

Tips on going to TRENZ

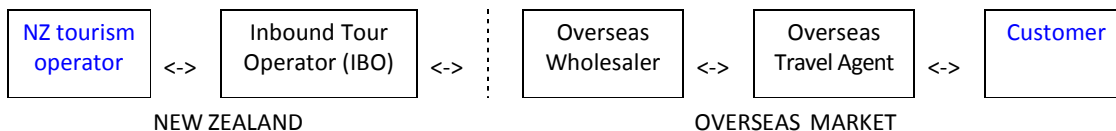
Jo Doherty attended TRENZ for many years in the 1990s whilst at Tourism New Zealand, Turoa Ski Resort and then Te Papa. More recently, Jo has assisted a group of small businesses, Te Urewera Rainforest Route, to go to TRENZ. Jo's experiences have resulted in these practical tips on getting to TRENZ and making the most of it.

What is TRENZ?

TRENZ (Tourism Rendezvous New Zealand) is a tourism trade show, where tourism operators, inbound tour operators (IBOs), and tour wholesalers meet annually to promote their products to each other, business to business. In 2009 TRENZ will run from 8-11 June in Auckland.



Fig 1: Traditional tourism distribution chain in New Zealand



For New Zealand tourism operators, TRENZ is an opportunity to meet with hundreds of tour wholesalers from around the world, through a series of 15-minute appointments and evening functions, over a period of just four days. It is not cheap at over \$5,200 for a single booth in 2009 (\$3,400 if it is your first time), but it is much cheaper and easier than travelling overseas to visit these wholesalers.

Deciding to go to TRENZ

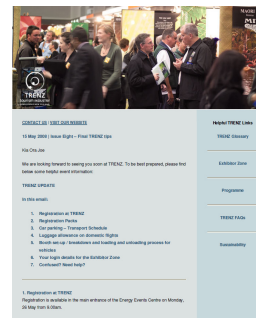
Before deciding to go to TRENZ, you need to think about the following:

- Is your tourism product of interest to overseas visitors?
- Is your tourism product 'wholesaler' ready? Do you have systems to cope effectively with bookings and payments? Do your prices include a margin of 20-30% to allow for wholesaler commission? Is your product delivered to the same standard, every time?
- Can you afford it? If you have never been before, the total cost of going to TRENZ is about \$5,500 or more for Tourism Industry Association members (if you are not already a TIA member the first year's fee starts from \$590). You need to pay booth hire, accommodation and travel expenses, booth graphics, and postage costs to send information to wholesalers after TRENZ.
- Could you spend that money more effectively on other marketing activities, or could you share a booth with two or three other operators to reduce costs?
- Getting business results from TRENZ takes time. It is unusual to get bookings in the first year. You may get some in the second year, but for most operators it takes 3 years to really see the benefits. Can your business sustain that level of investment with limited financial return for so long?

1 | www.landcareresearch.co.nz/research/sustainablesoc/tourism/growing_regional.asp

Getting ready for TRENZ

Once you have decided to go to TRENZ you need to prepare carefully to ensure you make the most of the investment. TRENZ organisers will e-mail regular and helpful tips in the lead up to TRENZ. Read them carefully because it is very easy to miss a key deadline. Also, visit the www.trenz.co.nz site regularly – it has heaps of really useful information too.



Registering for TRENZ

Online registration closes about 6 months before the event itself. To register you will need:

- All the contact details for your business and the delegates who will attend (all e-mail correspondence will be sent to your primary delegate)
- A 150-word description of the products that you want to promote. Prepare this carefully because buyers make their appointment decisions based on this
- A new product description, if relevant
- Details of your public liability insurance, and
- Credit card details

Leading up to TRENZ

Selecting buyers to meet with: 2-3 months before TRENZ, you need to read through the hundreds of buyer profiles so you can request appointments online. This step is really important – having appointments with the right buyers is the key to success at TRENZ. It is a good idea to set up a database to help prioritise the buyers, and to enable contact with the buyers pre- and post-TRENZ.

To improve your chances of securing good appointments, contact your high priority buyers before they make their own appointment selections. Mutual appointments (those where a buyer has selected you and you have selected the buyer) are given the highest priority in the initial scheduling process.

Once the initial appointment process is complete, you can fill gaps in your appointment schedule by focusing on any buyers that you have missed out on. Be at your desk and ready for when this opens online - if you are late, all appointments with your high priority buyers will be gone. For TRENZ 09 this date is 5 May – book it in your diary!



Let your regional tourism organisation know that you are attending. They can then include you in press releases, and pre- and post-TRENZ buyer family trips.

There will also be a large number of travel media at TRENZ. Make sure you prepare a press release on your product/s, particularly highlighting anything new.

What you need for TRENZ

- Promotional support material including a brochure, an up-to-date website, business cards, and a range of good quality electronic images for wholesalers to use
- A clear description of each of your products and their prices
- A clear, concise presentation, with good images. You will only have 15 minutes to impress the buyers. During this time you need to ask the buyer about their interests, give your presentation tailored to their interests, and allow time for questions. It is a good idea to practise beforehand so you are ready to go from the first appointment.



- Graphics that look great and promote the unique aspects of your product/s. It is a good idea to set up a mock booth beforehand to make sure it looks as good as it can
- A contact sheet for each buyer to record the key information discussed, as well as any follow up material you need to send. Fill this out as you go – it is difficult to remember the details of each appointment if you leave it until later

Making the most of your time at TRENZ

- Be ready for every appointment. It is a good idea to read each of the buyer profiles before the start of each day – there won't be much time to do it between appointments
- If you have a gap in your appointment schedule, check out the tea areas – you can often make contact with buyers or other exhibitors there
- Sit next to buyers at lunch rather than with local industry people you know. It is another valuable opportunity to talk about your business with them
- Attend the evening functions. Again, it is an opportunity to make contact with buyers

After TRENZ

It is vital that you follow up promptly on any information that buyers have requested from you. Make sure you set aside a block of time to do this – it takes longer than you think. Postage costs can be substantial, particularly if buyers are requesting a large number of brochures. Try to complete all your follow up within two weeks.

In summary

TRENZ is a great opportunity for operators wanting to target international visitors through the traditional tourism distribution chain. However, it is not for everyone. Think carefully about your decision to attend, and if you think it is right for you, make sure you prepare well. Put aside ample time to select buyers and contact them. Read all the TRENZ tips so you do not miss key deadlines or details. During TRENZ make the most of every opportunity to talk to buyers and keep records of every appointment. Once it is finished, make sure you follow up promptly with all the buyers you have met. And lastly, do not expect results overnight. It takes two to three years to reap the benefits but if you do it right, it can be very profitable.

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