



Familiarization Tours

South Dakota

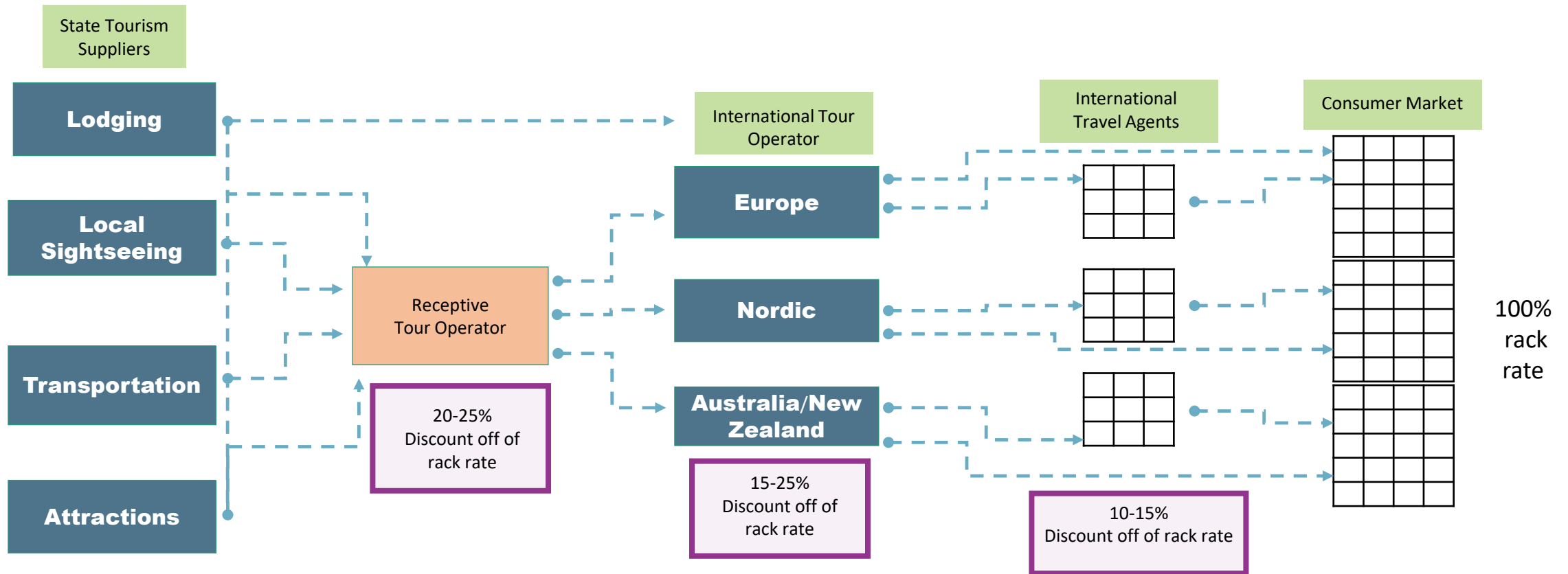
What is a Familiarization (FAM) Tour?

- FAM Tours are hosted by travel destinations, restaurants, lodging and attractions to familiarize travel professionals with the products and services that they feel will help the travel professional best sell their destinations or services.
- FAM tours are designed to provide the travel professional with a “snap shot” of the destination. The upside is that the travel professional will meet face to face with service providers and begin to build relationships with those they will potentially work with.

Types of FAM Tour Participants

- Travel Agents – A travel agent will most likely participate in a FAM tour to increase their product knowledge about a destination so they can better sell it to their clients. Travel agents have become extremely niche-focused, so it is important they are experts in the area in which they specialize.
- Tour Operators – If a tour operator features South Dakota product in their brochure, they will often arrange a FAM tour to the state for their agents. This gives the agents the opportunity to experience the product first-hand so they can adequately sell to their clients or travel agents that buy through them.
- Receptive Operators – A travel wholesaler located in the United States who contracts with both international tour operators and local suppliers, including accommodations, ranches, activities, attractions, services, and transportation. They act as the connecting piece between you and hundreds of overseas tour operators.
- Media/Influencers – The purpose of hosting a media FAM Tour is to create content about a destination and/or organization.

Receptive Tour Operator Chain



Types of FAM Tour Participants



- Individual—Many travel professionals prefer to conduct individual FAM Tours, meaning that they want to experience a destination on their own as opposed to with a group.
- Group — Create an itinerary geared for 3-15 travel professionals, which is comprised of a mix of domestic and international operators.

Why Host a FAM Tour?

- When travel professionals experience a destination first-hand, they are able to better sell and represent this information to their clients.
- Hosting FAM tours allows you as a supplier or destination to build relationships with the travel professionals that could lead to more of their clients either learning or visiting your destination.



How to Get a FAM Tour

- South Dakota Department of Tourism sends participants to your organizations.
- Attending Travel Tradeshow
- Partnering with neighboring attractions and communities on their FAMs
- Travel Professionals reaching out directly to you.

How to Verify Potential FAM Participants

- Contact South Dakota Department of Tourism.
- Visit their website and look through their product.
- Ask the potential travel professionals questions such as, what goals do you hope to achieve from visiting your destination.
- Ask for previous articles or tours they have produced.



Preparation

- Communicate with FAM Participant
 - What do they need to ensure a productive experience
 - Who do they need to meet with
 - Clearly state restrictions you may have for their visit
 - Ask if there are any special requests they may have
- Create a detailed Itinerary
 - Highlight your very best
 - Accommodate the needs of the FAM participant
 - Include any valuable information (meeting times, driving distances, reservations)
 - Include time to meet with participant
 - Develop Backup plans

Day of the FAM

- Be welcoming and accommodating.
- Offer printed materials on pertinent information such as rates, historical information and interesting facts. Offer to mail it if necessary.
- Try to offer something special for the fam participants, so your business will stand out in their minds i.e. gift, sticker, etc.
- Remain flexible with the needs of the participant, but also make sure that any firm scheduled appointments are clearly stated to them.
- Make introductions to anyone who may work with the fam participant in the future.

Follow up From the FAM

- Reach out and thank them for coming to your destination.
- Offer to answer any questions they may have going forward.
- Forward them any information they may have missed.
- Check in with them periodically.
- Ask them about their fam experience. Feedback is beneficial when planning future FAMs.
- Thank any partner in your community or area who helped with hosting.

Expenses

- Ground transportation is usually the greatest expense involved in a FAM. It is beneficial to get price quotes from several companies so you can be sure you are receiving the best value. Transportation costs can vary quite a bit depending on the size of the group and the size of vehicle you require.
- You should also anticipate that you might not be able to secure every single aspect of the FAM tour on a complimentary basis, so you should have a small amount of money set aside for incidentals. This could include meals, accommodations and admission fees.
- The cost of gratuity as part of a meal or activity is most times not included. You will want to have money on hand to cover some gratuities or settle this beforehand.
- If traveling in a group and you've arranged transportation it is nice to provide snacks in the van, and it saves time so you don't have to stop as much along the way.



South Dakota

South Dakota Department of Tourism

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