



Group Travel Product Development Opportunities & Marketing for Binational Regions

May 1, 2009

Barbara Hughes



A Division of AAA Western and Central New York



- Retail & Affinity Groups
 - Benefits of retail vs affinity groups
 - Some flexibility – look at regional touring differently for groups
 - Traditional Motorcoach – motorcoach transportation, accommodations, attractions, dining
 - Drive Market - Accommodations, attractions, dining
 - One Day Tours - attractions, dining



A Division of AAA Western and Central New York



What is needed for an itinerary to sell?

- Attractions - include free and paid admissions
- Restaurants - group friendly menu selection, restrooms, price/value, accessibility
- Transportation - midweek most affordable and assists transportation companies
- Theatre - midweek matinee
- Guides - docents are our best regional guides. They have a real passion and it extends to our travelers, enriching experiences
- Visitor Readiness – more than taking a reservation for the groups arrival



A Division of AAA Western and Central New York



What are group travelers asking for?

- Not the cheapest or the fanciest, but the most value for their money
- Value – Quality & Choice
- New destinations or a twist on an old one – connecting the destination for the group travelers
- One Day Tours and more of them.....
- Did someone say “Free Lunch”



A Division of AAA Western and Central New York



Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative

- Our group leaders would rather not deal with their travelers understanding the required documentation
- Get my trip booked to Canada before June 1, 2009
- Concern about the delays and hassles for their travelers
 - Seniors looking for an alternative to this options



A Division of AAA Western and Central New York



Removing the Barriers

- Passport Days

- Get your passport photo taken on site, plus take advantage of other specials while in the office. A County Clerk will be on hand to process new passports. Reservations required.
- Held at AAA offices, Town Clerk locations – need to increase opportunities i.e.. Senior Citizen Centers

BiNational Ambassadors

- Introduce history of the boarder crossings, on-board video
- Personal escort while crossing the bridge – make it interesting instead of an objection





Product Development & Marketing

- Preferred vendors and support
 - Give regional tour operators who are business professionals the ability to be competitive
 - negative or positive – US tour company regulation in NY state
 - marketing & sales support
- Deliver “high touch service” to us as potential customers who can move the group market share for the region
- Marketing collateral that promotes sales from the buyer



A Division of AAA Western and Central New York



Sales Efforts That Help Us, the Buyers

- Sales calls to buyers that are more effective
- Quarterly updates and introduction to new programs, festivals, special events
- Help us connect the dots for our customers

