

# MARKETING CHANNELS

For Tour &  
Activity Operators



Written by [Ahmed Samir](#)

# Marketing Channels for Tour & Activity Operators

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# Foreword



Modern-day travelers are picky. They expect to be catered to and served almost before they know it. On the other hand, the online market is getting more competitive. If you're in the tour & activity business, you know how hard it can be to attract new customers.

Sending a booking request to a guest? Offer a discount. Conducting a survey after a tour? Add a question for feedback. Planning a new tour? Run an ad on Facebook. These are examples of growth hacks that competitive tour operators and activity providers are performing.

If you want to grow your tour and activity business by finding new customers or encouraging repeat bookings through various digital marketing channels, this guide will help you identify the most effective channels and show you how to optimize your marketing and distribution efforts.

**Ahmed Samir**  
Marketing Lead

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# How to build an effective marketing and sales strategy for tour & activity operators



How often have you heard that the travel industry is set to grow in the next decade and beyond? It's true that there is a lot of potential for this industry and that it's only going to get bigger. All around the world, we're seeing both travelers and businesses growing in numbers.

With an increasing number of consumers comes an increase in distribution channels, as well as tourism opportunities.

Getting your tours to the right people at the right time is easy when you've included the proper channels in your [marketing](#) and distribution mix. To help you define your next strategy, we have created a list of the most effective options and the best practices for each one of them.

# Website



Your website can become your most important sales channel, especially when you can sell your [tours](#) and activities directly to consumers.

With your very own website, you get to craft a unique customer experience from the very start. How? By letting people make bookings when they want to, whether that's far in advance or at the very last minute, accepting online payments, and more. By offering your customers more flexibility, you instantly improve the overall customer experience.

Based on Arival's Recovery Survey of October 2020, website bookings grew from 36% in 2019 to 40% in 2020 for tours and activities and from 43% to 53% for attractions over the same period, making it the most important sales channel. However, a diversified distribution mix will always be better to enhance Tour Operators reach rather than relying on a single distribution channel.

That said, it can be hard to know where to start when you want to build a website. [Building a website](#) is like building a house. It would be best if you had a solid foundation. Your foundation is your [domain name](#), [website hosting](#), and your site's overall look and feel.



Next, you lay the foundation for each page on your site. The foundation for each page is the title tag, meta description, and keywords that you use throughout the page. Remember that search engines are looking at your entire website, not just one page! Your goal is to have all your pages rank well so that all your webpages are drawing visitors to your site. Need tips to optimize your website pages and drive traffic to them? Check out our [SEO checklist](#). While a functional website is essential for establishing your brand, it's only the start. Once you have a site, you want to make sure you're getting solid performance on key metrics. That's where optimization efforts come in.

## How could you improve your website performance?

- Analyze your potential audience to understand how your website's users want to interact with it.
- Have a responsive website so it looks good on all screen sizes: It should be designed so that it is optimized for mobile users.
- A successful website is scalable, which means that it's flexible enough to be adapted to both present and future business needs.
- Choose a Content Management System (CMS) that is suitable for your business needs. Among the most popular ones on the market, we can mention [WordPress](#), [HubSpot](#), [Joomla](#), and [Wix](#).
- Don't forget to include calls to action. Build brand credibility by including social proof.
- Connect your tour and activity business to a booking solution like my website [as-educate](#) to enable website sales.

# Resellers



Reselling enables you to get your products in front of thousands or even millions of potential customers. You can choose resellers according to their geographical coverage, language capabilities, pricing policies, and [payment methods](#) supported.

Resellers also help expand your [product range](#) with their own branded products that complement your portfolio. They act as intermediaries between suppliers and customers and bring you additional sales that you wouldn't have otherwise obtained.

The rise of online marketplaces has opened up new distribution channels for tour and activity operators.

The benefits of working with a third-party online marketplace include:

- **Making it easier for potential customers to find you:** It's tough to gain exposure in the competitive travel market, but online marketplaces expose you to millions of potential customers.
- **Access to sales channels:** Most online platforms resell their inventory on other channels such as airlines, and hotel websites, or work with larger distributors in the industry. This sort of access to sales channels would be difficult or impossible for most operators to create.
- **Scalability:** You can expand your reach without developing additional marketing infrastructure.

# Why consider a reseller?

A reseller's proven ability to create engaging content, drive traffic, and convert visitors into paying customers is the ticket to success for tour and activity operators. It allows operators to focus on what they do best – designing great tours and activities – while also taking advantage of the reseller's capabilities in online marketing.

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# Challenges of working with resellers

**[Building a business](#)** as a tour and activity operator requires lots of work.

Managing your schedule, tracking bookings, uploading your tours to OTAs, and constantly optimizing the experiences you offer are just some of the most time-consuming admin tasks that need to be considered. Finding a solution to manage your business on a single platform can be challenging, and collaborating with multiple OTAs with different booking flows isn't easy. You have to know when you have tours available in each one of them, and which ones are sold out so you can pack new tours for the next day or week, or month.

Just imagine if you could get rid of all the hassle that comes with this.

Here's where Application Programming Interfaces APIs can help.



## Content API

With a Content API, businesses only need to update one platform, typically their reservation system. The API then shares their tours and activities information across all connected **[OTA channels](#)**, removing the need to manually copy and paste text across all sales channels.



# Availability API

Providers use the Availability API to share their schedules and availability with multiple OTAs by loading them onto just one platform. These can be either reservation systems or suppliers who upload product information via the supplier extranet and map this with their Channel Manager.

To simplify and streamline operations, tour and activity operators can use a unified content and availability API that helps you share both content and availability with resellers.

With as little effort as a few clicks, operators can choose which tours they want to share on which platforms, and from there, they can truly maximize their revenue.

When it comes to the leading Channel Manager available on the market today, we can mention ExperienceBank. This solution will offer you a unified API to connect suppliers, booking systems like as-educate, and distributors with each other, helping you to better manage your tours and availability



# Google My Business



It's important to tell people about your business. It's also essential to be found when people are searching for you.

If you're a tour or activity operator, starting with a Google My Business account makes sense.

The process for creating an account is relatively straightforward. You'll provide some basic information about your business, add some photos, and then your location information. Once you've done all of that, you'll start getting reviews from customers. It would also be beneficial to add your social media accounts, which is a good idea since Google will use them in its review listings.

Suppose you're running a good business and getting decent reviews consistently over time. In that case, you should see your search rankings improve pretty quickly.

## Best practices for Google My Business

- Make sure your business name and address are written in the same format and in the same order every time you cite your business.
- Verify that your current location is correct by including accurate coordinates.
- Geotag your photos to help search engines understand the geographical relevance of the images you're sharing.
- Post new business updates regularly to showcase your company's activities.

It's simple to do ([click here to get started](#)).

# Social Media



**Social media marketing** has become essential for tour and activity operators to reach their customers, build relationships, and keep up with what they are saying.

It's also an opportunity to share information about new destinations, tours, packages, and specials, and promote destinations that are not usually well known but have great potential.

Social media creates opportunities to build communities around travel experiences.

- **YouTube** videos are another way to get people interested in travel by showing them what it's like to be part of a specific experience.
- **Facebook** is a great place to create a community around your brand, post news stories about new destinations or attractions, and share photos from your adventures.
- **Twitter** is more about instant updates from the people you follow. Instagram is a visual platform that works well for sharing photos of destinations, tours, and activities.
- **Pinterest** can get people thinking about travel by sharing pictures of beautiful destinations around the world. It's also an excellent tool for driving traffic back to your website or blog by pinning photos from the trips or tours you offer.

Although many tours and activity operators have successfully used Facebook and Instagram for promotion, we know it's not all rosy. Now more than ever, we need to be more creative and innovative with our social media strategies, especially with the younger generation of travelers.

That's why we also suggest you take a look at [TikTok](#). TikTok is a free video app that allows users to create videos with added music and effects. With over 500 million users worldwide, including 200 million monthly active users in the U.S., this platform offers unprecedented opportunities for tour and activity operators to connect with new customers.

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## Best practices for social media marketing

- Be authentic and social, and show off your unique brand personality to attract customers.
- Share content that engages people and establishes your expertise. We strongly recommend you consider adding video to your content marketing strategy.
- Address health and safety concerns, and provide solutions or alternatives.
- Be present where your potential customers are.
- Try new channels that are not yet saturated and could offer greater organic reach.

# Influencer Marketing



Influencer marketing is becoming an increasingly trendy tool for tour and activity operators. Many already use it to generate publicity for their business.

How does it work? Influencers are typically people with large social media followings who can promote your product to their networks. An influencer's followers trust them because they perceive them as experts in that niche. Thus, when an influencer endorses a product or service, followers feel trust and rely on the endorsement.

The best influencers are those who are passionate about the activity you're promoting. If someone running a travel blog loves hiking, they're more likely to produce high-quality content that will engage their existing audience and drive new traffic to your website.

When [choosing an influencer](#), make sure they have a similar target audience as your business. Keep in mind that a large social media following doesn't always equate to good influencer marketing. You want to pick someone who has a relevant following and is active on social media - posting regular updates and engaging with people on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram can help.

The idea behind influencer marketing is that a person with a large online following will promote your product or service in exchange for a fee. This strategy makes it essential to get your influencers to sign agreements that permit you to use their images and content in marketing materials.

Tour and activity operators can use influencer marketing to increase their online visibility and drive more traffic to their websites.



## Main considerations

- Define your target audience and goals.
- Identify the channels in which your target audience is spending most of their time.
- Micro-influencers, or social media users with small but dedicated followings, could prove helpful for Tour Operators looking to engage more personally with their audience without breaking the bank.



# Search Ads



**Search ads** are the most effective tactics for driving traffic to your website, securing a 30% higher click-through rate than other types of advertising.

It is crucial to understand the three major components involved in running a successful campaign to improve search ad results. These are Keyword research, targeting, and landing page optimization.

## Main considerations

- Analyze your audience's search intent to make sure you are creating ads that attract their attention.
- The keywords you choose must be relevant to your business but also the users' search.
- For visitors to have a positive user experience, you should consider matching the copy of your ad with that on the landing page. Always be consistent with the content you deliver

# Email marketing



Email marketing is an excellent way to promote your business and inform customers about the latest offers and promotions. It is also a good channel for customer retention as an alternative to phone calls or social media updates.

You can reach out to your customers directly by sending them promotional offers and [newsletters](#) about new additions to your business with email marketing. It is an effective way of engaging with your audience and converting them into loyal customers.

## Email Marketing Guide

Click below to find the ultimate email marketing tips and tricks



[Download Now](#)

# Conclusion



**No single marketing and distribution channel will work in isolation. Successful marketing and sales strategy is a holistic process that requires integrating all of the above channels where appropriate.**

**Online marketing offers the most cost-effective way to find new customers. The challenge is to know how to set up and optimize your online marketing efforts.**

**On the distribution side, a booking solution like as-educate powered by a channel manager like ExperienceBank can help a supplier distribute its tours and activities more efficiently.**

**Regardless of which distribution platform you choose to use, the more seamlessly you can incorporate it into your overall tours and availability strategy, the better off you will be.**

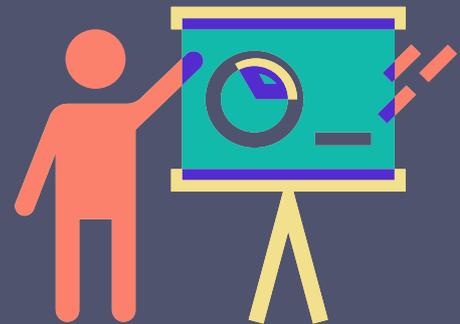
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