TRAVEL TRADE TEAM

Introduction to the Destination Queenstown & Lake Wānaka Tourism Travel Trade team



ABOUT TRAVEL TRADE

Destination Queenstown (DQ) and Lake Wānaka Tourism (LWT) are the Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) responsible for both destination marketing and destination management in the Queenstown Lakes District.

Our role is to market the district in both international and domestic markets and to work collaboratively with partners to deliver the region's destination management plan, focusing on regenerative tourism by 2030 and attracting 'high contributing' visitors.

The travel trade team engages with inbound tour operators, wholesalers, retail travel networks, airlines, OTAs (Online Travel Agents), and Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) to share the latest on Queenstown and Wānaka products, experiences, and tourism offerings.

We connect with these partners through offshore events with TNZ, sales calls, RTO-led market activity, and domestic industry events such as TRENZ and TECNZ. The team also delivers a regular program of trade-focused communications.





OBJECTIVES

- Work with the travel trade to cultivate visitor preference for the region by raising awareness in key markets and shape demand from high contributing visitors.
- Support balanced seasonality from our international markets through a diverse market mix.
- Leverage key industry partnerships and ensure Queenstown Lakes is present at key industry events.
- Share the region’s sustainable tourism progress with key travel trade partners, inviting them to celebrate our ambition with their clients.
- Support membership presence and development in travel trade channels.

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THE 101 ON TRAVEL TRADE

WHAT IS ‘TRAVEL TRADE’?

The Travel Trade refers to a network of intermediaries—such as inbound tour operators, wholesalers, travel agents, consortia, OTAs, and airlines—who promote and sell destinations like Queenstown and New Zealand to travellers.

DQ and LWT’s trade marketing team connects these partners with local tourism businesses (accommodation, activities, transport, etc.), helping them package and sell experiences to their clients.

In essence, the Travel Trade buys local tourism products and sells them on—either directly to travellers or through other agents.

For international visitors, the Travel Trade is a key influence in trip planning and destination choice, offering trusted advice, booking support, and curated travel packages.





DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

Distribution is how you reach your customers or how they can find you. Travel Trade marketing operates in the *indirect* channels.

DIRECT

You connect with customers yourself—via your website, social media, online advertising, customer referrals, or word of mouth.

INDIRECT

Indirect channels (Travel Trade): Third parties promote and sell your product, including Inbound Operators, wholesalers, OTAs (e.g. Expedia), retail travel agents, consortia, and visitor information centres.

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TRADE DISTRIBUTION PARTNERS



Retail Travel Agents

Retail agents deal directly with customers in their home country, often from a physical shopfront. They offer face-to-face service and help travellers book flights, accommodation, tours, and other travel arrangements.



Wholesalers

Wholesalers act as a bridge between NZ-based ITOs and retail agents. They purchase ready-made programs created by ITOs or design their own packages and itineraries tailored for travel agents and their customers. These packages include tours, accommodation, and attractions, making it easier for agents to sell a complete experience.



Inbound Operators

Also known as ITOs, a ground operator or destination management company (DMC), they are typically businesses based in New Zealand, that create itineraries and coordinate the reservation, confirmation and payment of travel arrangements on behalf of their overseas wholesale clients.



Online Travel Agents

Like retail travel agents, but operating exclusively online, OTAs are web-based platforms where customers can research and book travel services themselves — flights, tours, accommodation and activities. Examples include Expedia, Get Your Guide, and Webjet.

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PREPARE YOUR BUSINESS

BEFORE ENGAGING WITH TRAVEL TRADE, THOROUGH RESEARCH AND PLANNING ARE ESSENTIAL.

Understand Trade Pricing & Commissions

- Set pricing that works for your business, factoring in commission levels typically ranging from 10–30%.
- Commission is only paid after a sale is made.
- Know the difference between gross and net rates and ensure you're offering the correct rates to each part of the distribution system.
- Visit the Tourism Export Council of NZ (TECNZ) for detailed pricing guidelines and examples.

Build Industry Knowledge & Connections

- Join key tourism organisations: TECNZ, Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA), NZ Māori Tourism, Tourism New Zealand, and Qualmark.
- Stay informed by subscribing to industry news and insights: e.g. Tourism Ticker, Inside Tourism, Tourism Business Magazine, and annual tourism sector reports.

Research and Align with Your Ideal Market

- Explore international visitor research and domestic trends to identify markets that best align with your product.
- Understand the travel styles, expectations, and cultural preferences of different inbound markets.
- Use resources provided by Tourism New Zealand, Qualmark, and industry associations for up-to-date insights.

PREPARE YOUR BUSINESS

BEFORE WORKING WITH TRAVEL TRADE, THOROUGH RESEARCH AND PLANNING ARE ESSENTIAL.

Know the Travel Trade Structure

- Learn how the travel distribution system works, including:
- Inbound Tour Operators (ITOs)
- Wholesalers
- Retail agents
- Online Travel Agents (OTAs)
- Understand how commissions, booking timelines, and product contracting typically operate.

Get Trade-Ready

- Develop a trade marketing plan and set a budget to target international visitors through events, digital platforms, and trade networks.
- Prepare high-quality promotional materials, including brochures, rate sheets, and images — in English and relevant translated versions based on your markets.
- Package your product with complementary operators or experiences in Queenstown and Wānaka to create more compelling offerings.
- Consider refining your product to better meet the expectations of international travellers (e.g., language support, cultural considerations, flexible booking terms).

Train Your Team for Trade and Cultural Readiness

- Ensure your team understands the travel trade process, including handling trade bookings, commission payments, and working with international partners.
- Provide cultural awareness training relevant to your target markets — such as language basics, etiquette, dietary needs, and service expectations.
- Encourage team participation in industry workshops to build knowledge and relationships.

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WORKING WITH TRADE

BENEFITS

Expanded Reach
Working with travel trade extends your sales and marketing reach, connecting you with global customers through distribution channels. Trade partners extend your sales reach by earning commission on net or discounted rates — often with no upfront cost to you.

Market Expertise & Efficiency
Trade partners often have deep knowledge of key international markets and consumer behaviour. They bring repeat business, share valuable insights, and make regular sales visits, saving you time and resources on market development.

Longer Lead Times
Travel trade bookings typically happen well in advance, offering greater predictability and stability in your forward bookings — supporting better business planning and cash flow.

Enhanced Customer Experience
Trade partners handle bookings, payments, and pre-arrival comms, acting as a bridge between you and travellers. They can sell add-ons (e.g. transport, activities), reducing your admin and boosting guest experience.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Commission Reduces Margins
Offering commission means you'll earn slightly less per booking. Ensure your pricing structure accommodates this while remaining sustainable for your business.

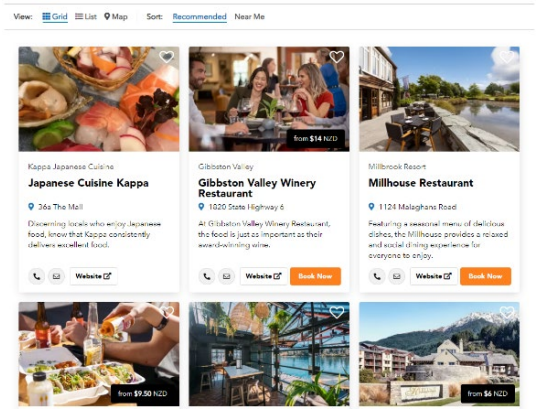
Less Direct Customer Contact
Trade bookings can limit your direct engagement with customers, making it harder to build loyalty, gather feedback, or personalise service before arrival.

Diversify Your Sales Channels
Avoid over-reliance on any one channel. Aim for a balanced mix of direct, trade, domestic, and international business in your strategy to reduce risk and improve resilience.

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WORKING WITH THE TRAVEL TRADE TEAM



Product updates

Keep the travel trade team updated with your latest news so we can support your product through our global trade marketing. Updates are shared in quarterly newsletters and ‘new product’ features during offshore sales calls and events.



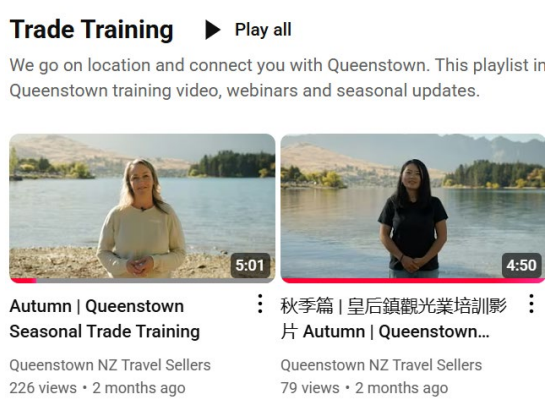
Spotlight Feature Content

New feature for engaging with trade is the creation of spotlight video features where we capture content and produce short snackable video edits for enhancing training and education. This is shared in newsletter form, on our website and through our social channels.



Facebook

Regular content schedule posted each week, sharing our newsletter updates and video training. This is closed group exclusively for Travel Sellers, currently close to 1,000 agents.



YouTube

YouTube houses all our training and educational tools to further enhance travel seller’s knowledge of our destination.

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WORKING WITH THE TRAVEL TRADE TEAM



Familiarisation (famil) trips

Famils are a valuable way for trade partners to experience your product firsthand. They may be organised through DQ/LWT, TNZ, Inbound Operators, Airlines, or others. To make the most impact, warmly welcome participants, share key information, and always follow up post their visit with you.



Content and assets

Providing the travel trade team with high quality imagery of your product or offering is important to ensure appropriate representation of your business within our activity. Ensure your assets have permission for DQ/LWT and third-party use, allowing us to use this in our activity and across all channels.



Attend trade shows

TNZ coordinate international roadshows and events, many of which provide partner opportunities. The trade team also leads off-shore activity. When these opportunities arise, they are shared in the Fortnightly Remarks newsletter. Be sure you read and keep an eye out.



Member Capability

We are always available for the opportunity to meet and connect, share insights and support where we can.

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TRADE ACTIVITY CALENDAR

Market	Activity	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Western Australia, USA, Canada, UK, Europe	Events			DQ LWT Australia Roadshow								Snow Travel Expo	
	Sales Calls			BONZ Sales Mission 2026 (USA)					AU Ski Sales calls	RTNZ Inbound Trade Event / IBO dinner & ANZCRO x AirNZ Sales Mission (USA)	AU Sales Calls		
	Famils		Air New Zealand Winter Incentive Famils (AU)			Post Australia Roadshow MEGA Famil (AU)					United Airlines Famil (USA)	Western TRENZ Famil	
		Ongoing collaboration with TNZ & IBO to support the delivery of famils											
Eastern China, SEA (Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia), India, Japan, South Korea	Events	General Travel India Roadshow & Kiwi Link India & Kiwi link SEA		Kiwi Link Korea		Kiwi Link China							Kia Ora South China
	Sales calls		NZ sales calls (IBO)			Sister City Event & China Sales Mission	IBO Hosted Breakfast Event						
	Famils											Eastern TRENZ Famils	
		Ongoing collaboration with TNZ & IBO to support the delivery of famils											
Industry events			TECNZ Conference				TEC Xmas Symposium		RTNZ-TNZ Connect			TRENZ	
EDMs		Spotlight Feature		Quarterly Newsletter	Spotlight Feature		Quarterly Newsletter	Spotlight Feature		Quarterly Newsletter	Spotlight Feature		Quarterly Newsletter

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TRADE INDUSTRY SUPPORT

TNZ

Tourism New Zealand is the national tourism body promoting New Zealand to the world.

With similar opportunities to your local RTO, create a listing on NZ.com and ensure the team are aware of your offering.

www.traveltrade.newzealand.com

RTOs

Your local Regional Tourism Organisations promoting Queenstown and Wānaka to both international and domestic audiences.

www.queenstownnz.co.nz/travel-trade/about-us

TIA

Tourism Industry Aotearoa is the national private sector organisation speaking on behalf of the tourism industry. TIA provides tools and information to help its members run successful business.

www.tia.org.nz

TECNZ

Tourism Export Council of New Zealand represents inbound tour operators and product/service providers who sell their services offshore.

www.tourismexportcouncil.org.nz

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OTHER PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Qualmark

Qualmark is New Zealand's national quality assurance programme for tourism operators. It operates as a licensing system for tourism's official quality mark. All tourism businesses in NZ are eligible to apply. To participate in offshore marketing with TNZ you must be endorsed by Qualmark.

www.qualmark.com

MBIE

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment is responsible for tourism research and policy making, providing advice to government on how to create the right environment for enhanced productivity and growth in the tourism sector in order to grow tourism's contribution to the NZ economy.

www.mbie.govt.nz

DOC

Department of Conservation. If you have a business that seeks concession on DOC estate with visitors you are required to pay a concession fee which assists DOC with their conservation activities and/or maintenance of many walks, huts and car parks.

www.doc.govt.nz

NZ Māori Tourism

New Zealand Māori Tourism is the national Māori tourism organisation, representing and advocating for more than 200 Māori tourism businesses.

www.maoritourism.co.nz

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