarterly the Mississippi Welcome Center Motorcoach Report Lead Program to tourism organizations.
- * Further develop major group travel operator company profiles (Contactwise or MDA designated program) for individual follow-up and future solicitation (trace system).

- * Submit regular group tour inquiry and trade show appointment lead reports to Mississippi CVBs/tourism organizations; encourage reciprocal leads between State and local destination marketing organizations; encourage local dissemination of leads.
- * Continue tour operator/ travel agent lead system through the Mississippi Inquiries Center.
- * Coordinate group travel/trade information on the internet. Track hits/visits made monthly on domestic group tour page located at www.visitmississippi.org.

STRATEGY II

- * Increase level of awareness of Mississippi as a destination through participation in major industry associations, direct contact at trade shows and marketplaces, and through travel organization's promotional programs.

ACTION PLANS

- * Maintain membership in travel industry associations:
 - National Tour Association
 - American Bus Association
 - Travel South USA
 - Bank Travel
 - African American Travel Conference
 - United States Tour Operators Association
 - Florida Motorcoach Association
 - Alabama Motorcoach Association
 - Tennessee Motorcoach Association
 - Student Youth Travel Association of North America
 - TAP into Southern Treasures
- * Participate in the following domestic travel/trade shows:

2009

August 3-5	South Central Motorcoach Marketplace	Mobile, AL
August 20-22	Going on Faith	Grapevine, TX
August 28-September 1	SYTA Conference	Norfolk, VA
September 14-17	Florida Motorcoach Marketplace	Pensacola, FL
November 13-18	NTA Marketplace	Reno, NV

2010

January 15-17	ABA Marketplace	National Harbor, MD
February 7-10	Tennessee Motorcoach Association	Chattanooga, TN
February 23-27	UMA Motorcoach Expo	Las Vegas, NV
April TBD	Travel South Showcase	Birmingham, AL

- * Depending on budget items will research possibilities of sales calls in a market city and will look at special tour operator promotions/tradeshows as opportunities arise

STRATEGY III

- * Develop sales aids and promotional materials

ACTION PLANS

- * Broaden development of suggested itineraries/theme tours as needed.
- * Distribute inexpensive gifts (magnets, pens, etc...) to group leaders as incentive to notify us when groups are coming to Mississippi
- * Update Mississippi generic slides on CD rom as needed.
- * Produce Mississippi promotional items to compliment specific promotional endeavors and campaigns. (new escort manual)

STRATEGY IV

- * Develop effective programs and relationships with the tourism industry both in-state and on a regional and national level to produce an expanded awareness of Mississippi as a vacation destination.

ACTION PLANS

- * Sponsor closing dinners and events at tradeshows with those companies that have received meeting incentive funds to host their tradeshow in Mississippi the following year if the bid is awarded to Mississippi (Tennessee Motorcoach and South Central Motorcoach are currently approved to receive funds if Mississippi is selected).

- * Plan and provide grassroots tourism development assistance to Mississippi communities by servicing local domestic group tour industry's needs in identifying, developing and promoting group travel products in a particular area/region.
- * Develop tour operator recognition program with in-state industry partners that will allow us to target 10-15 top tour operators with promotions, mailings and incentives
- * Organize pre-convention caucus in Jackson to discuss tips of sales appointments at tradeshow and trends of the group travel market.
- * Conduct post-convention caucuses for the Mississippi delegation following the destination marketing organization exchange at both the NTA and ABA Marketplaces.
- * Maintain and update local CVB and supplier group travel representative list.
- * Target group tour operators that attend Student & Youth Travel Association and send them a "Back to School" gift to let them know we will miss seeing them at the marketplace in 2008
- * Continue to seek development of regional tour programs with the bordering states of Tennessee, Alabama, Louisiana and Arkansas, specifically Civil Rights tour operator program.
- * Participate in trade/group travel educational seminars as opportunities arise.

STRATEGY V

- * Develop trade advertising and promotions to increase the tour operator's awareness of Mississippi's group travel product.

ACTION PLANS

- * Coordinate the continuation of Mississippi's trade advertising efforts in the major travel/trade publications.
 Florida Motorcoach Tennessee Motorcoach
 South Central Motorcoach Going on Faith
 Bank Travel
- * Contract with North American Journeys for continuation of Mississippi's Online Itinerary and Destination Profile listing on their website.

(Contract expense split with International)

- * Organize mailings to let tour operators/travel delegates know if not attending marketplace in FY09 and to continue promotion of state

STRATEGY VI

- * Develop an awareness of Mississippi itineraries and offerings by showing tour operators, travel planners and travel agents the State firsthand (familiarization tours).

ACTION PLANS

- * Host and coordinate Post Travel South Showcase FAM tours. visits for qualified tour operators on an individual basis as opportunities arise and when deemed necessary.
- * Consider possibilities of hosting smaller FAM tours and offering site visits to specific tour operators throughout the year as the budget will allow.
- * Provide assistance to local communities and the Mississippi Tourism Associations in planning FAM tours for qualified tour planners, tour operators and travel agents.
- * Continue to actively pursue co-operative FAM tours with Louisiana, Tennessee, Alabama, and Arkansas.