



## How to Work with International Travel Media

### Dos and Don'ts to Ensure Positive Results

Many times, media can tell a more authentic, engaging and detailed story if they are actually able to experience it firsthand. By working closely with Discover New England and your state representative, you can prep yourself and your employees to ensure successful international media visits.

Providing media with an unforgettable New England experience can lead to worldwide exposure. Here are some tips on how to communicate, host and, in general, be prepared for a visit that will result in a win-win situation for both the media and New England.

#### Before the media arrives:

Please remember that international media will be travelling from overseas, so more preparation time is needed before they fly. For example, all travelers need to enter their first hotel into the Advance Passenger Information System (APIS) before check-in; plus, media like to research activities that they have planned. With this in mind, please promptly reply to your state contact when asked to host.

- Alert your staff that the guest is from the media to ensure the best possible guest experience is delivered.
- Work together with local area accommodations, restaurants, and attractions and local tourism organizations to be sure that you have all the information you need to provide the writers with great things to do and places to experience in the area.
- For CVBs and Chambers of Commerce: Please be aware that journalists will only write or broadcast about a hotel or experience if they believe it is relevant for their readers/audience. For example, British journalists know that if their readers travel to New England they will likely choose to stay in centrally located hotels within walking (or easy travelling) distance of restaurants, nightlife, attractions and daytime activities. Be sure that the attractions and experiences you offer are 'international ready' – they must be experiences that the international visitor can easily book, whether directly or via in-market tour operators.
- Consider the shooting needs of a photographer and be prepared to suggest scenery, etc.
- Follow all of their social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Google+, etc.).
- International media may look at things from a different angle. Things that we see as ordinary may be captivating and story-worthy to them.

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## When media arrives:

- Greet them! A personal introduction will go a long way in making them feel welcome. Ask if they are interested in a brief tour. Allow them to ask questions or take a few photos along the way. Make a good impression by taking an extra step – anything from a handwritten welcome note with extra bottles of water in their room when they arrive to a small token of appreciation from a local artisan; it doesn't have to be a huge gift to be remembered.
- \*\*Lodging properties – Always check the media into their rooms and let them settle in before conducting a site visit or tour. Please note that the journalist may not be interested in hotel site inspections. There are exceptions to this, for example, if the hotel is a central part of the story. But formal tours of hotels should not be arranged unless specifically requested. However, by being creative with meeting arrangements it is possible to showcase elements of a hotel product along the way.
- There is a fine line between being helpful and hovering over the journalist. Give them as much space as they need, and remember, they need to experience a place, sometimes on their own, to be able to write about it.
- Many media are looking to write 'first person' experiences – as if they are reporting about their own vacation. This means they may need some down time to experience the region individually to help develop their own story.
- Do not judge a book by its cover. Not all journalists are warm and outgoing, but it doesn't mean they aren't creative and productive writers.
- Forcing story ideas or packing an itinerary with activities will not always yield the best results; some of the greatest story ideas come from open exploration. They may need to spend some time out and about in the town to get their story. Our in-country reps – after discussions with the journalist – will provide as much guidance as possible to help shape the itinerary.
- Make sure that there is someone monitoring your social media mentions during the journalist's stay. Be sure to interact with the journalist if they are utilizing social media to document their visit.
- Always provide help with follow-up, fact checking and providing additional details or photos, if requested. Don't overload them with printed materials; offer to ship them or send information in digital form after they depart.
- Don't give them a product or service that you wouldn't offer every guest, i.e., don't send them on a tour that wouldn't be available to the general public. They want to be able to share their experience with their audience.
- Don't remind them that you're comping their accommodations/service/meal.

## Always remember:

- Your website should always be up-to-date with packages and rates. Writers will use your site to complete research after their visit and they want to refer their readers to a website with current information.
- It is helpful to provide a phone number and email where media can contact you when they are exploring the area and working on their story, just in case they get lost or have questions.
- "All ships really do rise with the tide" – even if you are not the feature of the article, or even mentioned in the article, your area will receive great exposure, increasing the likelihood of increased business for you!