

New to Group Travel



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR GROUP TRAVEL NEWCOMERS

GROUPS
TODAY

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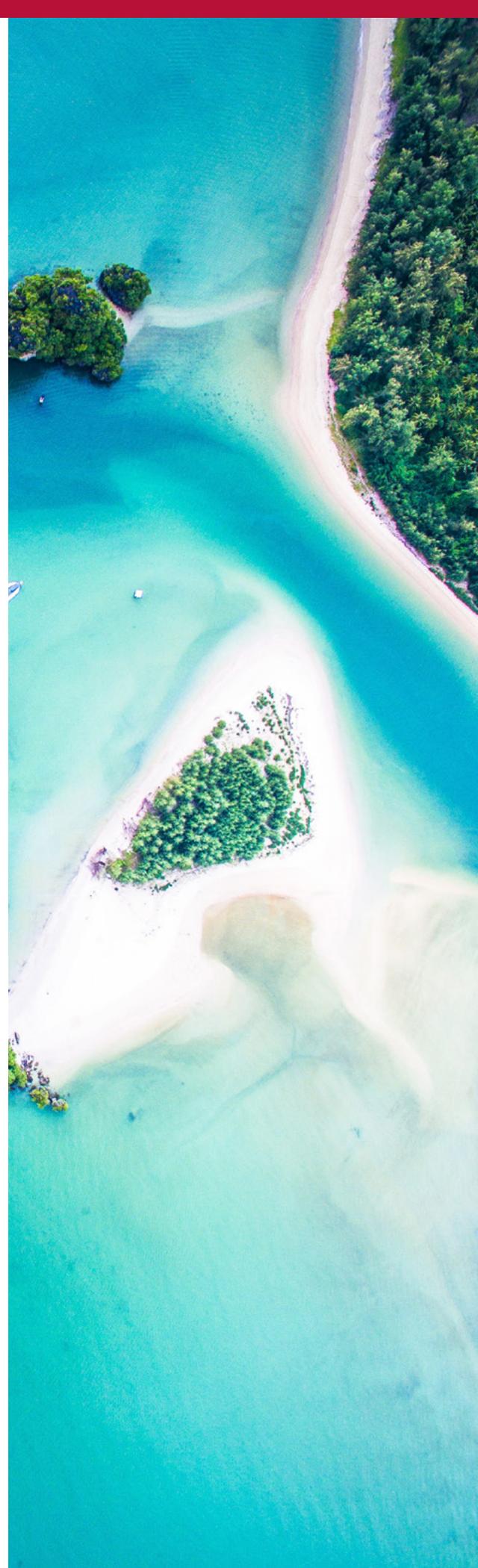
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Break the Tourism Code

Those of us who have been around a while throw out names of tradeshow, types of visitors and industry-specific terms as a type of shorthand that only insiders can follow. But for those of you who are new to the tourism industry, all those three-letter terms can be confusing. And few people are brave enough to stop a conversation and ask, “What does VFR mean?”

On the following pages is a short dictionary of all these terms. Share with someone else in the industry and they will be so thankful that they might buy your next drink at the bar!

Every industry has an alphabet soup of acronyms and tourism isn't any different.



Types of Visitors

VFR: *Visiting Friends and Relatives.* | This type of visitor can be an individual, a family group or parents visiting college students. They can stay in your lodging or stay with family. The value to these visitors is that they come any time of year and can come multiple times. Their activities are usually suggested by the family members that live in your destination. So, marketing efforts for VFR often focus on area residents.

FIT: *Foreign Independent Traveler.* | This acronym is also known as shorthand for similar terms like Financially Independent Traveler, but they all describe the same type of guest. Someone who plans her own itinerary and travels by car. She might work with a travel agency to get help booking flights, hotels and some VIP level attractions, but she is in control of her day. FIT travelers are booking more and more by themselves online with the rise of the internet. Companies that specialize in FIT visitors often have a niche they service—they concentrate on a destination such as the U.S. or they provide high-level service and unique offerings.

Tradeshows

Tradeshows are the lifeblood of our industry. Salespeople at attractions and DMOs are often on the road traveling to these shows. Each one targets a specific market, but the goal is always the same: to build business relationships that translate into bookings.

INTERNATIONAL

ITB: *Spring trade show in Berlin.* | Destinations from all over the world market to the European travel trade (businesses in the travel industry).

IPW: *International Pow Wow.* | The show formerly known as Pow Wow. You can tell how long someone has been in the industry if they still refer to this show as Pow Wow! A U.S.-based show that changes location every year. Travel trade from all over the world come to this show to learn about U.S. destinations and attractions.

WTM: *World Travel Market.* | A November trade show in London. Destinations from all over the world market to the European travel trade (businesses in the travel industry).

IITA: *International Inbound Travel Association.* | A membership-based organization for international tour

business. They have a tradeshow and other events.

RTO SUMMIT: *This set of trade shows consists of RTO West, RTO East, RTO Orlando, and Active America China.* | These are smaller, more boutique-style shows with a day of educational sessions built in.

TRAVEL SOUTH | This large regional organization represents the southern states and has international sales missions as well as an International Showcase each year.

GOWEST SUMMIT | A large trade show for the Western U.S. states. Specifically for international tour operators and suppliers.

DISCOVER NEWENGLAND SUMMIT | Can you guess what geographical region this trade show promotes? Ayuh, as they say in Maine, the six New England States. This first-quarter show has international tour operators from many countries attend.

GROUP TOUR TRADESHOWS

ABA: *American Bus Association.* | An annual tradeshow for the group tour market, mostly U.S. and Canada suppliers and buyers. Well over 4,000 attendees and a new location every year.

NTA: *National Tour Association.* | Another annual tradeshow for the group tour market, mostly U.S. and Canada suppliers and buyers. Over 3,000 attendees and a new location every year. NTA approves Chinese

tour companies that want to do business in the U.S., so there are often Chinese tour operators at this show.

HEARTLAND TRAVEL SHOWCASE: *A group tour tradeshow primarily for the Midwest states.* | Tour suppliers have booths and the tour operators walk for appointments. Locations changes annually.

PBA: *Pennsylvania Bus Association.* | A regional show for the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. Tour suppliers have booths and the tour operators walk for appointments.



Types of Jobs

DOS: *Director of Sales.* | The person who is responsible for bringing in the guests and developing strategies and tactics to achieve the targeted numbers.

MOD: *Manager on Duty.* | Often a hotel responsibility, but some attractions have this as well. The Manager on Duty role is an assigned but rotating position. This is the person in charge after regular business hours. MODs have responsibilities on nights, weekends and holidays.

TPA: *Tourism Promotion Agency.* | Similar to a DMO—see below.

DMO: *Destination Marketing Organization, similar to a TPA.* | Because why not confuse everyone?

CVB: *Convention and Visitors Bureau.* | Typically, this is the name of a DMO that also has convention facilities. But not always the case; these three terms are interchangeable, so don't panic if you use one instead of the other. ■

International Bathroom Etiquette

When you've got to go, you've got to go. Trust us: You don't want to wait until that exact moment while traveling abroad to try and figure out what the local etiquette and standards are for bathrooms. We've broken it down so when the time comes, groups will be ready.

You may be flying by the seat of your pants on an international trip of a lifetime, but doing your research on loos around the world is imperative. Groups will need to be aware that bathrooms may be called something different in other countries. For example, they may encounter water closets in many European countries abbreviated as "WC" in addition to "dunny" in Australia and "ben-jo" in Japan. Luckily, the man/woman images are a pretty universal indicator and widely used around the world so even if groups aren't sure, they can still get a pretty good idea of what's up. Some public restrooms in [Europe](#) are gender neutral, so even better!

As absurd as it may seem, groups should keep in mind that some bathrooms require you to pay a small fee before using them, so you never want to be caught short on cash or coin at any point—this is common in large cities in Europe: [London](#), [Paris](#), Amsterdam, et cetera. If there's a bathroom attendant, groups should be sure to tip them—just as they would in the United States.

Unless groups have been rustic camping or happen to be a group of 12-year-olds running around late on



Halloween night, chances are they're not accustomed to carrying around their own toilet paper. However, there are countries that require it and you don't want to end up out of luck. Examples include parts of Thailand, Korea and [China](#).

To flush or not to flush—that is the question groups should also keep front of mind. Because not all plumbing systems are built to handle toilet paper, groups may need to dispose of their toilet paper in a small trashcan nearby (which often serves as a clue to not flush, to begin with.) Groups may come across this in countries like [Turkey](#), Mexico, [Egypt](#), Ukraine and [Greece](#). On the other hand, not flushing in some countries could leave groups facing fines, like Singapore.

Certain countries like France, [Italy](#), Japan and parts of the Middle East prefer to avoid paper products altogether, looking to bidets for personal hygiene.

Hope you've been doing your quad workouts! Groups are likely to run into bathrooms in Asia that require squatting over an in-ground toilet rather than sitting on the traditional porcelain throne they're used to.

Don't be cheeky: Do your [research](#). ■

Tips for Flying with Medication

Preparation is key to having a safe and successful trip.

While packing and making considerations for outfits and accessories for your excursions, you may also be wondering what things need to be accounted for in terms of medications for your groups.

While travelers are certainly allowed to travel with their medications, the [Transportation Safety Administration](#) offers these considerations and tips you should keep top of mind to stay in the clear.

- *It's not necessary to present your medication to or notify an officer about any medication you are traveling with unless it is in liquid form.*
- *Medication in liquid form is allowed in carry-on bags in excess of 3.4 ounces, in reasonable quantities for the flight. It's not necessary to place medically required liquids in a zip-top bag.*
- *However, you must tell the officer you have medically necessary liquids at the start of the screening checkpoint process. Medically required liquids will be subjected to additional screening that could include being asked to open the container.*
- *You can bring your medication in pill or solid form in unlimited amounts, as long as it is screened.*
- *You can travel with your medication in both carry-on and checked baggage. It's highly recommended you place these items in your carry-on, in the event that you need immediate access.*
- *TSA does not require passengers to have medications in prescription bottles, though states have individual laws regarding the labeling of prescription medication with which passengers need to comply.*
- *Medication is usually screened by X-ray; however, if a passenger does not want a medication*

X-rayed, they may ask for an inspection instead. This request must be made before any items are sent through the X-ray tunnel.

- *Nitroglycerin tablets and spray (used to treat episodes of angina in people who have coronary artery disease) are permitted and have never been prohibited.*



MEDICAL EXEMPTION FOR HAND SANITIZER

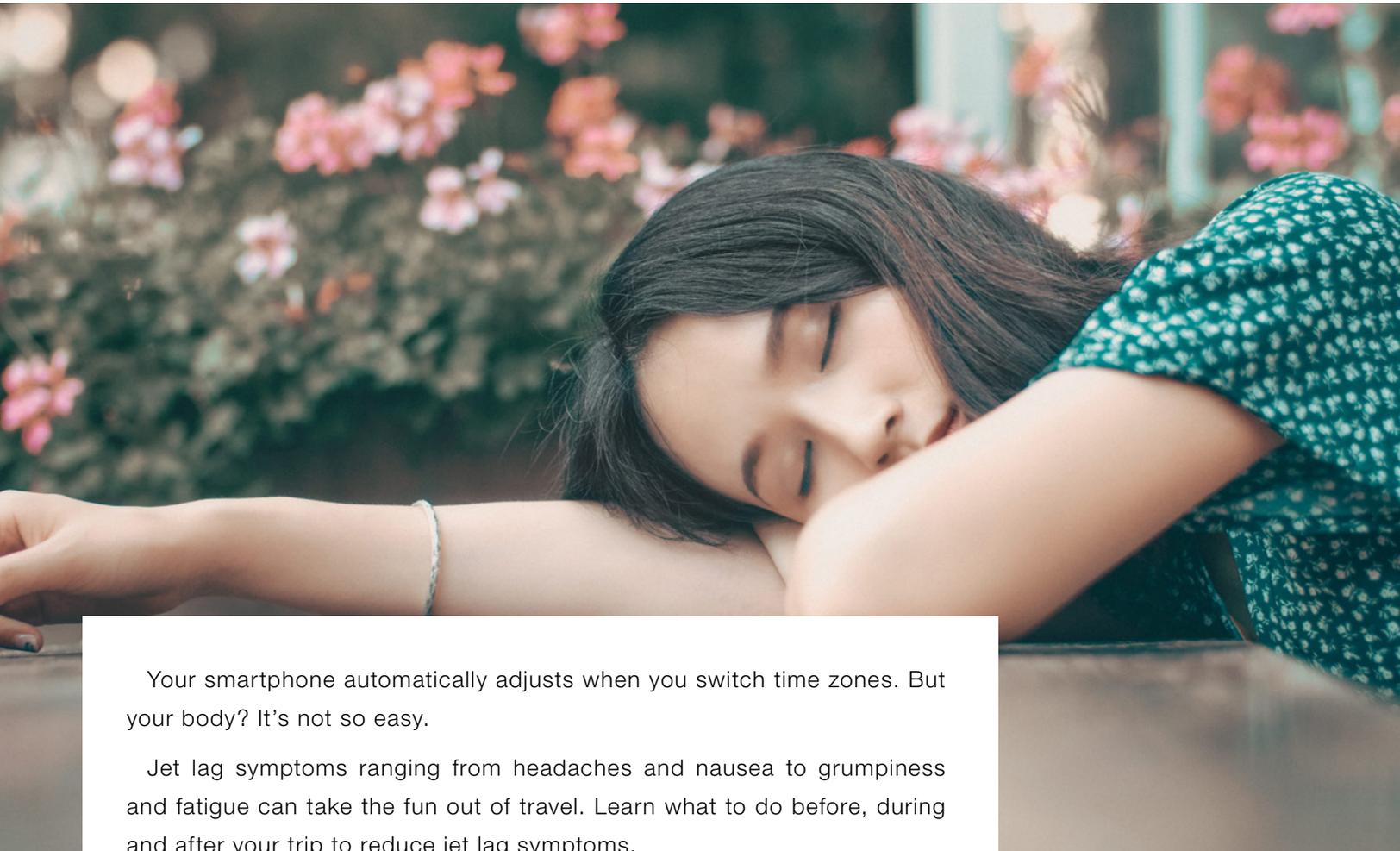
As a temporary exemption from the 3-1-1 rule during the COVID-19 pandemic, TSA is allowing one oversized liquid hand sanitizer container, up to 12 ounces per passenger, in carry-on bags. Since these containers exceed the standard allowance typically permitted through a checkpoint, they will need to be screened separately. Keep in mind this will add some time to your checkpoint screening experience, and that all other liquids, gels and aerosols brought to a checkpoint continue to be limited to 3.4 ounces or 100 milliliters carried in a one quart-size bag.

Still have medication questions? The [TSA Contact Center](#) and the [TSA Cares Help Line](#) are able to assist. ■

Written by Sarah Suydam, Managing Editor for Groups Today.

Reducing the Effects of Jet Lag

Tips for before, during and after your trip.



Your smartphone automatically adjusts when you switch time zones. But your body? It's not so easy.

Jet lag symptoms ranging from headaches and nausea to grumpiness and fatigue can take the fun out of travel. Learn what to do before, during and after your trip to reduce jet lag symptoms.

Before Your Trip | Shifting daily rhythms from home to destination decreases the effects of jet lag. Gradually move sleep and wake times earlier (when traveling east) or later (when heading west), starting several days before the trip. You may not get fully acclimated before a long trip, but every bit helps.

On the Flight | Change your watch to the time in your destination upon boarding the plane. This can

shift your thinking, so you actually want to eat and sleep on the time in your destination.

Since dehydration exacerbates jet lag symptoms, drink water. Avoid alcohol, which causes dehydration and interrupted sleep. A coffee kick may be a good idea if you're traveling west, since it can delay circadian rhythms and keep you up later, but counterproductive when traveling east.

Get a good night's sleep on the plane—easier said than done, though travel accessories can help. Earplugs or noise-canceling headphones tune out sounds, while sleep masks block light. Travel pillows, while not as good as the real deal, support your neck while you sleep.

During Your Trip | The later you stay up on day one, the faster you'll adjust schedules. Plan a full first day you're excited about, then try to stay up until 10 p.m.

Eat protein-rich foods, which give you the energy needed to explore—rather than sugary foods that cause a crash. Get outside and soak up natural light, which regulates circadian rhythms. If your normal routine includes a morning workout, try to keep the habit while traveling.

If you must nap, keep it brief. Set an alarm clock or request a wake-up call, or both. A too-long nap can leave you lost in time, with unpleasant symptoms to match.

Travelers heading east may need sleep aids to settle into early bedtimes. Melatonin, a natural hormone that regulates circadian rhythm, is one to consider. Take a

pill 30 minutes before your desired sleep time; however, don't use melatonin in combination with prescription sleep aids or alcohol. As with any medication, discuss it with your doctor.

Apps such as Timeshifter can prompt you with suggestions to reduce jet lag symptoms. Timeshifter tailors its recommendations based on your sleep patterns, travel itinerary, age and gender. Acupressure app Uplift promises a five-minute fix for jet lag.

After Your Trip | Without the distraction of new sights to see, it's natural that you'd notice jet lag symptoms. Stay hydrated and take breaks when you need them. Morning exercise boosts blood flow for a natural brain jolt that can help you get back into your daily routine.

It takes a good two to three days to reacclimate, so be patient with yourself if you experience jet lag post-travel. ■



7 Times Not to Take a Selfie While Traveling

At memorials honoring the dead. Memorials honor those who suffered and are places where people—often related to the victims—go to pay their respects. This includes places where people died, such as historic battlefields, the 9/11 Memorial & Museum and Auschwitz. These locations are for thoughtful reflection—not for looking at one’s own reflection. This includes cemeteries.

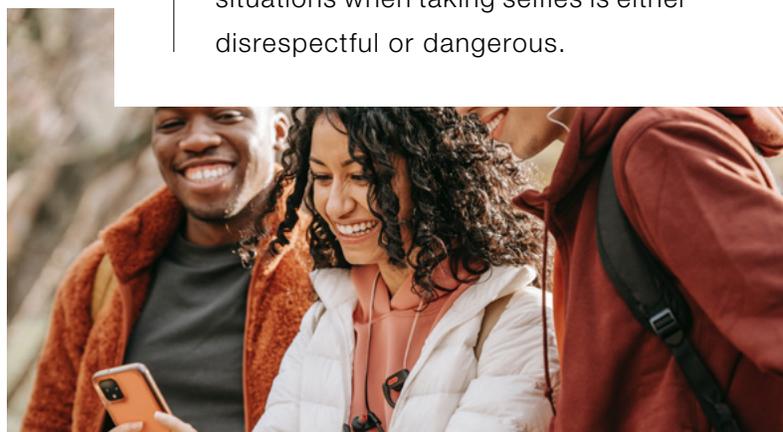
With locals travelers don’t know. Got to know a local a little and built a bit of a rapport with him? Sure. Snap a selfie. Travelers should not, however, take selfies with locals they haven’t met or had an opportunity to form a personal connection with. Those selfies could be construed as mocking them or their way of life.

Around animals. Unless travelers are far away from the animal and have no chance of coming in contact with it or endangering it in any way—such as at a zoo—selfies with animals are a no-go. First, animals are animals and the traveler’s safety is at risk. Second, the animal’s safety is at risk. There are too many stories of tourists wounding or killing an animal in an attempt to take a selfie. Just like people, animals deserve respect.

On the move. Walking and texting isn’t safe. Walking and snapping a selfie definitely isn’t safe. It poses a risk not only for the self-ographer but for anyone around them.

Photos while traveling are great. Yet somewhere along the road, most travelers inevitably turn the camera lens from focusing on the landscape to focusing on themselves.

It’s fine. No judgment here ... most of the time. Because there are situations when taking selfies is either disrespectful or dangerous.



On the edge. Snapping shots of beautiful views is a must for travel. So is paying attention to the edge of a mountain or cliff. Close-to-the-edge selfies are dangerous. It’s not just cliffs, either. Balcony railings. Stair railings. Big, open windows. The list goes on.

At holy sites. Churches, mosques, temples and other sacred spots are often architectural masterpieces and ornately decorated. They can be favorite attractions while traveling and taking a photo is fine if there are no signs prohibiting it. Snapping a selfie, however, crosses a line. Holy sites are often places for prayer and reflection, and it’s disrespectful to those who may be trying to use the site to do so.

When something bad is happening. Citizen journalists are a thing these days—but it comes with a risk. If something dangerous is happening, travelers should put their phones away and seek safety. No selfies after the fact, either. While travelers might be safe, that doesn’t mean others haven’t been harmed. ■

Tradeshow Tips & Tricks

With tradeshow season comes lots of preparation and planning! The team at *Groups Today's* parent company, Serendipity Media, is always on top of what's going on throughout the industries we work in, so we checked in with some of our team to find out what their go-to tradeshow tips and must-bring items are.

What are your top tips for a successful tradeshow?

MAKE COMFORT A PRIORITY.

"Looking good is important, but comfortable shoes are more important than looking good. Also, be present! You never know where or when a new connection will be made!"

—**Kasie Smith**, *President and Publisher, Serendipity Media*

Remember: You don't have to sacrifice style to look professional on the floor. Add personal touches to your outfit that people think of as YOU, whether that's a distinctive bow tie, vibrant scarf, statement jewelry, a certain pattern, signature color, etc.

TAKE NOTES.

"Remembering a business discussion is important, but so is remembering chatting about an event, the food or their personal life. No matter how memorable a conversation is, by the end of the tradeshow your head will be swimming with all the conversations you had—on top of being tired from being constantly on-the-go for a few days straight."

—**Ashley Micallef**, *Media Sales and Operations Coordinator/Media Consultant*

BRING BUSINESS CARDS AND A STRATEGY.

"Always have business cards on you and go in with a plan. If you don't have a scheduled appointment with someone, make sure to find them off the appointment floor or at a networking event."

—**Monica Schafer**, *Media Consultant, Groups Today and Teach & Travel*

BE SOCIAL.

"Attend the evening events! Get outside of your hotel room! A lot of great connections happen off the tradeshow floor."

—**Lauren Abdelkader**, *Media Consultant, Groups Today and Teach & Travel*



What are some items you're always sure to have with you?

HAND SANITIZER, MASKS & OTHER TRAVEL-SIZED ESSENTIALS.

"We're certainly all used to having hand sanitizer and masks on us at all times, but it's always wise to keep extras on hand while on the road and the tradeshow floor! Pack travel-sized personal hygiene items in your bag, as well. There's nothing worse than realizing you have to run all the way back to your hotel room for something you need!"

— **Ashley Micallef**, *Media Sales and Operations Coordinator/Media Consultant*.

Don't forget to bring products from home that you love and are used to. While hotel amenities are improving, they may not always suit your needs—or your hair and skin.

A WATER BOTTLE & LAYERS.

"I always pack comfortable shoes and layers for warmth as the tradeshow floor temperature fluctuates. Also, a water bottle to stay hydrated. Our days are long and jam-packed, and drinking water can be easily forgotten."

— **Monica Schafer**, *Media Consultant, Groups Today and Teach & Travel*

Remember: Keep plastic bags in your suitcase. Small Ziplocs and other sealable bags are good for toiletries, ensuring clothing stays dry if a lotion or liquid leaks, etc. Transporting dirty laundry home becomes a breeze when you realize the laundry bag from the hotel closet is available.

ANTACIDS AND VITAMINS.

"TUMS! The trade show diet/lifestyle can be unforgiving. Also, I always bring anything and everything that supports your immune system; vitamins, Emergen-C, et cetera."

— **Lauren Abdelkader**, *Media Consultant, Groups Today and Teach & Travel*

ASPIRIN AND PROTEIN BARS.

"Keep aspirin and protein bars in your bag, to help you stay full and headache-free throughout the day."

— **Kasie Smith**, *President and Publisher, Serendipity Media*

How are YOU preparing for your next tradeshow? ■



The Riches are in the Niches

One of the statements I dread hearing when a tourism attraction describes itself is: **“We have something for everyone.”**

That doesn't set you apart or explain your “wow” factor. You are much better off figuring out what niches of customers love your product and concentrate on finding more of them. What are some popular niches of customers for the group tour market? There are as many niches as there are customers, but some of the ones that you might target are:



SENIORS | The traditional group tour market. These people are typically retirees and can travel during the week since they aren't working full-time. Exhibits and activities that reflect their past are interesting for them. Simple hands-on experiences are fun for this group as well. Remember that mobility can be an issue. If you are an outdoor experience activity, this might be a tough market for you to get to capture.

STUDENTS | The student market is a growing market and there is even a major trade organization, [SYTA](#), dedicated to connecting student tours with

attractions and destinations. There are two student markets to consider: Your local schools within an hour drive, and students from other locations.

Educational value, as well as location, are key for these markets. If you are located in a major city, or on the way to another key destination, you are well located. Does your attraction offer something that would fit into a school curriculum, preferably at several different grade levels? Is your information documented so it is easily shared with teachers? Consider working with local educators to develop specific tours. One of the benefits

of working with local students is that you can target them to come back with their families.

INTERNATIONAL | International visitors to the U.S. are getting more adventurous so you don't have to be located in NYC, LA or Las Vegas in order to target international guests. You do have to have a compelling attraction, though. It's best to work with your DMO to target specific countries that are already coming to your area. Don't worry if your staff is not multilingual. By the time international visitors are visiting our smaller cities and towns, they have gotten comfortable with English.



S.M.E.R.F | This acronym stands for Social, Medical, Educational, Religious and Fraternal groups. While it's a term used mostly in the meetings industry, it also covers a niche of groups that are likely to travel. Military and reunion groups are a popular market to target—especially if you have exhibits or activities that pertain to their shared history.

FAMILIES | Family reunions can be big business. I have seen multigenerational groups at hotels and full-service lodges. They are looking for attractions that will be fun for kids, parents and grandparents. They are looking to create memories, so target opportunities for experiences, picture taking and fun!

Some examples:

ZIPPO MUSEUM | I recently visited the [Zippo Museum](#) in Bradford, Pennsylvania. The staff told me they get many senior tour groups and I can see why. The museum showcases the history of the world's most dependable lighter (I didn't know they had a lifetime guarantee!) and has displays with many ads that will look familiar to seniors. The exhibits are older, and a lot of reading is required, but the

museum space itself is small and easily toured.

While we were there, the majority of visitors were bikers. There were probably six expensive motorcycles in the parking lot and four cars. There were many Harley Davidson branded lighters and other merchandise.

Why is this popular with bikers? Because Zippo has a licensing agreement with Harley Davidson and it is their most profitable license, according to Shirley Evers at Zippo. She also said the motorcyclists love to ride with a specific destination in mind and Zippo is located in an area of Pennsylvania with nice winding roads and other places to stop. A perfect niche to capture.

DOLLY PARTON'S STAMPEDE

| I was in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, recently and had a great evening at [Dolly Parton's Stampede](#). It is a very family-friendly dinner with seating around an arena where patriotic displays of horsemanship and American history are on display. There is no menu—the servers, dressed in jeans and boots, serve up platefuls of food that would never make a dieter's list. The show is set to music and Dolly Parton's voice.

Chinese groups have found this place and it is now featured on some itineraries. Steve Ellis of Dolly Parton's Stampede told me they are popular because no translation is needed to enjoy the show and their location makes them a good stop on the way to the Smoky Mountain National Park. So they are looking at ways to grow this niche market.

TIFFANY AND TREASURES TRAIL |

The Corning Museum of Glass' major exhibit a few years back was on Tiffany glass. Besides viewing the museum's amazing exhibition, we worked to promote the *Tiffany and Treasures Trail*—other locations throughout the region that had Tiffany's work installed. This was a perfect program to promote to religious groups since many of the installations were in churches.

FINAL THOUGHTS |

Look at what niches of customers are already coming to your attraction. Spend some time asking why they come and how you can reach out to groups they belong to. By targeting specific demographics, you can increase the number of visitors coming through your doors. Who will you choose to target? ■

Generation Z Travel Trends

Millennials better make some room in that plane, train or automobile: Generation Z is beginning to enter the travel scene. Consisting of people born in the late 1990s to 2010s, they have grown up in a connected and instantaneous environment. They're adaptive and technologically savvy global citizens with aspirations to change the world.

And they want to see the world, too.

According to [a study conducted by Expedia Media Solutions](#), Gen Zers average 29 travel days per year. Just entering the workforce, they aren't exactly breaking the bank. Still, they're interested in investing in travel experiences, and it's important to keep them in mind when marketing tours. The Expedia Media Solutions study identified several trends.

They look for a deal. Again, Gen Z doesn't have a lot of money—but that doesn't mean they aren't traveling. They just opt for budget-friendly travel experiences. According to Expedia Media Solutions' report, 81% said budget factors into their travel decisions and 93% look for the best deals.

Social media influences their decisions. Of Gen Zers polled, 90% testified that social media influenced their travel decisions.

According to [Upfront Analytics](#), Gen Z prefers Snapchat and Instagram—platforms popular for their photo and video-based content. They watch two times as many videos on mobile as any other demographic, with 70% watching two hours of YouTube per day. It's wise to keep social video platform TikTok on your radar, as well.

They're bucket list conquerors. When traveling, Gen Zers likely have a goal in mind. Of those surveyed, 81% noted crossing off bucket list items is imperative.

They take the road less traveled. Like millennials, Gen Z loves the outdoors: 83% noted they would travel anywhere that allows them to explore the outdoors and be active. They also prefer to keep travel local: 78% opt for off-the-beaten-path locations and rely on recommendations from locals. ■



Travel Adapters and Converters

Chances are, if you're traveling abroad you'll want to bring along some electronics, such as your cellphone, camera, laptop or tablet, or razor.

But imagine arriving at your destination and realizing you don't have the proper accessories to charge—or use—*anything* requiring electricity.

Throughout the world there are about 15 different types of plugs and outlets, making even simple tasks like blow-drying your hair require more thought. We've broken down everything you need to know about adapters and converters, so you'll never be left in the dark on the road.

Adapters serve as a sort of middleman between your electronic device and the socket, ensuring the appropriate prong style is inserted into the socket while your familiar cord plugs into the external side of the adapter.

But wait!

It's not that simple.

Electrical voltage plays a huge part here, as anyone who has blown a fuse or fried their

favorite straightening iron abroad will agree.

In the United States, electrical devices are generally designed for 110/120V, versus other countries, which sit at a much higher 220/240V. Even if you have the correct adapter, it won't be compatible.

Enter the converter.

Converters essentially step down a high voltage to be compatible with lower-voltage devices. Investing in a combination adapter/converter is your best bet to protect your (probably not inexpensive) electronic items.

Keep in mind that many devices are now made to be "dual voltage," making them safe to use at either voltage. To know whether or not your device is made this way, check out the item itself, as the voltage is sometimes printed or stamped on it. Still having trouble knowing for sure? Check out the product's description online—you should be able to find it there.

Do your research before your trip and check out this **handy list** from the International Electrotechnical Commission to see the plug type, electric potential and frequency of the destination you'll be visiting.

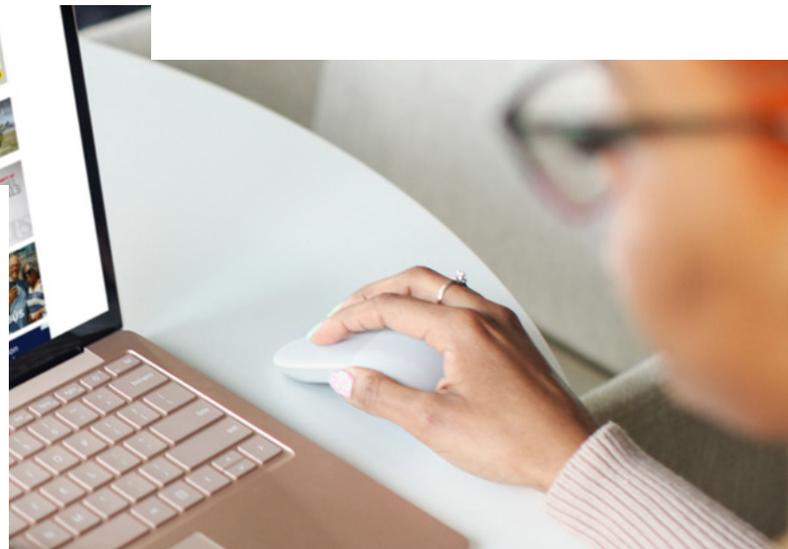
Now that you have everything you need to stay plugged in and connected while abroad—Ben Franklin would be proud—just remember to grab your phone off the kitchen table before heading out the door. ■



Written by Sarah Suydam, Managing Editor for Groups Today.

How to Stay Informed and Engaged

With news and current events swirling around us at what seems like the speed of light, it's understandable to feel like you can't keep up. It's critical, however, to do so. Use these tips to up your game, while ensuring the information you're reading is credible.



1. Determine who your go-to sources for knowledge are and subscribe to their communications. This could be an e-newsletter for one of your favorite attractions, a video series from an expert in your professional industry on YouTube, or following an outlet socially or otherwise. If you don't see a subscribe button, reach out and ask to be added to the email communications list.

2. Follow hashtags. Whether it's COVID-19 related or otherwise, following specific hashtags allows you to see the latest news and information, especially in real-time on platforms like Twitter. In a world where change is inevitable, hashtags allow news that's especially important to you to float to the top of your feed.

3. Set aside time each day to catch up on the latest. It's vital to take time to learn about the world around you. But don't get bogged down! Think critically about what's news and what's simply noise, and filter your inbox to reflect that.

4. Share your thoughts! Whether on your social media, blog, professional profile, or elsewhere, sharing your opinion on a topic or strategy gets the conversation going.

You may end up having constructive dialogue—with those within your industry or others—that offers information you weren't privy to until now.

5. Expand your bubble. To truly see beyond your perspective of a situation alone, be sure your resources and feed include varying voices and professions, as to not create an echo chamber of only one viewpoint.

As always, when presented with information, determine if it's **credible**:

- *Identify the source of the information and determine whether it's reliable based on the author or organization.*
- *Check sources for validity against other credible sources.*
- *Determine the purpose of the information.*
- *Ask yourself if the information is presented in a biased way.*
- *Check the date when the information was published.*
- *Search for citations supporting the claims made by the author or organization.*
- *Look for the use of proper grammar, spelling and punctuation.*
- *Examine the end designation of a website and how that relates to the information you're presented with. ■*

Advice from the Group Travel Field

“Know that you can’t do it alone! Delivering a great travel experience relies on so many people and businesses coming together in partnership to offer a cohesive and seamless tour to our common client. Foster partnerships with like-minded organizations and suppliers, so the values and level of service you intend to provide will be delivered at every turn. We’re so lucky to work in such a dynamic and rewarding industry; helping make people’s dreams come true and giving them priceless memories is an incredible opportunity and responsibility. When the day-to-day challenges get you down, remember that!”

Michelle Hundt Tupman | *Vice President* | Great Canadian Holidays

“Get involved in industry events— networking, associations, committees, boards— putting your image and the company’s in people’s minds. Tourism is a small industry. Everyone seems connected. One person could introduce you to a whole new group of individuals. Share your voice! You’re never too young or new. Change comes from fresh ideas, minds and perspectives. Never get too busy to focus on your business. If you’re spread too thin, the business will be first to suffer. Don’t lose sight of promises to yourself. We give everything to our families, businesses, associations, and volunteering, but need time away to refresh, reset, and return with fresh perspectives. The human brain needs and deserves a break. Please give it one.”

Elizabeth Hall | *Chief Operating Officer* | John Hall’s Alaska

“I encourage every newcomer to feel proud of the amazing and powerful force they’re part of. At NTA, we seriously know how to have fun—and we do serious business. It’s the same for our entire industry. I encourage each of us to understand and champion the power of travel. Travel’s intrinsic value—opening minds and connecting cultures—is critical; we need to better understand our similarities, rather than exploit our differences. And there’s the incredible economic power of travel. The jobs we support, tax relief we bring and dollars we generate are absolutely critical to our global economy. We need to better understand this and constantly espouse this message.”

Catherine Prather, CTP | *President* | NTA

“It’s great to travel! That’s why so many people want to get into this industry. Just know it’s really hard work to plan other people’s travels. You have to be a problem-solver and be patient. But this industry has some of the smartest and most interesting people you’ll ever meet. I wouldn’t trade what I’ve done for anything else.”

Rainer Jenss | *Founder* | Family Travel Association

“Diversification and innovation are the reasons GoPegasus has continued to thrive and grow the past 26 years. Communication, building relationships and integrity are seeing the company through the COVID-19 pandemic—its toughest crisis yet. This would be my advice to a newcomer: Keep it simple, keep it right.”

Claudia Maria de Menezes | *Vice President and Co-Founder* | GoPegasus

“The travel industry is like no other industry I have worked in before. We always say we are a big family, but it is true. Everyone is connected and tied to each other for success. From the ride to your destination to the restaurant you eat in and the hotels you sleep in, everyone is working together to ensure you have the best experience possible. And there is no experience like the memories you make through travel.”

Peter Pantuso | *President & CEO* | American Bus Association

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