



American Bus Association
Marketplace
Calgary | Feb 6-9, 2027

STAR Delegate Prep Packet

STEPS TO BE A SUCCESSFUL STAR

An exclusive ABA designation given to **first-time Marketplace attendees**.

- ▶ Visit the Marketplace Delegate Depot to learn the do's and don'ts, will's and won'ts and participate in our STAR Program.
- ▶ Meet one-on-one with an experienced Marketplace delegate in our Ambassador Program.
- ▶ Participate in a Floor Tour. You'll get a jump-start on how to navigate the Marketplace Networking and Business Floors.
- ▶ Spend quality time researching potential clients and learning about their business.
- ▶ Attend Education Seminars to keep up on what is happening in the industry.
- ▶ Remember to get a good night's sleep before your business appointments.
- ▶ Carry plenty of Business Cards
- ▶ Ask Questions – Marketplace volunteers are ready to help.
- ▶ Use all meal functions and social events effectively. These networking opportunities provide you with time to learn more from your colleagues in the industry.
- ▶ Sellers, listen carefully during your appointments. Learn what the Buyer's needs are and then tell them how you can realistically fulfill them.
- ▶ Sellers, remember to do your Marketplace follow-up. Ask the Buyer when the best time is to send the information to their office and follow-up accordingly.
- ▶ Follow ABA on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn for the latest information.

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 evening 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 Delegate Depot 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, Instagram, and LinkedIn to get the latest updates.

TIPS FOR SURVIVING MARKETPLACE WEEK

- ▶ Schedule some down time for yourself to regroup and relax.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ 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 between networking and adequate 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.

- ▶ Minimum supply of 300 business cards
- ▶ 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
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Knowledge of tour production for each destination served and the attractions, restaurants, lodging and receptive services used in the tour program.
- ▶ Listing of key company contacts for tour planning/purchasing and their responsibility
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Schedule breaks during appointment scheduling.
- ▶ 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.

- ▶ Minimum supply of 150 business cards
- ▶ Concise Profile Sheet (approximately 100) highlighting your services, and key tour contacts.
- ▶ Presentation book such as a loose-leaf binder that offers a pictorial representation of your destination
- ▶ Maps that geographically position 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
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Reference lists of step-on guides and/or receptive operators that serve your area
- ▶ Lists 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
- ▶ Access to coop advertising funds to help the tour company promote your destination
- ▶ FAM trip opportunities
- ▶ 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.

- ▶ Minimum supply of 150 business cards
- ▶ Concise Profile Sheet (approximately 100) highlighting your services, and key tour contacts.
- ▶ Presentation book such as a loose-leaf binder that offers a pictorial representation of your attraction
- ▶ Maps that geographically position 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. Have information on barrier-free facilities.
- ▶ Private, "insider" or special interest tours of your facility
- ▶ 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
- ▶ Knowledge 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
- ▶ 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.

- ▶ Minimum supply of 150 business cards
- ▶ Concise Profile Sheet (approximately 100) highlighting your services, and key tour contacts.
- ▶ Presentation book such as a loose-leaf binder that offers a pictorial representation of your restaurant
- ▶ Maps that geographically position your restaurant and shows access to major roadways, attractions and other tour regions or destinations
- ▶ Clearance knowledge of signs, marquees, low trees, entrances and awnings. You must have a motorcoach-accessible area for parking and information on barrier-free facilities.
- ▶ Capability of managing a large group of people during breakfast, lunch or dinner.
- ▶ Capability of managing a large group of people for meal service in either the restaurant or banquet facilities
- ▶ Meal: plated or buffet-style?
- ▶ Special menus and the capability of accommodating dietary requests such as: Diabetic, Kosher, Gluten Free, No Nuts, No Shellfish, Vegetarian, Halal
- ▶ 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
- ▶ Knowledge of meal packages in conjunction with hotels or attractions
- ▶ 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: Diabetic, Kosher, Gluten Free, No Nuts, No Shellfish, Vegetarian, Halal
- ▶ Number of restrooms
- ▶ Information regarding handicapped-accessible facility

MARKETPLACE LODGING 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.

- ▶ Minimum supply of 150 business cards
- ▶ Concise Profile Sheet (approximately 100) highlighting your services, and key tour contacts.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Maps that geographically position 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.
- ▶ Lists 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
- ▶ Clearance knowledge of 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)
- ▶ Complimentary or special considerations for the escort, driver or group
- ▶ Definitive reservation/deposit/refund policy for tour groups and a billing policy
- ▶ Knowledge of 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: Diabetic, Kosher, Gluten Free, No Nuts, No Shellfish, Vegetarian, Halal
- ▶ 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 to conduct 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 onsite 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

- ▶ One page, double sided on 8½" x 11" paper
- ▶ 1" left-hand margin and be three-hole punched
- ▶ Copied and ready for distribution before your appointment session
- ▶ 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
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Profile Sheets may be distributed during your actual appointment or while you are on the Business Floor.