

DESIGNING A TOURISM BROCHURE ***for a tourism business***

Tourism businesses are spending large sums each year producing brochures to promote their accommodation, attraction, hospitality venue, retail outlet or other business.

The aim being to persuade potential visitors to become customers.

Many tourism businesses have no access to a reference to guide them with development of their brochure. As a result, brochures are often produced with emphasis on the secondary information with the most important information not being highlighted.

This reference paper outlines how tourism businesses can use their existing marketing budget to far greater business results.

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Please feel free to make this paper available in full or in part to others who may be interested in a more successful tourism industry for regional Australia.

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For most tourism businesses their brochure is their most important merchandising tool. Customers and the travel industry often decide to buy the product or service based on the standard of the brochure and the information it contains.

PRINCIPLES

For a brochure for a tourism business to be competitive and to motivate customers to buy, there is a need to follow certain principles as follows:

1. BUSINESS OBJECTIVES FOR THE BROCHURE

Before design work begins, the business objectives for the brochure need to be clear.

Why is the brochure being produced? First and foremost, the role of brochures is to lead to business being written by attracting customers.

However brochures can have different purposes. Some examples would be to

- highlight a new feature
- sell packages
- counter an adverse image or competitive shortcoming
- fill idle capacity in a quiet period
- tap into a new market segment
- feature a special offer in co-operation with another operator

The objective of the brochure needs to be clearly understood.

Also to be considered are the market segments to be targeted by the brochure. What are their special interests? If trying to win new business from honeymooners and couples celebrating anniversaries, copy which appeals to fishermen or lawn bowlers is not appropriate.

2. THINK CUSTOMER, THINK CUSTOMER, THINK CUSTOMER

Successful brochures show an empathy for customers needs and aspirations. They concentrate on providing the information which will assist the customer to make a purchase or booking.

Too often operators are more concerned about what they want to say, rather than what the customer wants to read.

Important rule. If the customer is not enthused or impressed, it is unlikely they will choose to buy your product

Websites – partners with brochures

With so many travellers now turning to websites for information for travel plans, it is essential that brochures and websites for any business be a reflection of each other with themes. Information and pics.

Brochures also need to promote their website address even at the foot of the front cover. Some put the website address on each page but this is not recommended. Every business certainly needs to put the website address on the back page in the “Call to Action” section.

Websites need to promote their brochures. It is not difficult to show an icon for downloading an electronic copy of the brochure. This means instant delivery for the client and saves on postage.

3. UNIQUE SELLING FEATURES

Before designing any brochure, the unique selling features should be determined (based on customer needs and desires) and prioritised for maximum impact.

Other features should be noted also. Relevant information should be included but it should be accepted that some information may need to be omitted. *Too much detail can be counter-productive.*

4. FORMAT AND DESIGN

No matter whether the brochure is a one page leaflet or multiple pages, certain fundamentals need to be followed for success.

The information needs to be presented in an order consistent with the principles of AIDA

- A Attention
- I Interest
- D Desire
- A call to Action (see Note)

This is the sequence followed to motivate customers to actually make a purchase. First the interest of the customer must be secured with a front cover that gets their attention. From there further interest is generated by the supporting text and illustrations, design ,etc. This then builds the desire for more information and lastly, the Call to Action when the customer makes a decision to buy (or at least contact a Visitor Information Centre or website for further information or to make a booking). It is a natural progression.

Information should be shown in such a way that travel consultants and consumers can scan it quickly.

Note: Call to action - This is the "Contact details" information to help customers to make contact easier for information and bookings. Details are shown on page 4 under the heading "Back page"

5. USE THE RIGHT APPROACH WITH COPY

Customers of tourism products and services are usually seeking an experience of some kind ie. enjoyment, excitement, relaxation, adventure, romance, indulgence, comfort, etc. Any copy that is written should demonstrate an understanding of customer desires and needs. The copy needs to be emotive wherever possible.

Claims about the product should be believable and valid.

Sub-heading and 'point-form' presentations are preferred by readers and travel consultants. Long narrative style paragraphs should be avoided. Long paragraphs without visual relief should also be avoided.

IMPORTANT: Copy to be avoided would be a "statement of fact" style which leans more to showing pride in the product rather than demonstrating the WIIFM¹ factor for customers.

6. MAPS

IMPORTANT: A good map showing location and access routes should be included usually on the back page together with the contact details (see also page 4).

Customers need to know how to find you. Also the location of the town shopping area should be shaded on the map as many travellers use this as a reference point when planning their travel

¹ WIIFM - What's in it for me?

7. IMAGES

Selection of photographs is critical for success. Some do's and don'ts.

DO chose photographs that reflect the target market. If target markets cross several age groups do choose young adults as subjects. Older people like going to places where there are young people but not vice-versa.

DO chose photographs that best reflect the experiences to be enjoyed.

DO include suitable people in photographs wherever possible.

DO chose photos that show people enjoying themselves. After all, this is why most people travel.

DONT use photographs that look like amateur family snapshots

DONT use family photographs or photographs of mature age travellers or business travellers though these are important market segments, these may only be appropriate if specifically targeting these markets. Images of these groups (and to an extent, children) can be counterproductive in trying to enthuse the leisure traveller to select your product.

DO REMEMBER: Family travel is mostly restricted to 12 weeks pa. Non-family travel covers the other 40 weeks pa!

DONT have photos with people showing their backs to the camera if it can be avoided.

8. USE OF TYPE FACES, PICTURES AND COLOURS

Many brochures lose their impact because of a lack of consistency in presentation of typefaces, colours and pictures. Some sponsors of brochures allow their personal creative tastes to over-ride the primary commercial need which is to impress potential customers.

Type faces to be used should be appropriate to the image and positioning of the product. The variety of type faces (fonts) should be kept to a minimum, preferably one and no more than two.

The size of the type face (font) for the text should not be too small particularly for mature age customers.

If the brochure is to have less than four colours, careful consideration should be given to colours. Options include

- one colour on coloured paper, or
- two colours

Use of three colours is usually not economical. It is advisable to discuss the economics involved with your printer before deciding the number of colours.

Photographs are normally preferable but sometimes a good line drawing can be very effective.

9. SEQUENCE OF PRESENTATION

When producing a brochure the correct sequence is essential and will bring better results from customers and travel consultants. As an example this is the recommended approach for a four page brochure.

Front cover. First impressions are most important. The design should be simple and not complicated. Avoid the temptation to "say too much" with pictures and copy. A simple message will have more impact.

Top of the brochure should comprise either the name of the business and/or a statement defining the product as well as the location. An example

Mountain Top Motel - Hobart

A promotional statement is an option to excite the reader further. An example

Fabulous mountain and river views

The front cover picture/s (photo or illustration) need to reflect the “promise” or major appeal of the product or service being promoted.

For the Mountain Top Motel, this could be a photo looking over the shoulder of a seated guest who is admiring the view.

The bottom of the front cover could be used to reinforce any other features which may interest prospective customers. As an example

Motel's chain logo
or
Hospitality that is out of this world

Page 2. At the top of the page should be a heading which attracts attention. As an example the heading on page 2 could be

So much to enjoy

This could be supported with sub-headings, other statements and pictures to raise interest like

Great ways to relax

Great food and wine

Great rooms for a good sleep

Emphasis on this page should be directed at raising interest and the desire to buy.

Page 3. This page should provide detailed information which the customer may require such as product description, nearby attractions, food and wine features, nearby sporting facilities, etc.

It is not normal to show prices in accommodation brochures, inserts can be used if required.

Back page. The top half can be used to promote other features or a map. Travel consultants and many customers prefer to have the **map** on the back page for ease of reference.

The lower half is the “action” or “contact details’ area. Here should be shown

- the name, logo and address of the business
- telephone and fax numbers
- website address
- e-mail address
- computerised reservation system codes (if accepting travel industry bookings)

- white blank space of adequate size for travel agency or sales agent stamp. Looking after retail agents is so important if travel industry support is being sought as part of the marketing strategy.
- accreditation logo, logos of awards that may have been won, etc.

More than four pages

If the brochure has more than four pages the same sequence and principles apply.

10. DISTRIBUTION

Important considerations for any brochure are the arrangements for display and distribution.

When designing the front cover, it must suit all brochure racks. Important information must be at the top and easily seen when a display in the rack.

The size of the brochure should suit ease of mailing. Brochures arriving creased spoil the impact required. The standard sizes prevalent today are DL (210mm x 100mm) and A4 (300mm x 210mm). Some choose A5 (150mm x 210mm) but these are unpopular with most travel agents and some Visitor Information Centres. The size is also inconvenient for postage. The A5 size and non-standard sizes should be avoided for these reasons. Non-standard sizes are also an uneconomic use of paper.

Brochures with horizontal front covers or of a non-standard size are usually relegated to the bottom of the brochure rack.

Victoria has moved to produce A5 size destination brochures and brochure racks have been modified to accommodate this size.

11. PLANNING

Before starting to plan the brochure and before \$1.00 is spent on design development, it is strongly recommended that the brochure sponsor prepare a written Brochure Brief. Appendix A is a check list of issues which need to be addressed.

Once each issue has been considered, decisions should be recorded to avoid vacillation during the development process which can prove very expensive. So often production costs are incurred when changes are made because of a lack of adequate prior consideration.

If several people are involved in producing the brochure, it is wise to get agreement on each point in advance of production so as to avoid costly changes later.

HINTS & TIPS

Appendix B sets out at random, a number of helpful hints and tips which may prove useful.

APPENDIX A

BROCHURE BRIEF

The following issues need to be addressed before production begins. It is strongly recommended your resolution of these issues be committed to paper so that

- the design artist or printer retained to produce the brochure has a clear understanding of requirements. A written brief avoids disputes and costly changes later
- as time progresses, factors behind decisions are forgotten which can lead to changes during production. **Changes cost money**
- time is saved. Making all decisions “up front” speeds production and saves money.

To be considered are

Marketing objectives	What are the marketing aims of the brochure eg. new features, off-season promotion etc.
Business objectives of the brochure	How will the brochure support planned marketing activities? What business is being targeted?
Branding	Is the brochure to strengthen the branding or even launch a new branding for the business.
Markets	What are the primary markets for the brochure? What other markets are to be serviced?
Travel Industry	Will the brochure be distributed through the travel industry? Will it be used by the travel industry as a reference? If so what additional considerations are important?
Copy style	What style of writing is to be used? Is it emotive and exciting? Is it easy for the customer to read and understand.
Images	What pictures are to be used? Are present photographs suitable for a high standard brochure? Are new photographs required?
Map/s	What map/s are required?
Content	What are the important features to be highlighted? What are the other features or information of importance to the customer? As an example, an attractions business may need days and times of opening or set departure times for tours or cruises.
Format	Will the brochure be A4 or DL? If another size is desired what distribution issues must be considered? How many colours? How many pages? Information, pics and maps for each page? Front cover layout? Back cover layout? Any logos to be shown, if so, where? Date of issue on back page is important unless a period of validity is shown on the front cover.

Production	<p>Production schedule needs to consider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• when brochure production starts• when brochure mock-up and draft copy will be available• how much time will be needed to check the mock-up and draft copy• when brochure proof will be available for you to check• after brochure is approved for printing how long before brochure is printed• will the brochure producer arrange printing or will the brochure producer supply the necessary artwork to your chosen printer. This transfer is usually done electronically but not always• if a colour brochure, when will the “chem-proof” be available• date brochure will be delivered to the brochure distribution agent or to the client
Distribution	<p>What is the brochure distribution plan?</p> <p>What reserve stocks will be held and by whom?</p> <p>How are the brochure stocks replenished at Visitor Information Centres and other locations eg. attractions brochures are often available in hotel and motel foyers?</p>
Budget	<p>How many copies are to be printed?</p> <p>What are production costs including copy writing and photo shoots?</p> <p>What are distribution and storage costs?</p> <p>What budget is available for production, printing, distribution and storage. Is it adequate?</p>

HINTS & TIPS

The following hints and tips are worth considering.

1. Before starting the project, collect a variety of brochures and examine them as if you are a customer. If you are an attractions operator, dining experience or accommodation provider chose brochures from your field.

By examining the concept, design, pictures, maps, information and copy style as customers you will soon see the good points to be noted and the bad points to be avoided.

The big question to be asked “which brochures enthuse you most as a prospective customer?”

2. Be mindful of printing costs. Talk to a printer about your plans before finalising your Brochure Brief. Printers will alert you to savings which can be achieved.
3. Paper stock is very important. Flimsy brochures do not stand up in brochure racks. Also the paper weight (if too light) can mean print showing through.

Is glossy stock better than a flat stock? This is something else to discuss with your printer. Most brochures are 80-90 gsm (grams per square metre) but some brochures use heavier stock if they are trying to create an image of being an upmarket product. However this is more expensive. This also means less copies can be stored in brochure racks when on display.

4. The front cover design of a brochure is crucial. If the customer does not lift it from a brochure rack, business opportunities are lost.

Avoid at all costs a horizontal format. These DO NOT work in brochure racks. Also they don't easily fit the reading style of the reader. It is better to stay with the upright or 'portrait' format.

5. “A picture is worth a thousand words” is a famous statement. It certainly applies to brochures. If good pics can be used, the customer gets the message more quickly particularly if each pic is accompanied with an explanatory note or caption.
6. If you are writing your own copy that is fine provided you ensure independent assessments are obtained. It is suggested you approach people with an understanding of what you are trying to achieve. Visitor Information Centre staff or other industry people are best. They will tell you whether you are “getting your message across”.

If you choose someone to write the copy for you, ensure they are well briefed. The quality of their work is usually directly relative to the quality of the briefing.

If a professional “wordsmith” is used, they may prefer to use a style which is not your first choice. Be careful this may just be better than what you have in mind. The important question is “does this style deliver the information enthuses the customer to buy?”