



# Expert Tips to grow your group sales

Group Tour Media, publisher of *Group Tour* and *Student Group Tour* magazines

## How to work with Inbound Tour Operators\* by Lisa Simon

### 1 Offer Best Tiered Pricing

Remember, ITOs are wholesalers, so not only do they need to make a profit, but so do their customers (international operators, agents, business travel companies). The volume they bring can make up for what may be perceived as extensive discounts.

### 3 For Hotels Only

Many ITOs offer online hotel bookings as an added service. Hoteliers can increase bookings and move distressed inventory at higher yields with ITOs than most online travel agencies.

*\*The International Inbound Travel Association (IITA) uses the term "Inbound Tour Operators" to distinguish international-market focused receptives from their domestic counterparts.*

### 2 Invest the Time

It's a relationship business, and suppliers need to be prepared to invest the time to build business from international markets.

ITOs generally work at least 18 months out – and need rates and marketing support that far in advance.

When you start reaching ITOs, it may take a few years to reap the results of your investment. That said, it can take far more time to make inroads in international markets when going direct to international trade or consumers and it's far more costly. Worldwide, people are planning and booking travel on much shorter notice so the time investment might not be that long with certain ITOs.

### 4 Join IITA

Belonging to IITA and attending our Summit are the best ways to reach the key, most influential ITOs.

IITA ITO members are the largest and best inbound travel producers, ranging from traditional European markets to the emerging markets, like China, southeast Asia, India and Latin America.

#### International Visitor Spending

|             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| China       | \$24.0 billion |
| Japan       | \$17.7 billion |
| U.K.        | \$13.5 billion |
| Brazil      | \$13.4 billion |
| India       | \$9.8 billion  |
| South Korea | \$7.8 billion  |
| Germany     | \$7.4 billion  |
| Australia   | \$6.2 billion  |

Source <http://travel.trade.gov/research/index.html>



**Lisa Simon** is the Executive Director of the International Inbound Travel Association (IITA), the only trade association focused solely on the international inbound travel industry.

Last month's Expert Tips covered Lisa Simon's reasons **why** to work with ITOs.