



**MARKETPLACE PREP  
SECTION TWO**



## PRESCHEDULED APPOINTMENTS

More than 140,000 appointment requests slots are scheduled for the Marketplace 2025 week. Beginning on Oct. 1, all Appointment-Takers can request appointments with the organizations they most want to meet with during Marketplace.

ABA gives you the flexibility of requesting your appointments on our website, [www.buses.org/marketplace](http://www.buses.org/marketplace), allowing you to change and update your requests up until the minute they are scheduled. Requests not received by January 3 will not be included in the appointment scheduling process.

### TIPS ON REQUESTING ONLINE APPOINTMENTS FOR MARKETPLACE

- Start with the materials ABA will send you electronically. The Appointment Request Mailing will contain valuable information on how to research and request your appointments.
- Your Marketplace Passport contains the Motorcoach and Tour Operator Database and Travel Database. Both can be used as a search engine to find up-to-date information on registered companies. You may then select these companies for an appointment and submit your requests online using the appointment request software.
- ABA will show you which companies have requested your organization and will allow you to review and change your requests so you can have more mutually requested appointments.

### UNDERSTAND THE ABA SCHEDULING PROCESS

- Appointment codes are assigned to you on the day you register, and appointments are prioritized and scheduled in order of your appointment code. Appointments are not prioritized based on the date your appointment requests are returned.
- Keep a copy of your requests for your records.
- ABA's appointment scheduling program schedules nearly 95% of mutually requested appointments (meaning both the Buyer and Seller requested to meet with each other), and 90% of the Buyer requested appointments. Requesting the maximum appointments allowed increases your chances of getting those mutual requests.
- ABA's goal in scheduling appointments in this manner is to provide you with the absolute best quality appointments possible.

### BUYERS: SEARCH THE MEMBER PROFILES ON ABA'S WEBSITE

- Profile forms for all companies attending Marketplace are available online through your Marketplace Passport. Using the interactive Seller database will help you determine which companies meet your criteria; these will be the profiles you want to research.
- In using the database, popular searches are by: Tour Destinations, Amenities.
- Remember when searching the profile database, the more criteria you select, the smaller the results of your search will be.
- You may want to start with your ideal group. Choose your city as a top destination, the type of service/property. Your search may result in only a few companies, but these will be your top priority prospects when requesting your appointments.
- Keep in mind that the data is only as good as the information supplied by the travel industry members when completing their ABA membership profile form. Some information may be incomplete. If your first, most specific searches result with nothing, keep trying by broadening your search criteria.

## **SELLERS: SEARCH THE MEMBER PROFILES ON ABA'S WEBSITE**

- Profile forms for all companies attending Marketplace are available online through your Marketplace Passport. Using the interactive Motorcoach and Tour Operator database will help you determine which companies meet your criteria; these will be the profiles you want to research.
- In using the database, popular searches are by: Tour Destinations, Intermodal Programs, Marketing Activities, Operator Size, Customer Base, and Facilities Used.
- Remember when searching the profile database, the more criteria you select, the smaller the results of your search will be.
- You may want to start with your ideal group. Choose your city as a top destination, the type of market you would prefer to cater to, or search for operators who use your type of facility on their tours. Your search may result in only a few companies, but these will be your top priority prospects when requesting your appointments.
- Keep in mind that the data is only as good as the information supplied by the operators when completing their ABA membership profile form. Some information may be incomplete. If your first, most specific searches result with nothing, keep trying by broadening your search criteria.

## **APPOINTMENT REQUESTS BY THE NUMBERS**

Different member categories are scheduled for appointments during the same sessions, but appointment requests are made separately to ensure an even distribution of appointments among DMOs, Hoteliers, Attractions, Receptives, Charter Operators, Allied Associations and Associates registered as appointment-taking Seller delegates. ABA allows delegates to submit more requests (75) than the (54) prescheduled slots to increase their potential for matches.

### **Appointment-Taking Buyer Delegates**

- ⇒ 75 Requests for DMO and Receptive/Charter Operators registered for the DMO session
- ⇒ 75 Requests for Hoteliers
- ⇒ 75 Requests for Attractions, Receptive/Charter Operator and appointment-taking Associates registered for the Lodging/Attraction sessions

### **Appointment-Taking Seller Delegates**

- ⇒ 75 Requests for Buyers

## **YOUR GOAL SHOULD BE TO FIND THE “VALUE PROPOSITION” OR “SALES MESSAGE” FOR THE OPERATOR**

- Remember the 80/20 rule: 80% of your visitors come from 20% of your feeder areas.
- Go after a targeted group of prospects based on your search findings. The number of appointments you schedule is not your primary objective. It is better to have 2 great opportunities than 20 okay prospects.
- Finally, look up the website of specific companies that you are interested in to get more information on their current tour product.



## PLANNING YOUR WEEK

### DEVELOP YOUR WEEK'S SCHEDULE

- Block out the days you have appointments.
- If you are a first-time delegate, make sure you go through the Orientation process.
- Mark the times for the breakfasts, luncheons, dinners and hospitality events that you will attend.
- Select the education seminars that you would like to attend and pencil them into your itinerary.
- Attend a sightseeing tour on Saturday.
- Block out time to do research in the Marketplace Service Center on the companies who you will be meeting with during your appointments.
- Target those companies you would like to meet with and attempt to schedule an appointment with them.
- If you do not have a mutual appointment time available to meet, try to schedule a meeting outside the Marketplace floor.
- Make reservations for the dine-around.
- Schedule some time to volunteer for ABA to meet new friends and get better acquainted with Marketplace.
- Follow ABA on Facebook and Twitter to get the latest updates.

### TIPS FOR SURVIVING MARKETPLACE WEEK

- Remember you can't be everywhere at one time. It is OK to schedule some down time for yourself to regroup and relax.
- On your appointment day you may find you have extra nervous energy. Wear a suit with pockets to carry a granola bar or other snack items to munch on during your breaks. Food and drinks are also available on the Marketplace Networking Floor.
- Be sure to get enough sleep prior to your appointment session.
- Wear comfortable shoes. Your professional image is necessary to uphold, but that doesn't mean your feet have to pay for it.
- Socializing and meeting new contacts is a large piece of the power of Marketplace. Many valuable contacts are made outside of the business floor at social functions and events.
- Balancing your schedule to allow you enough time to network and get enough rest will be your biggest challenge during the week.

## MARKETPLACE BUYER CHECKLIST

Please use this guide to prepare for the American Bus Marketplace. A comprehensive knowledge of your organization's product and/or service will help you effectively communicate during your seven-minute appointments.

- A minimum supply of 300 business cards
- A minimum supply of 200 profile sheets
- Understand your company's product positioning and customer base.
- Be knowledgeable about your business mix and the types of tours operated, e.g., retail, pre-formed student, adult, and special interest.
- Bring an example of catalogue itineraries, promotional flyers, etc.
- Define your goals for attending Marketplace.
- Know the future business opportunities under consideration, e.g., new destinations, new market segments, special interest tours.
- Be knowledgeable about your tour production for each destination served and the attractions, restaurants, lodging and receptive services used in the tour program.
- Have a listing of key company contacts for tour planning/purchasing and their responsibility, e.g., retail, charter, geographic regions.
- Review your company's profile information and know what information you need to bring back from Marketplace.
- Review and update your company's profile information online.
- Be in your booth for appointments.
- Attend Marketplace education seminars to assist in business and personal development and growth.
- Be prepared for appointments that you did not request.
- Remember to schedule your breaks during appointment scheduling.
- When at Marketplace, use your breaks to take a walk, go to the restroom or grab a snack. Just be sure to place your Official Break card on your table when you leave.

## MARKETPLACE DMO CHECKLIST

Please use this guide to prepare for the American Bus Marketplace. A comprehensive knowledge of your organization's product and/or service will help you effectively communicate during your seven-minute appointments.

- A minimum supply of 150 business cards
- Concise Profile Sheet (approximately 100) highlighting your services, and key tour contacts. Include your toll-free, direct, and fax numbers, and your e-mail and Web address.
- A presentation book such as a loose-leaf binder that offers a pictorial representation of your destination
- A map that geographically positions your destination and shows access to major roadways, attractions, cities and other tour regions or destinations
- Suggested itineraries for tours including points of interest, attractions and side trips. Itineraries should include trip time, mileage and note specific information, such as road conditions, restrictions and parking.
- Escort notes/guide speak for accurate tour narration of local points of interest, sights, attractions, customs and history
- Dates and descriptions of local events, festivals or activities to enhance an Operator's tour product. Also, highlight value periods/shoulder seasons when tour services are readily available.
- Blackout periods when special events or conventions may cause difficulty in securing services for operating a motorcoach, e.g., Mardi Gras, Rose Bowl, Rodeo Days
- Knowledge of attractions, restaurants and lodging seeking motorcoach business and able to meet the needs of the Operator and tour passenger. Be able to describe local attractions, operation schedules and fees.
- A reference list of step-on guides and/or receptive operators that serve your area
- A list of local service facilities for diesel repair, sanitary dump stations, bus wash racks, fuel stations and short/long term bus parking
- Knowledge of local laws, regulations, ordinances or fees that affect the operation of a motorcoach within your city, state or province
- Examples of promotional brochures and tour-planning guides that can be sent to the Operator following Marketplace. Multilingual brochures should be available.
- Availability of transparencies, prints, separations, logos, videos or preprinted brochure shells for the Operator's use in tour promotion
- Accessibility of cooperative advertising funds to help the tour company promote your destination
- Information regarding FAM trip opportunities
- A schedule of media advertising (forecast 12-18 months out) that may motivate a Tour Operator to promote your destination

## MARKETPLACE ATTRACTIONS CHECKLIST

Please use this guide to prepare for the American Bus Marketplace. A comprehensive knowledge of your organization's product and/or service will help you effectively communicate during your seven-minute appointments.

- A minimum supply of 150 business cards
- Concise Profile Sheet (approximately 100) highlighting your services, and key tour contacts. Include your toll-free, direct, and fax numbers, and e-mail and Web address.
- A presentation book such as a loose-leaf binder that offers a pictorial representation of your attraction
- A map that geographically positions your attraction and shows access to major roadways, cities and other tour regions, destinations or attractions
- Operation hours and program schedules for the upcoming 12-18 months
- Escort notes/guide speak for accurate tour narration of your attraction
- Information regarding handicapped-accessible facilities
- Reserved or block seating at park events or programs to allow the tour group to be together. Also, have information on barrier-free facilities.
- Private, "insider" or special interest tours of your facility
- A designated group entrance to expedite tour movements with a motorcoach-accessible area reserved for bus parking
- Blackout periods when special events or conventions may preclude a tour from using your attraction
- Advise the operator of any construction/renovation or traveling exhibits that might affect the tour group's overall experience
- Multi-tiered pricing with net, tour operator rates to entice the Tour Operator's business
- Complimentary or special considerations for the escort, driver or group
- A definitive reservation/deposit/refund policy for tour group admissions and a billing policy
- Examples of promotional brochures that can be sent to the Operator following Marketplace. Multilingual brochures should be available.
- Availability of transparencies, prints, separations, or logos for the Operator's use in the tour promotion

## MARKETPLACE FOOD SERVICE CHECKLIST

Please use this guide to prepare for the American Bus Marketplace. A comprehensive knowledge of your organization's product and/or service will help you effectively communicate during your seven-minute appointments.

- A minimum supply of 150 business cards
- Concise Profile Sheet (approximately 100) highlighting your services, and key tour contacts. Include your toll-free, direct, and fax numbers, and e-mail and Web address.
- A presentation book such as a loose-leaf binder that offers a pictorial representation of your restaurant
- A map that geographically positions your restaurant and shows access to major roadways, attractions and other tour regions or destinations
- Certainty that a bus will clear any signs, marquees, low trees, entrances and awnings. You must have a motorcoach-accessible area for parking. Also, have information on barrier-free facilities.
- Capability of managing a large group of people during breakfast, lunch or dinner. Will prospective tours need to be accommodated during non-peak times?
- Capability of managing a large group of people for meal service in either the restaurant or banquet facilities
- Will the meal be plated or buffet-style
- Special menus and the capability of accommodating dietary requests such as Kosher/modified Kosher, low sodium, low fat, or vegetarian
- Blackout periods when special events or scheduled club meetings may preclude a tour from dining at your restaurant
- Multi-tiered pricing with net, tour operator rates to entice the Tour Operator's business
- Complimentary or special consideration for the escort, driver or group
- Does your establishment offer any meal packages in conjunction with hotels or attractions
- A definitive reservation/deposit/refund policy for tour groups and a billing policy
- Examples of promotional brochures and menus that can be sent out to the Operator following Marketplace
- Multilingual, Braille or large print menus or multilingual staff are available, if needed
- Special menus and pricing with the capability of accommodating dietary requests such as Kosher/modified Kosher, low sodium, low fat or vegetarian
- Number of restrooms
- Information regarding handicapped-accessible facility



## MARKETPLACE HOTELIER CHECKLIST

Please use this guide to prepare for the American Bus Marketplace. A comprehensive knowledge of your organization's product and/or service will help you effectively communicate during your seven-minute appointments.

- A minimum supply of 150 business cards
- Concise Profile Sheet (approximately 100) highlighting your services, and key tour contacts. Include your toll-free, direct, and fax numbers, and e-mail and Web address.
- A presentation book such as a loose-leaf binder that offers a pictorial representation of your rooms, facilities and amenities/services. Also, have information on barrier-free facilities.
- A map that geographically positions your property and shows access to major roadways, attractions, cities and other tour regions or destinations. Also, be able to describe nearby services, including gift shops, drug stores, restaurants, recreation and emergency medical centers.
- A list of local service facilities for diesel repair, sanitary dump stations, bus wash racks, fuel stations and short/long term bus parking
- Understanding of how the tour segment fulfills your market mix and revenue goals
- Knowledge of when (days of the week/season) tours can most easily be accommodated, and the number of discounted rooms allotted to the group tour market
- Ability to block rooms together, manage early and late arrivals/departures
- Provisions for mass baggage handling, hired security or lifeguards
- Certainty that a bus will clear any signs, marquees, low trees, entrances and awnings. You must have a motorcoach-accessible area for parking.
- Multi-tiered pricing with net tour operator rates (forecast 12-18 months out) to entice the Tour Operator's business
- Complimentary or special considerations for the escort, driver or group
- A definitive reservation/deposit/refund policy for tour groups and a billing policy
- Does the property offer any packages including attractions, special activities or restaurants
- Dates/descriptions of local events, festivals, or activities to assist an Operator's tour scheduling
- Blackout periods when special events or conventions may preclude securing rooms and services. Also, highlight value periods/shoulder seasons when rooms are readily available.
- Capability of managing a large group of people for meal service in either the restaurant or banquet facilities
- Special menus and pricing with the capability of accommodating dietary requests such as Kosher/modified Kosher, low sodium, low fat or vegetarian
- Information regarding handicapped-accessible facilities
- Examples of promotional brochures that can be sent to the Operator following Marketplace
- Multilingual, Braille or large print menus or multilingual staff are available, if needed
- Availability of transparencies, prints, separations or logos for the Operator's use in the tour promotion

## PROFILE SHEETS

All members can now upload your profile sheet as a PDF or Word document. This will enable other members conducting research through the Passport or My ABA/My Member Search to view your company's branded information in a printable format.

To Upload Your Profile in Your Passport or in My ABA

- Click on the Upload Profile Doc tab at the top of the page.
- Browse for your profile sheet in Word or PDF format.
- Click on Upload.

You can change your profile sheet as often as you would like by removing your current, printable profile and uploading a new one. You can also upload images, videos and logos.

In addition to uploading your profile sheet online, remember your On-site Profile Sheet is your calling card at Marketplace. Profile sheets and business cards are the only collateral allowed on the Business Floor for distribution during appointments.

### PROFILE SHEET GUIDELINES

- Should be one page, copied front and back on 8½" x 11" paper
- Should have a 1" left-hand margin and be three-hole punched
- Should be duplicated and ready for distribution before your appointment session
- Should include complete address, phone and fax numbers, e-mail, web address and contact name
- Feature characteristics of product/location in bullet-point format
- Use a font and type size that is easy to read and follow
- Include maps if applicable. Provide a list of "bus friendly" services that are offered.
- Discuss "what's new" in your location or company
- List peak seasons of operations
- Give a detailed description of products and services
- Include group policies, incentive booking programs, etc.

### IN ADDITION

- Delegates are not required to provide Profile Sheets.
- All appointment-taking and Business Floor delegates may distribute Profile Sheets on the Marketplace Business Floor.
- Forms should not be mailed in advance to Buyers. As you are preparing for time out of the office, appointment sessions, and making final arrangements for the handling of groups in your absence, so too are the Motorcoach and Tour operators. Please be as courteous in your preparation for the appointments as you are during the appointments.
- Profile Sheets may be distributed during your actual appointment or while you are on the Business Floor.