



MARKETING

# Excellence

# Introduction



**Effective marketing is at the heart of every successful business, from small tour operators to global hotel chains.**

It's your opportunity to tell the world about your unique product: to promote your brand, and communicate with your audience about what makes your product special.

It's well worth putting in the time to plan your marketing to make sure you're reaching the right people, in the right way, at the right time.

A good marketing plan will reflect and address the main objectives of your business plan, and will span product development and positioning, market research and targeting, pricing, and marketing communications.

In this guide, we'll help you on your way to marketing excellence with:

- product development
- working out where to be seen
- planning your marketing
- pricing and discounting
- media relations
- digital marketing.

# Developing your product

**Product development involves both marketing and business planning.**

If you're a start-up business, you're in the exciting position of being able to create a product from the ground up and to customise your product to meet the needs and aspirations of your target market.

Finding out about your markets' needs and wants will take some research. Fortunately, there is plenty of data available to make this relatively easy and cheap.

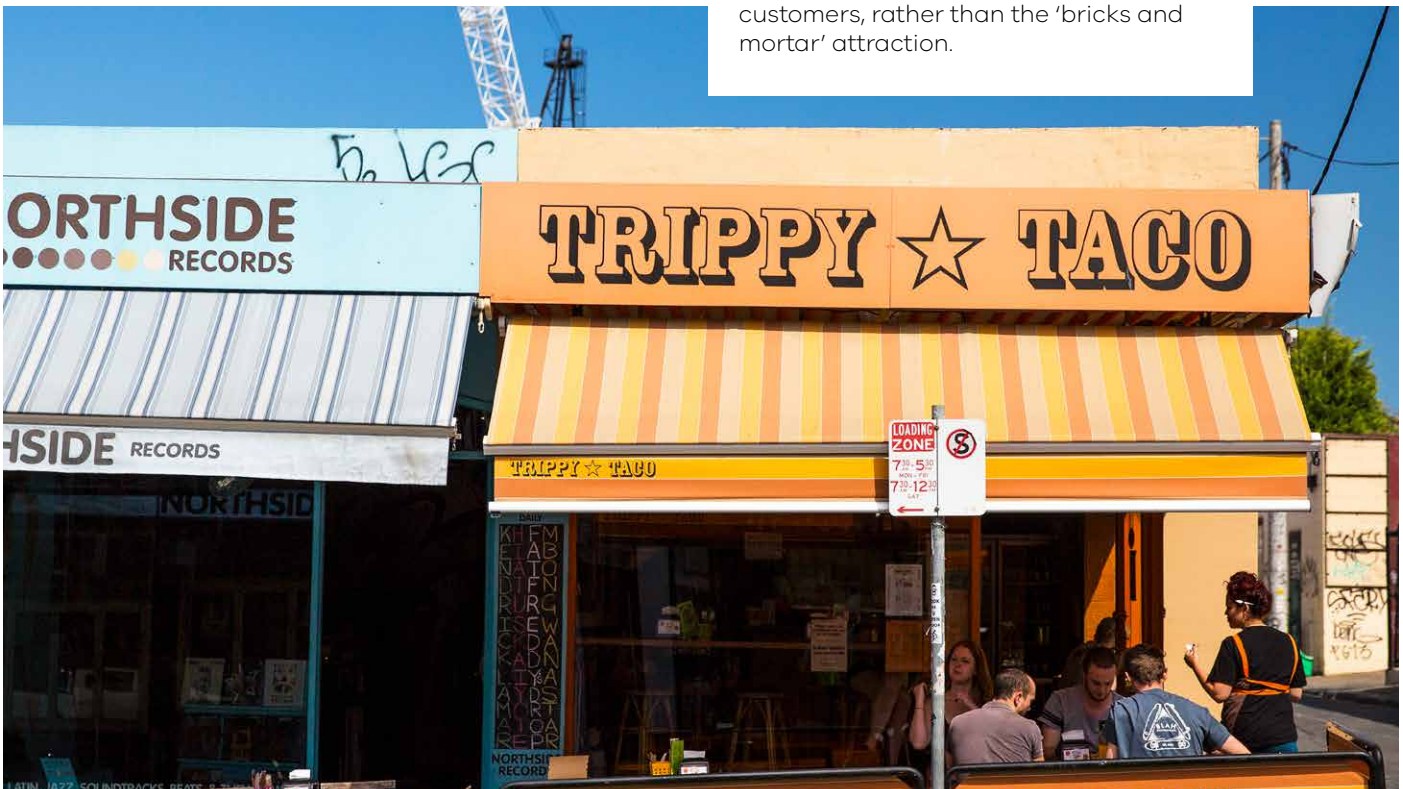
To find out about the many research options available to you, see [Understanding Visitor Needs](#).

## Your Unique Selling Proposition (USP)

The Unique Selling Proposition (USP) of your business is what sets it apart from others.

While you might have an idea of what makes your product special, it can take time to pinpoint and refine your USP. Over time, your knowledge of the industry, product development techniques and target marketing will all help you to determine exactly what it is that sets your business apart.

When determining your USP, remember that tourism is experiential, and focus on the experience you're offering your customers, rather than the 'bricks and mortar' attraction.





*Think about the experience and benefits your guests receive by using your business, and tell them about this, not just what your product is.*

Your restaurant/accommodation /tour is much more than the attraction itself –it’s an opportunity for your visitors to have the experience they seek: pampering, freedom, indulgence, escape, adventure, and so on.

Think about the experience and benefits your guests receive by using your business, and tell them about this, not just what your product is.

When you have identified your USP, build it into all your marketing material, campaigns and selling procedures. You want to reflect your USP in everything – from your brochure design, advertisements and website, to your social media activity and even the way you answer your phones.

### **Your position in the marketplace**

Of course, it’s not all about your USP and marketing plan. How well the market perceives your product can be influenced by the perception of your town, city or region, too. It helps to know and understand how your area is being promoted in the wider marketplace, so you can see how well your product fits with the regional image. You might also get the opportunity to save on marketing costs by linking to regional marketing programs.

To find out how to get in touch with tourism associations in your region, see Networking in Business Excellence.



# Working out where to be seen

**Doing some market research will help you determine which market/s respond best to your product offer, and which distribution channels will work best for you.**

Distribution channels are the paths via which your customers find you. The channels can include:

- online travel agents
- social media
- travel agents
- visitor information centres
- traditional media, or online media sources such as Broadsheet or The Urban List
- e-marketing
- traditional advertising on radio, television or in print.

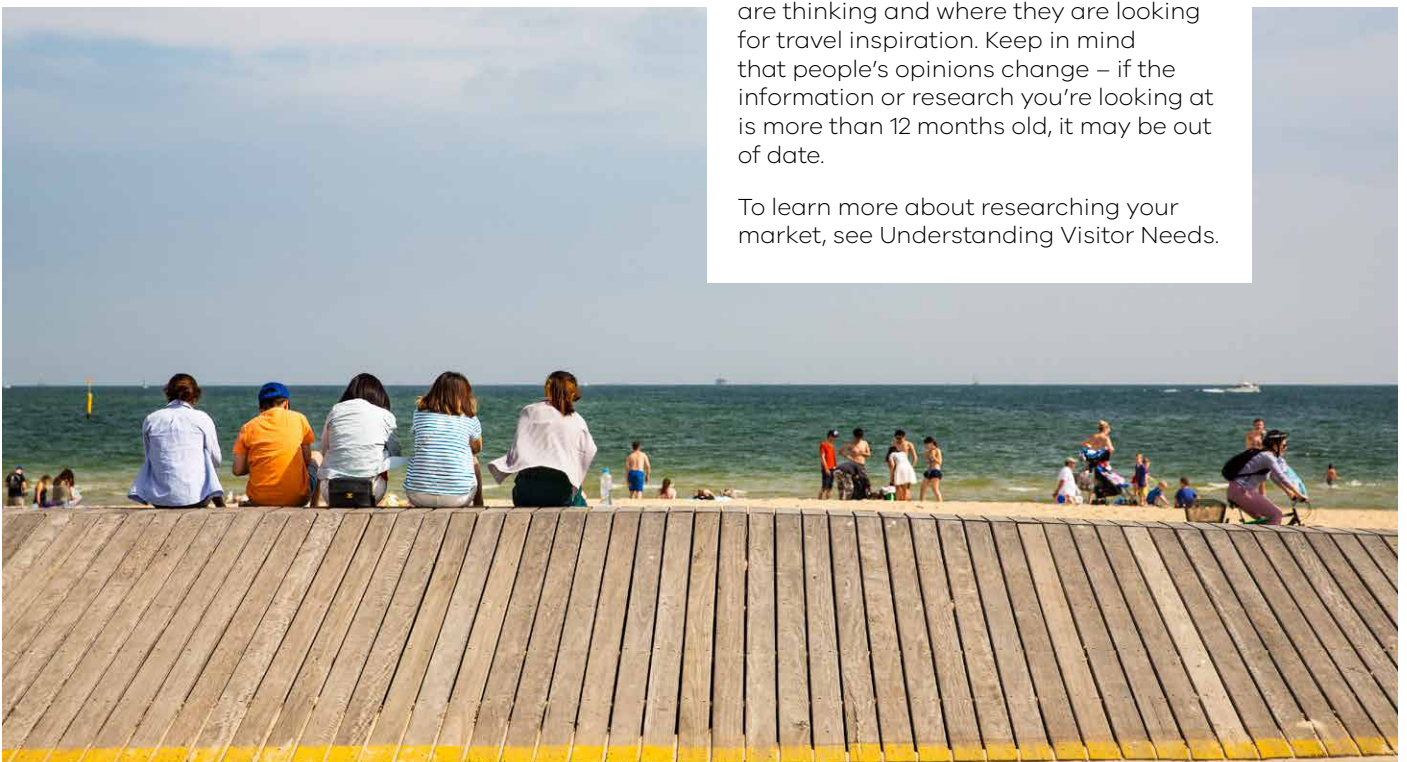
Choosing the best channels for your product and market is important – if you're trying to get noticed in places that your target market simply isn't looking, it will be a waste of money.

Learning about your customers enables you to better match your product to your target market and to be more specific and cost-effective with your advertising dollar in order to reach them.

To work out which channels will work best for you, your market research can be as simple as using customer surveys and talking regularly to customers, to find out how they discovered you, or booked your product. This will help you learn more about and focus on their needs and wants.

Continually monitoring the characteristics of your chosen market/s will keep you up to date with what your customers are thinking and where they are looking for travel inspiration. Keep in mind that people's opinions change – if the information or research you're looking at is more than 12 months old, it may be out of date.

To learn more about researching your market, see [Understanding Visitor Needs](#).



# Planning your marketing

**For tourism and hospitality businesses, marketing is a usually a major expense. Chances are it will be a major expense for your business too, so it's important to plan your marketing in a systematic way.**

Traditional 'scattergun' advertising can be an expensive way to reach new prospects. Your marketing needs to be as targeted as possible to be effective.

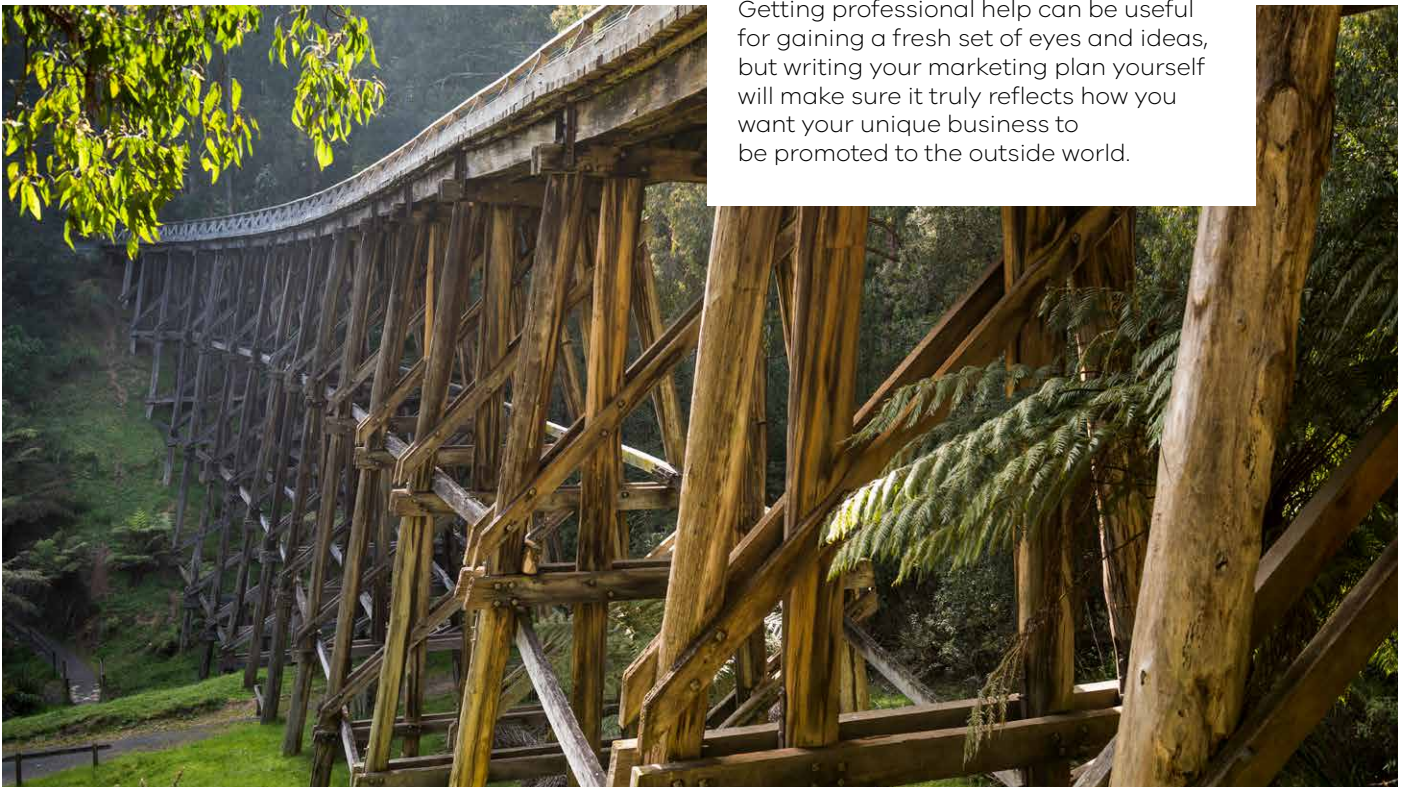
Your product offer and your marketing message needs to reach those who are most likely to book with you or buy your product, and at the times when they're most likely to do so.

This might mean targeting your marketing to reach people when there is a broader campaign about your region already in the marketplace, and awareness of your location is raised, and highlighting your particular product strengths. Or perhaps it means reminding people of an event in your region that's coming up, or teasing them with a sun-soaked image of your product in the depths of their winter.

Having a marketing plan will make planning your marketing easier by helping to guide your thinking and meet your business goals.

Your marketing plan doesn't have to be a daunting, elaborate document. In fact, the simpler it is, the more likely you are to use it.

Getting professional help can be useful for gaining a fresh set of eyes and ideas, but writing your marketing plan yourself will make sure it truly reflects how you want your unique business to be promoted to the outside world.





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**Fundamentally, your marketing plan should answer these key questions:**

Which target market/s will best respond to my product?

Is that target market/s large enough and accessible enough to sustain my business?

What are the primary motivators that drive my target market to buy a holiday product?

What are the major benefits the market seeks from a holiday?

How can I incorporate those benefits into my product/marketing offer, and fulfil their motivations?

What actions do I need to undertake to cost-effectively communicate with the target market, at a time when they are most likely to positively respond?

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**What to include in a simple marketing plan**

- **Your business goals and vision**

Be specific about what is it you want your marketing plan to accomplish. Your objectives may be financial, with a goal to increase sales, or marketing focused to build awareness of your product or service. The marketing plan is where you should write down all of your goals.

- **Identify your target market**

What kind of customers are you trying to attract to your product or service? What sets you apart from competitors? Identify your target market in your plan, and list their characteristics to find the most effective way to market to your target clients.

- **Outline your strategy**

Describe your product or service, outlining all the features and benefits as well as your promotional activity.

- **Your budgets**

How much money do you have to work on your plan's actions and how will you allocate the funds? Ensure you have a budget for each task and deadline.

- **Tips for writing your marketing plan**

- set clear targets you can measure  
e.g. increase in sales
- set deadlines for each target
- include a calendar schedule of key tasks
- always link back to your business strategy and goals.

## **Resources**

Help is at hand. There are excellent resources available to help you plan your marketing and write your marketing plan:

- Business Victoria's interactive [marketing plan template](#), specifically aimed at the needs of a small tourism business.
- The Small Business Mentoring Service (SBMS) [marketing plan guide](#): a detailed, step-by-step guide for any type of business.
- Business Victoria's [five-step approach to market research](#), applicable to all businesses.

# Pricing

**Pricing can be complex, but it's important to get it right so all of your hard work pays off.**

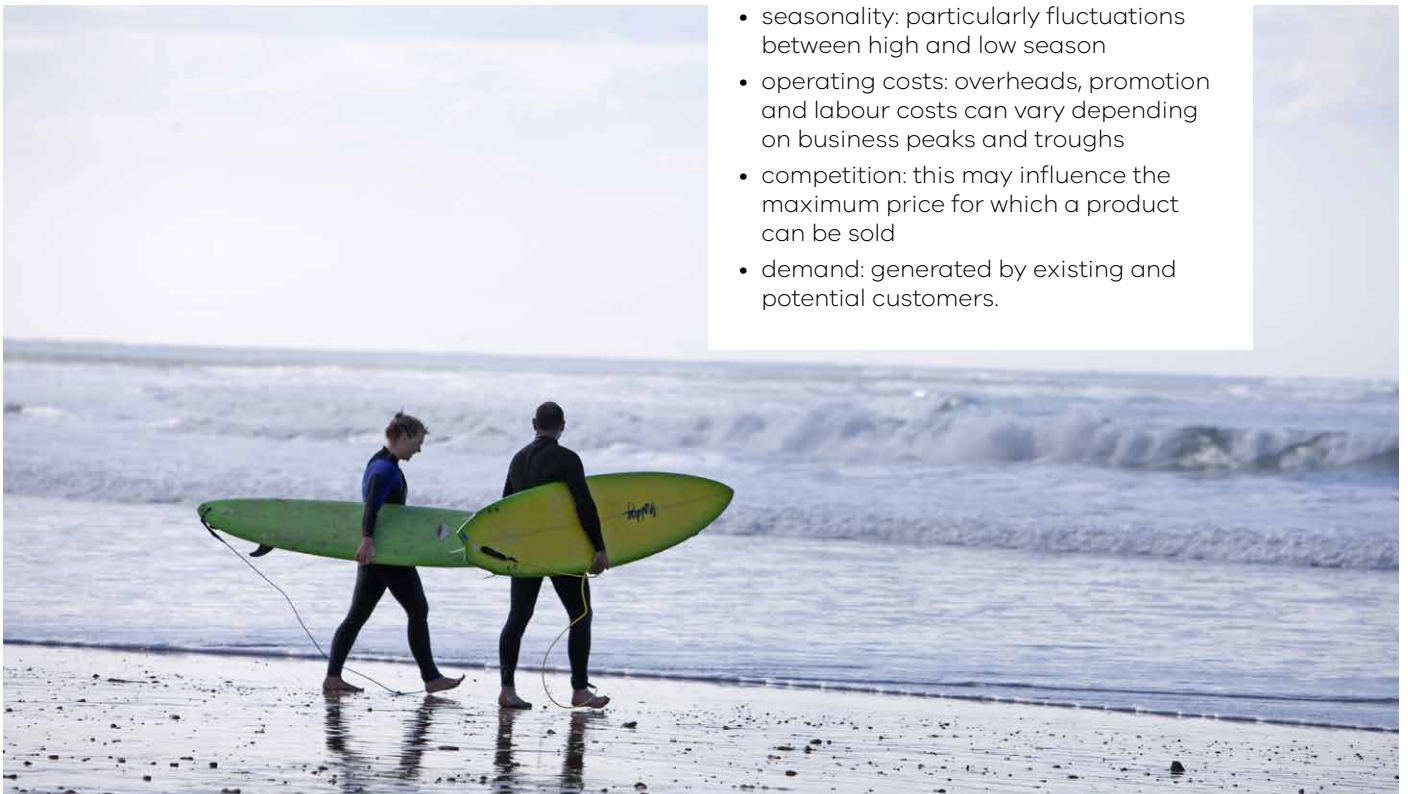
To price your product accurately and competitively, you will need a clear understanding of all product components and their impact on the total price.

Before you set your prices, it's important to consider:

- the total costs involved in getting the product or service to the market
- your required profit margin
- price sensitivity of target markets
- commission levels and other distribution costs
- allowance for any taxes that are applicable
- competitor analysis and competitive advantage
- market and image perception of the product, the business and the region
- the perceived value of the product
- the quality of the product.

Factors influencing pricing include:

- seasonality: particularly fluctuations between high and low season
- operating costs: overheads, promotion and labour costs can vary depending on business peaks and troughs
- competition: this may influence the maximum price for which a product can be sold
- demand: generated by existing and potential customers.





*Using dynamic, seasonal and value-added pricing, including discounting, can be a valuable part of your marketing strategy.*

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It's also worth considering that your price can influence the perceived value of your product – if it is too low, your product may be seen as “cheap” and therefore be bypassed by some customers, even if it actually delivers a very high quality experience.

Setting your prices can be a complex process and it's worth having a look at Business Victoria's guide to [Pricing Strategies](#) to be sure you have taken into account all of the elements that could impact your decision.

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## Discounting

Using dynamic, seasonal and value-added pricing, including discounting, can be a valuable part of your marketing strategy.

There are a number of ways you can influence customers to buy more, such as:

- offering discount pricing, including quantity (“pay two, stay three”, or kids enter free, for example) and seasonal discounts
- packaging or bundling your product (working with other products in the same region and offering a discount on a combined offering)
- segmenting your pricing (offering price reductions to one part of your market, for example, students and seniors)
- repeat and referral business (offering special deals for returning visitors, or new visitors who have been recommended to visit you by loyal repeat visitors).

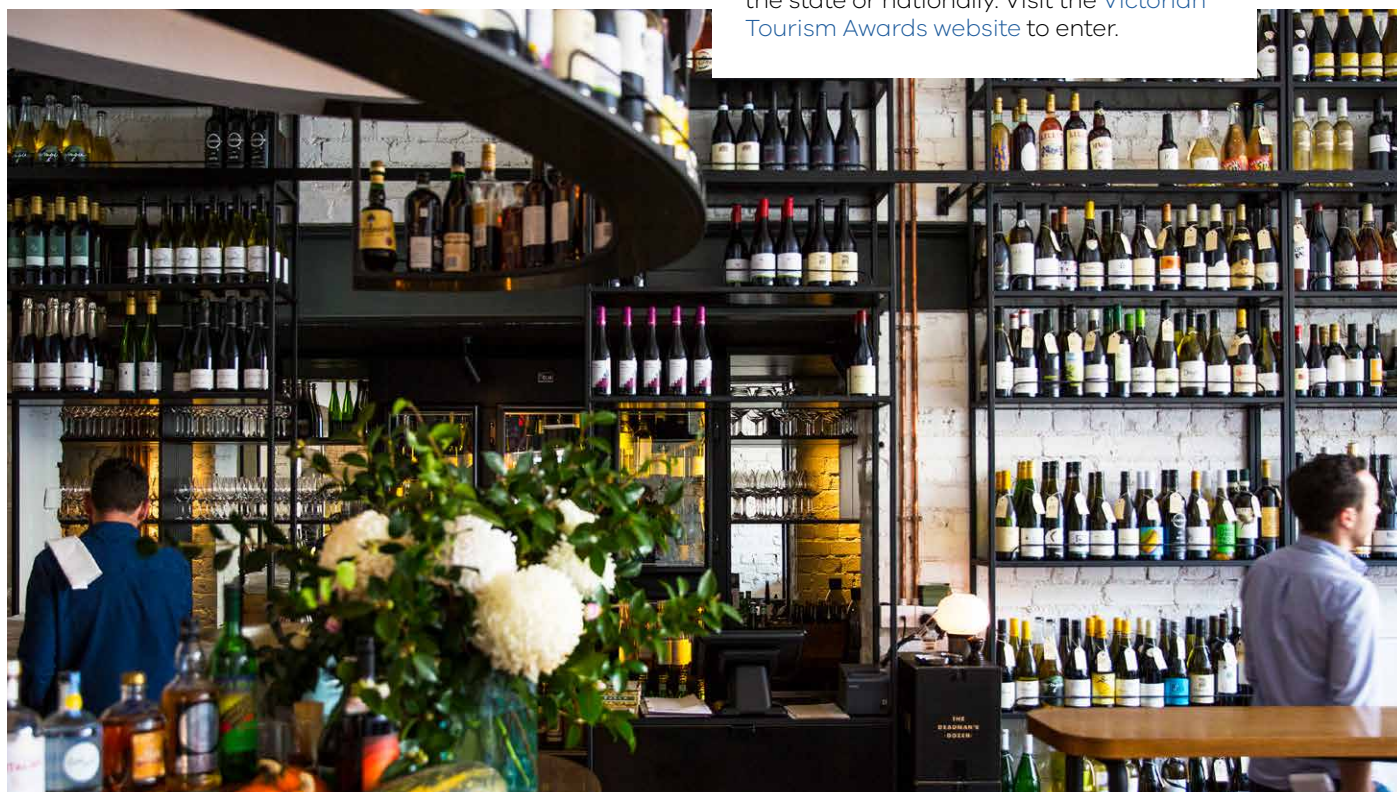
Discounting on price alone can boost sales in the short term. In the long term, however, it can be risky. If competitors can undercut your price, you may find yourself in a continuous cycle of competitive price-cutting, so it's worth thinking about whether it's a viable option for your product.

# Awards and accreditation

Awards and accreditation can be surprisingly good marketing tools. Having a nationally recognised accreditation or an award adds to your business's credibility with customers and even the media.

A formal option is the [Australian Tourism Accreditation Program](#) (ATAP), which aims to give tourism operators across Australia the ability to apply for 'Australian Tourism Accreditation' online and become an 'Accredited Tourism Business'. The online program is a business development tool that assists tourism businesses to meet industry standards and to gain recognition for doing so.

The Victorian Tourism Awards is another valuable tool. Gaining recognition through the awards can provide invaluable exposure and consumer credibility. The process of completing the awards submission also offers a great opportunity to analyse your business by self-evaluating your goals and objectives. And of course if you're recognised as a winner, you can market yourself as the best in the state or nationally. Visit the [Victorian Tourism Awards website](#) to enter.



# Working with the media

**When you've done your marketing plan and you're ready to start generating publicity, it's time to work with the media to get your product noticed.**

To make it easier, here are some tips for approaching media outlets and contacts:

- understand the readership profile of the medium, what material they present and how they present it
- try to see your story from the audience point of view, rather than from your marketing perspective
- target the story idea to the most appropriate person in the media outlet
- present the story idea succinctly and professionally
- mention any business accreditation or awards you've received
- follow-up the contact if required
- make it easy for them to deal with you.





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**There are a few things you can do to make your media release stand out:**

### **DO**

Keep it short

Be simple and get to the point quickly

Keep to the main point

Make it relevant to their readership

Create a catchy but relevant heading

Proof read it for spelling, typos and grammar

Provide full contact details

Date it

### **DON'T**

Waffle

Overload it with too many things

Go overboard on presentation

Say things you can't substantiate

Use clichés or jargon.

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## **Media releases and media kits**

When you're sending information to the media:

- TV shows generally prefer a brief media kit
- websites, newspapers and magazines prefer a media release.

Most media offices are sent a huge number of media releases every day, so getting yours noticed can be a challenge.

### **Helpful contacts**

- Your Regional Tourism Board
- Visit Victoria's public relations team
- Published media guides, with detailed contact listings
- Public relations and media consultants

Keep in mind that while public relations and media consultants can be helpful, it's important to develop the skills you need to work with the media directly, and to generate your own publicity.

# Digital Marketing

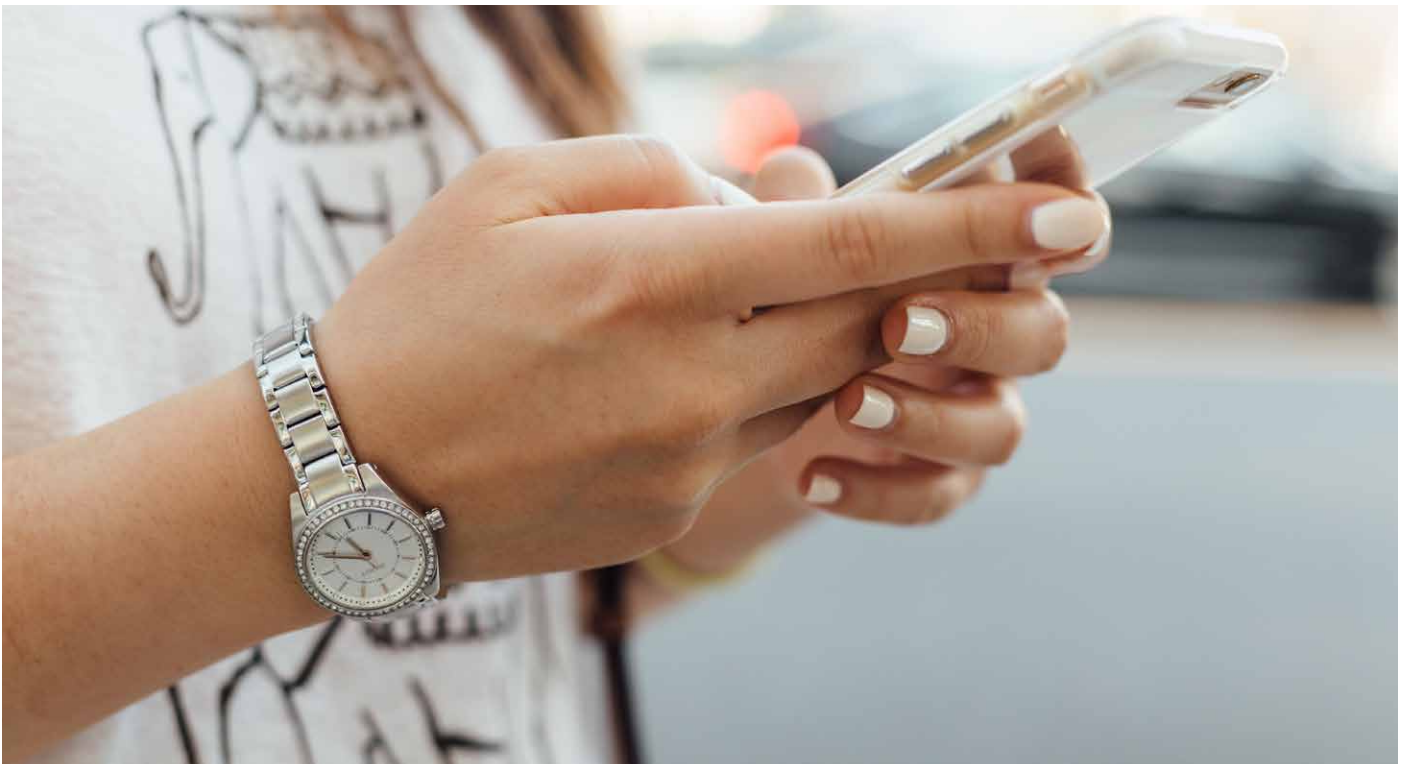
**Digital marketing is ever evolving, changing the way consumers travel and how we communicate with them.**

Most consumers engage with digital channels - from destination and attraction websites to social media platforms and review websites - at some stage in their travel journey.

Many will engage with the channels many times on their path to purchase (finding a destination, searching for experiences, reviewing accommodation options and making a booking), on their holiday (finding a nearby restaurant or attraction, sharing their experiences with their friends and family and reviewing places they've been) and once they're home (more sharing and reviewing).

As technology and consumer behaviour changes, so do your marketing opportunities and challenges. With the proliferation of mobile technology (almost everybody travels with a mobile phone, and many with tablets), it's more important than ever to make sure your website is 'mobile-friendly' - that is, easily accessible for mobile devices. (You can check how mobile-friendly your website is with the [Google Mobile-Friendly Test tool](#).) And as engagement with social media platforms continues to grow, it's essential to consider these valuable tools for communicating with and understanding your customers.

There are many aspects to digital marketing, and the landscape is continuously and rapidly changing.



Some elements we recommend you understand and actively monitor or engage with are:

- **Website analytics:** knowing where your visitors are coming from, and how they're finding you, is fundamental to maximising one of your biggest owned assets: your website. [Google Analytics](#) is a free service that allows you to track and analyse visits to your website. Its [Analytics Academy](#) offers free online tutorials about how to use the tool. Business Victoria's [Measure your website's success](#) has useful information about measuring your website's performance with web analytics.
- **Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM):** ensuring that people can find your website at the various stages of their journey planning is critical, and optimising your site is a key step in making this happen. Business Victoria's [Improve your SEO](#) has a wealth of information about how to optimise your website for search engines. [Seoptimizer](#) is a free tool you can use to assess your website's optimisation. You may also wish to invest in search engine marketing, such as [Google AdWords](#), to raise the profile of your site through online advertising.
- **Social media:** It's estimated that there will be more than 3 billion social media users in the world by the end of 2020, so it's a communication channel that can't be ignored. There are plenty of ways to maximise your reach through key platforms, and it's certainly worth staying up to date to ensure you are taking advantage of the latest changes and opportunities. See Business Victoria's [Use social media for business](#) for advice about the best ways to use social media channels to communicate with your customers. For information about how to create and manage social media accounts for business, most major platforms such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) offer free tutorials and support pages.
- **Content:** story telling is king in the modern marketing world, and if you have a website, blog or social media accounts, you have all the tools you need to tell great stories that make a real impact on consumers.  
  
Stories - website content, blog posts or social media posts - don't need to be long, but they do need to be regular. Whether you're creating content for your website, for social media channels, or both, keeping your content up-to-date is absolutely critical. Up to date content reassures consumers that your business is operating and has something to offer. Out of date content suggests just the opposite.  
  
Content can take many forms, so choose what works for best for you and your business. Remind people of how beautiful a sunset at your property is, or what the changing season is bringing to your kitchen, for example. You can also be utilitarian - announce a new menu, changed opening hours, a new vintage release or an event that you are holding. The key is to communicate, regularly and frequently. An added bonus is that Google search rewards websites that are kept up to date and have content refreshed regularly.
- **Review sites:** Current surveys suggest that more than 80% of consumers trust review site recommendations as much as those of their friends and family, so it pays to take care of your business's reputation online. It's important to monitor these sites (such as TripAdvisor and Yelp) and engage with your guests once they have left your property or venue. There's plenty of information available online about how to respond appropriately to reviews both good and bad, to both engage with your customers and look after your online reputation - see tips on how to manage your business's online reviews at [business.gov.au](#).



Further resources:

### **Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)**

The [Australian Tourism Data Warehouse](#) (ATDW) is an essential digital marketing tool for tourism and event operators in Australia. The ATDW distributes tourism and event product information to national, state and local consumer websites, including the official tourism website for Victoria, [visitvictoria.com](#).

### **Visit Victoria's Corporate Website**

[Visit Victoria's corporate website](#) has information, fact sheets, webinars and links for setting up and managing a listing on [visitvictoria.com](#) and the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW).

### **Tourism Tribe**

[Tourism Tribe](#) is a digital-marketing-focused training portal for the tourism industry. The portal offers members training materials, tutorials, forums and webinars, with options to access live support and one-to-one mentoring. Topics covered range from analytics and SEO to social media channels and online reputation.

### **Google**

Google has a number of useful resources:

[Analytics Academy](#): free, online training in Google Analytics.

[Digital Garage](#): free, online digital marketing training aimed at small-to-medium sized businesses.

[Think with Google](#): a large range of digital marketing consumer insights, resources and case studies.

### **Business Victoria**

Business Victoria's website is a reliable, valuable resource for small business, with sections dedicated to:

- [Building a website](#)
- [Social media for business](#)
- [Website analytics](#)

