

## Make the Media Work For You

A presentation by Liz Fleming

Travel writers spend a lot of time traveling, sitting in departure lounges, on planes and in hotel rooms. We also spend a lot of time banging furiously on a keyboard, trying to turn our experiences into articles...and meet our deadlines.

Somewhere in the middle, we get to spend time with great people like you and that's when the magic happens. You give us a glimpse into the part of the world you know the best. You serve as our guides, our interpreters and our teachers. You show us what you do, where you go and what you love. We try to absorb and understand so we can share your passion with our readers.

Often, we find ourselves wishing we could stay for a week...or a month...or forever...because you and your place inspire us. Time, however, is always in short supply. Often, a press trip lasts only a few days but involves covering hundreds of kilometers, visiting a dozen different sites...all for too short a time. That lack of time is frustrating...for you and for us.

You've prepared for weeks for a media visit, only to have us come and go in what seems like the blink of an eye. You have so much to say and show, and such a little time in which to do it.

### Five Great Strategies For Making The Most of a Short Media Visit

So...how can you make the most of a short media visit?

1. Know who you're hosting, lead with your strong suit and cut to the chase.

Ask the trip organizer for a participant list and do a bit of research on the writers you'll be hosting to see who they are and what they write about. Google is your best friend. Travel writers specialize in different areas. Some of us write about food, others about history, and still others about culture. Some, like me, have a special fascination for soft adventure and love to swing from ziplines, hike, splash through the waves in a sea kayak and get up-close- and-personal with wildlife. Though I'm interested in the whole package, I'm always looking for a bit of fun to entertain my readers – and myself.

2. Be ready to rock and roll when we arrive.

If time is tight, skip the business history and dive right into showing us what you do best. If you have a lot to showcase, but only half an hour in which to do it, let's get at it. The more time we spend experiencing what it is that you have to offer tourists the better. You can always give us a USB stick with the background info or send us to a website. Better yet, you can email us the info later, giving you another opportunity to connect. Talk to us, one on one, and help us to experience what you want tourists to see, hear, feel, smell and taste. If it's not possible to give the whole experience, just give us a sample. Show us a video or even photos of what it's like and be sure to tell us some real-life stories of guests who've had a great experience. Tell us why you love what you do and what people say when you take them out on the trail, or on the water.

If you have the names and contact information for people who've told you they really loved your tour/hotel/restaurant etc. and are willing to share with us, that would be great. We won't mind if you want to contact them first to explain that we'll be in touch. Quotes from actual guests of yours could really make our stories come alive.

3. Give us a great guide – they're the most important part of any tour.

Make sure we have a great guide to show us the tiny things we'd miss. Every experience – whether it's touring a bed and breakfast, hiking on a trail in the wilderness or learning to create a signature dish in your hotel's kitchen – every experience needs a great guide. Don't leave us to flounder on our own, hoping we'll figure it out – give us the full busman's tour.

4. Teach us something you take for granted but we don't know.

You run a café? Show us how to tie a fly, or give us a taste of your grandmother's chowder and tell us how you make it. Give us some local flavour. And please, don't hide your accent. We love it. It's what makes you special and different and fascinating to our readers. Use all the local expressions you can think of. I've been known to build a whole article around something someone said to me.

5. Let us get into the act and give things a try.

Get us involved. Show us the things you want our readers to be excited about. Get right to the good stuff and give us as much time as possible to get to know you and what you do.

What Else Can You Do To Increase Your Chances of Coverage?

1. Provide hi-res photos on a website that doesn't require a password.
2. Offer interesting factoids about your hotel, restaurant, tour company etc.

Tell us how many eggs you fry in a year, how big the largest fish ever caught at your lodge was etc.

3. Don't feel you have to give us gifts or take-aways. Your time is what we value most.

4. Recommend all that's best to see and do in your area. Don't worry about taking the focus away from your own business but instead work as a team with your neighbours. By promoting your region as a whole, everyone will benefit and great stories will be created.

Interesting Points Raised in Discussion

- It's always best to work with the DMO if you're contacted by a media person asking for any kind of support etc. Not all will be genuine journalists – the DMO can help you sort out the real opportunities from the scams.
- You can feel free to send interesting story leads to journalists via email – and the DMO can again help you with any contact information.
- Googling travel sites and online versions of travel publications is a great way to find the media members who tend to cover your kind of tour/hotel/restaurant etc. Once you find a journalist whose work seems to resonate for you, google him/her to get a profile, then connect with the DMO to suggest an invitation at some point.
- Working together to promote your region as a whole is the best way to gain media attention and tourist visits. Knowing as much as possible about your neighbours' hotels, restaurants and attractions and ensuring they're well-informed about yours is the key to creating a comprehensive tourism

experience...and a great way to generate business for everyone.

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