
UNIT 32 TOUR OPERATORS MARKETING

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32.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you will be able to:

- know about the nature of market analysis needed to be done in tour operations business,
- understand the process of designing tour packages,
- appreciate the importance of brochures in tour operator's marketing, and
- know about the promotional and sales methods adopted by the tour operators.

32.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the last Unit of this course. In the earlier Units, you were familiarised with the marketing concepts and how the principal suppliers of tourism products apply these concepts for marketing their products and services. A tour operator assembles the products and services of principal suppliers into an inclusive tour package. This is the reason for keeping this Unit as the last Unit in this course.

The Unit starts with a brief recap of the tour operator's job and the type of tour operators about which you have already read in detail (see Unit 14 of TS-1 and Unit 22 of TS-3). It takes into account the various aspects of market analysis done by tour operators needed for designing their products along with issues in decision making, role of brochures, promotional and distribution strategies, etc. The Section on brochures has been reproduced from the **South Asia Tourism Secretariat's** booklet on tour operations.

32.2 TOUR OPERATORS : A RECAP

Unit 14 of TS-1 had introduced you to different types of tour operators. Here, once again, we list the different types of tour operators based on the functions performed by them:

- 1) An In-bound tour operator handles tours coming into the country from overseas.
- 2) An Out-bound tour operator is one who operates tours to other countries.

- 3) A domestic tour operator is one who handles the tours of people of a country who travel within the country.

A tour operator may be specialising in any one, two or all the three areas as mentioned above. However, because of the distinct nature of operations, generally a tour operator selects one's own specialised area. At the same time, many tour operators carry their operations keeping in view the seasonality of tourism operations. For example, foreign tourists visit India mainly between the months of September-March, whereas the domestic tourists use the summer months more for travel purposes. In such situations, a tour operator may function as an in-bound tour operator for the foreign tourists but during the lean months switch over to conducting out-bound tours and/or domestic tours.

You often come across the terms wholesaler and retailer in relation to tour operations. Well a wholesaler is one who plans the tour, prepares a package and markets it. Whereas a retailer is one who sells the tour to the customers. It should also be remembered here that the in-bound tour operators pass on the services of the group to someone in the area of the visit and this somebody is known as an excursion agent who takes care of the group in the area.

A tour operator develops a package, sells it and at the same time also ensures the smooth operation of the entire tour. In **Unit 22** of **TS-3**, you have been already made aware about the product knowledge necessary for packaging tours and how tours are packaged. That Unit had also given you an account of costing tour packages, managing a tour operator's office and more specific knowledge about customer care. Hence, we will not take into account these aspects in this Unit. Rather we will raise certain issues based on the earlier Units in this course (**TS-6**) and how their application helps in tour operator's marketing.

32.3 MARKET ANALYSIS

Tour operations is a highly competitive and risky business and no tour operator can ignore the basic concept of market analysis for establishing and expanding his or her business. As already discussed in **Block-2** of this course, marketing research, competitive analysis and strategies and forecasting for tourism and its products are necessary components of market analysis and a tour operator has to develop a systematic approach to achieve results for the company.

Generally, because of the small structure of the organisation, most of the tour operators do not go for a systematic market research. They tend to follow the trends in the market as accepted by the larger companies dealing in tour operations. There is nothing wrong in this but such an approach deprives you from being creative and taking into account the markets in your own specialised area and region of operations. Though certain features of the market may be common to all situations, different types of tour operators have to deal with different types of customers catering to different needs, attitudes and budgets. Hence, every tour operator should go for one's own marketing research activity. For example, an outbound tour operator has to be aware of the profiles of the tourists going out of his region and accordingly decide on the tours to be packaged. For example, he might have packaged a tour to Nepal but the number of out bound tourists in his region is limited (though the figure may not be static) and to attract them for repeat business with his company, he can not be offering the same package to them for every holiday. The tourists may go to Nepal once and for the second holiday they may be looking for some other destination. He will have to create different packages for them or else his market share will go on shrinking and he could be out of business also.

While going for market analysis a tour operator has to take into account the competition he has in the market and accordingly in order to have a larger market share, he has to develop his competitive strategies. There are different ways to deal with competition and you must read the various aspects dealt with in **Unit-5** of this course for developing your own competitive strategies.

32.3.1 Tourist Profiles and Segmentation

In **TS-2 Block-1**, you were made aware about the necessity of profiling the tourists and **Unit-2** of this course has given you an idea of the necessity of market segmentation in tourism business. As a tour operator you have to apply these concepts in relation to your own business as they are crucial to the type of packages you would be packaging and offering for sale.

People of all types indulge in tourism activities but at the same time their needs, wants, tastes etc. vary from person to person. Hence, in order to provide better service to the customer, it is essential that a tour operator should have a complete profile of the tourists he intends to or is supposed to cater to. The profiling of tourists is closely linked with the concept of Market Segmentation (see Unit 19). A tour operator will have to decide whether he will go for **mass marketing or product differentiated marketing**. Specialised tour operators go for **target marketing** where they concentrate on definite target groups and develop the package according to the needs of that market segment. They do take into account all the major variables for segmenting the market like geographic, demographic, psychographic, behavioural and price besides taking into account travel motives, distances to be travelled, time of travel etc. The profiles of the tourists like age, sex, income group, profession, motive of travel, etc. are very useful in this regard and after analysing all these factors, a tour operator selects the target markets.

32.3.2 Target Markets

A variety of factors have to be taken into account for selecting the target markets a tour operator would like to cater to. For example, market segmentation by tourists' income groups helps the tour operator to narrow down on the income group he would like to cater. Some tour operators target the up-budget higher income group whereas some go for middle income group and some for lower income group. This again is closely linked with market segmentation by tourists' motives i.e. adventure, cultural, wildlife, etc. This is because within one segment of an income group, there could be different segments by motives. Some among the higher group may go for cultural tourism, others may go for wildlife and so on. A reverse situation could be that going by motives segmentation, some having motives of adventure may belong to lower income group or higher income group or middle income group. Hence, the different types of packages will be needed to cater to the different groups. Most of the tour operators today, though not averse to mass packaging, are going for specialised target marketing and accordingly select their own areas for specialisation. There are large tour operators who offer variety of packages which cater to different target groups, for example, separate tour packages for the youth, packages for the elderly, etc. Similarly, they offer adventure tours, cultural tours, health tours, shopping tours and so on.

The various approaches to market segmentation discussed in Unit-2 are applicable in the case of tour operators. Asking questions like what do the tourists expect? what facilities they demand? what risks do they perceive? how would tourists buy their package? how much they are willing to spend? how much time do they have for the tour? where would they seek information about the tour? when would they take a vacation? etc. help a tour operator attaining knowledge about the target market.

A sound knowledge of tourist markets (international, domestic or regional) is hence, essential in this business.

32.4 ISSUES IN DECISION MAKING

Tour operations is a risky business and many a times external forces have an important impact on the operations. Fluctuations in currencies, airline strikes, law and order situation, political relationships are some such factors which increase the risk factor in this business. Hence, decision making for tour operations is not an easy task.

32.4.1 Business Environment

Every tour operator whether dealing in inbound, outbound or domestic operations must taken into account the prevailing business environment that has an impact on tour packaging, and tour operations. For example, the economic environment like wage levels and real income, inflation and prices and fluctuations in economies have a direct bearing on the tourism business. Similarly, the political situation directly affects tourism. One has to take into account not only the political condition in the destination country but also the relationship between the Government and people. Many a times, tourism is projected as a devise to improve relationships between different countries. Changes in political situation also effect tourism business. For example, China had remained a closed country for tourism for a number of years and when it was opened a large market share from the tourist generating countries was diverted to China. This definitely was at the cost of other destination countries. This is because in a previous situation the tourists would have visited the other destinations meaning thereby that certain political decisions added a new

destination to compete with other destinations. Moreover, the economic and political situations combined together, become decisive factors in the taxation policies in relation to tourism (visa fees, airport taxes, service taxes etc.). These have a bearing on tour costs.

Rapid advances in the area of information technology have had a direct bearing on reservations and bookings, product knowledge, destination awareness, advertising and selling. This too has a bearing on the business environment. Intense competition among the operators is another aspect which affects the business environment. The long lead time taken by tour operators in putting a package together, selling it and actual operations (say 12-18 months) open the tour operators to face all the risks and fluctuations of the business environment and costing becomes a major issue. According to Victor T C Middleton:

"Two key strategic decisions have to be made from the assessment of external factors; what prices are likely to be, based on cost calculations of estimated contract prices; and what volume of products should be offered in twelve to eighteen months time. The two considerations are obviously inter-related with other estimates of what prices the market will bear. Both price and volume decisions have to be based on judgement rather than statistical projections, and successful managers need strong entrepreneurial flair to get the answers about right. They also need a very strong nerve to hold onto their judgements, or change them as unpredictable events emerge."

32.4.2 Forecasting and Seasonality

Since the lead time in tour operators business is 12-18 months, forecasting for tourist arrivals becomes crucial. The world tourism organisation regularly publishes tourism forecasts in relation to international travel trends. However, in relation to domestic travel, little or no exercise has been done in India in this regard.

The very nature of the tourism product that it is intangible demands accurate forecasting in order to devise an accurate market plan. Forecasts regarding prospective buyers of the tour packages are essential for this business. In fact, commitment of financial resources for tourism packages would largely depend on the amount of business one expects to do and this again will depend on how accurate one feels the forecasts are (see Unit 6).

Seasonality is a major determinant in tourism and a tour operator, in the absence of the knowledge of its varied implications is bound to fail (see Unit 19).

32.4.3 Infrastructure

Decision making in tour packaging is also linked to the availability of infrastructural facilities for packaging the tours. Basic infrastructural facilities like transportation and accommodation are required for any type of tour packages. However, when one goes by target marketing approach, one has to take into account that the destinations that are being packaged have the requisite accommodation and transportation needed by the customers alongwith the quality of service required to cater to that target category. You may have creative ideas for packaging tours but in the absence of necessary infrastructure the ideas will never be converted into reality.

Check Your Progress-1

1) Why is Market Analysis necessary in Tour Operations Business?

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2) What is the importance of analysing Business Environment for packaging Tours.

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32.5 ISSUES IN PRODUCT DESIGN

In Unit 13 of this course, various issues related to product designing had been discussed and they are equally relevant for product design in tour operations. Once the process of market research has been completed and a tour operator has narrowed down on the target market to be catered to, the product has to be designed accordingly keeping in view the business environment and competition. For example, a tour operator will have to find answers to the following questions:

- Should he develop a tour package which is already commonly available in the market?
- Should he develop a tour package which is unique and different from others?
- Should he develop a tour package which is commonly available but is better than others?

It must be remembered here that a tour operator's package is not just a product item but a product line which consists a group of product items within it. The various product items include **travel, accommodation, sightseeing, entertainment, shopping**, etc. and by packaging all these product items together the tour operator is able to develop the product mix of the tour.

Initially, most of the tour operators went by the product orientation approach laying stress on the products and services of tourism supply rather than taking into account the tourists' requirements. Gradually, the approach shifted towards market orientation by packaging tours as per the requirements of the target market segments. However, recently, the societal orientation approach has been added for developing tour packages in order to check the negative impacts of tourism and developing responsible tourism which also takes care of the interests of the host population and is eco-friendly.

Since a tour operator packages the services of other organisations over which he has no direct control he has to be extra-cautious and choosy in selecting these organisations. **This is because the image and credibility of the tour operator depends on the quality of service of each and every component that has been packaged in the tour.** This has a direct bearing on the tour operator's business. For example, if the guide's services are bad, the blame for this would come on the tour operator who could not provide a better guide. All good tour operators prefer to first experience the services themselves before packaging them in order to ensure a certain amount of quality.

Monitoring, controls and crisis management to meet emergencies should be in-built in the plan for product design in order to provide better services to the customers.

Constant updating of product knowledge and orientation of the personnel handling these operations is a must while developing the tour packages. For example, you have to be sure that what you are packaging is available, not only at the time of packaging but will also be there when the actual operation of the tour starts. That is why, cancellation of flights, delays in flights, over-booking in the accommodation sector, etc. create problems for the tour operators.

While developing the tour package, the concept of product differentiation (see Unit 13) has to be kept in mind because it is this differentiation which will distinguish your package from other competitors.

The tour operator should also keep a close watch on the product life cycle of the packages that are offered and the movement it is felt that a saturation point has been reached, immediate efforts should be taken to rejuvenate the package, make alterations or drop the package. Many a times such decisions may have to be taken even without reaching the saturation point because of the

prevailing competition and business environment. In tourism, attitudes and fashions change faster and one may have to diversify the products accordingly.

The Indian tour operator's industry has been looking for new avenues and product diversification keeping in view the new trends that have set in. For example, today, there is more emphasis on health tours (a number of Ayurvedic Health Resorts have emerged), adventure tours take into account nature interpretation, cultural tours have been added with musical and dance performances and so on. **There is no end to creativity for product design in tour operations and a tour operator has to always think of something new, something fresh and something different to offer a unique experience to the tourists.** In certain cases, the tour operators are designing highly specialised packages to cater to very-very specialised groups/individuals. For example, packaging tours for anthropologists or archaeologists, etc. taking into account the places they would like to visit and the people they would like to interact with as per their requirements. But such packaging needs very specialised handling.

Business travel and convention tourism are other areas that need special packaging (see TS-3, Block-8).

A tour operator, in a world where there is growing concern for customer protection, must also be familiar with **travel legislation**. While designing a product, the **consumer protection laws** should be taken into account. In many countries, governments have introduced various measures to protect tourists. In all such cases, laws have been enacted not only for protecting consumers but also for providing compensation when problems arise. In most of the western countries, contracts are signed between the sellers and buyers of tourism packages. However, this practice is yet to gain momentum in India. It is advisable that the tour operators follow this practice which will also ensure greater customer care and avoid problems. Moreover, **it is always good to sign contracts with your principal suppliers whose products you are packaging in order to ensure quality standards and protect yourself against any damages claimed by the customers on you for bad service.**

Infact you have to scan the business environment in the region where your target markets are along with where to you are operating the tours and the destinations you are packaging.

Keep a close eye on the law and order situations, attitude of the host population, etc. You wouldnot like your group to be cheated, robbed or face a hostile situation.

32.6 DISTRIBUTION AND PROMOTION

Generally, the methods adopted by tour operators for selling their tour packages include both direct sell and indirect sell through intermediaries like the travel agents. In Unit 16 of this course, you have been already familiarised with the various aspects related to distribution and the strategies adopted in relation to tourism operations. You should once again read Unit 16 and then try to apply it in the context of tour operator's business.

A tour operator has to very carefully plan his or her distribution channels and nothing can be left to chance. This is because sales to the target market depend on the channel selected and the performance of that agency which has been selected as the channel. Mostly, tour operators distribute their products through travel agents who dominate the distribution system. It is they who decide what to display and sell to the customers. The relationship between the tour operator and the travel agent depends on pure business dealings in relation to commissions, payment terms and credit. This relationship has to be very carefully handled and the terms offered to the distributors have to be competitive and attractive. Both sides enter into mutual agreement where the travel agents agree to promote and sell the tour operator's packages whereas the tour operator offer commissions, provide brochures and at times even assist in advertising or promotional activities.

In some cases tour operators employ sales representatives to establish business links with travel agents or other intermediaries. Certain tour operators also adopt a direct sell approach as it increases their profits for no commissions are to be paid. However, proper cost calculations have to be done for adopting a direct sell approach as the costs for advertising and promotion may turn out to be higher in this regard.

Whatever distribution strategy you may adopt as a tour operator, you have to go for a SWOT analysis and at the same time constantly monitor the performance of your intermediaries and review the business that you are getting through them. You can not ignore if the business is going down and have to ensure what has gone wrong? At the same time, if the business is going up, you have to take steps to maintain it. Many a times, incentives in the forms of higher commissions for higher sales are offered to the intermediaries. Organising familiarisation trips at your cost for your intermediaries to make them aware of your products and services is often used as another incentive.

With the information technology revolution many tour operators have started using the electronic media for selling their tours. Use of E-Mail, T V Cable Networks, etc. are the modes being used in this regard. However, costs are high and this is one of the reasons the Indian tour operators find it difficult to compete in the international markets.

Participation in travel marts, travel fairs, travel exhibitions is an important form of establishing business relationships and promoting the product. Generally, most of the large tour operators participate in such activities at the international level. Recently, in India, tourism fairs are being organised at the national and regional levels which provide opportunities to the local tour operators in promotion of their products.

We have not gone into the details of costing in this particular Unit as costing of tour packages has been dealt with in Unit 22 of TS-3 and in Unit 14 of this course, we have dealt with pricing strategies. However, many a times tour operators have to go for tactical marketing as their products are perishable and have to be sold in the available timeframe. If the sales are not taking place at the expected pace, they have to find measures to attract customers whereas if sales follow as per predictions, the rate of tactical promotional intervention will be very little. In case, sales are more than predictions, the efforts would be geared to enhance the supply of the product and cut down on promotional expenditure. The various options exercised by tour operators in tactical marketing include:

- cutting on the prices,
- value addition to the offered packages,
- more commission to intermediaries in the form of special discounts (cut off dates can be mentioned in this regard),
- spending more on advertisements, etc.

The application of these will depend on the type of problems a tour operator is facing.

Check Your Progress-2

1) What aspects you should consider in designing a Tour Operators' Product?

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2) What aspects would you consider while selecting your Distribution Channel?

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32.7 THE ROLE OF BROCHURES

High quality printed materials are essential to the success of tour operating businesses. Most customer buying decisions are made on the basis of brochures, which are the closest the consumer can get to investigating or handling the travel product before purchasing it. Competition between inbound tour operators is not local, or even national, but is on a destination-competitive worldwide basis and publicity material must therefore be of such high quality that it can compete in an international market with high expectations. The travelling public has become used to a very high quality of graphic material through the mass media, particularly TV. Poorly produced material now stands out, as never before, as a result of these high expectations, and causes the (possibly wrong) assumption that if the literature is poor then the travel product itself is also of poor quality. In order to compete all publicity material must therefore be of the highest quality.

The printers bill is one of the highest business costs that a tour operator must face each year. It would be only too easy to spend more on producing brochures than could ever be earned in tour sales ! It is accordingly essential that costs are tightly controlled and that savings are made wherever possible, yet this must be done carefully, and in such a way that the competitive effectiveness of the published materials is not reduced.

You need to understand how brochures are designed and made in order that you can help or can produce better materials for the same price as less good ones or, alternatively, you will be able to see how the cost of the materials you already produce could be reduced.

This section has been written as if you were personally going to produce the whole brochure yourself, as the staff of many small companies indeed do, and you do need to know how this is done. However, not even every experienced person has the time, or the talent, to do this and many companies choose to use professional help. When you are working with outside professionals a little understanding of what is involved will help you to have a much better relationship. If you can talk to your artist, printer, or designer in a way that they understand, they will produce work which is closer to your requirements, and they may be more willing to pass on help and professional expertise to your advantage.

Cost savings can be made when the overall concept does not build in unnecessarily expensive features from inception, and your understanding will help to ensure that this is so.

Before continuing it will be helpful to you to gather a number of examples of brochures for all sorts of different products and organisations to compare and contrast.

32.7.1 Basic Principles of Brochure Design

Before starting to design any brochure it is important that you have a clear idea of the answers to a number of crucial questions:

- what do you want the brochure to DO?
- who is intended to read the brochure?
- where will they be when they read the brochure?

Let us consider these one at a time.

Most tour operators will answer the first question by saying that they want the brochure to sell tours. Look at each page of the brochure produced by your company (or any other). What percentage of the brochure is specifically devoted to selling tours ? Quite often the answer will be less than 50% (What is it in the case of the example you are using ?)

The rest of the space may sell the beauty of the countryside, give advice on passport or visa requirements, detail health advice, or many other things. All of these are worthy, but they are not the stated objective, which was to sell our companies tour!

We also need to ask ourselves the second and third questions. Who will read the brochure, and where will they be when they read it.

If we are producing a travel trade/wholesalers edition they will expect technical matters which a member of the public would not find appropriate. If we are producing for a special interest group

we must refer to their interest, and if for a particular age group we must use language which appeals to them. Further, if we are writing for clients who are already in our country but we do not need to waste expensive space advising them how to get to us, or what our climate is like. They only have to look out of the window to see the answer ! But if they were to be reading in their home country then they may certainly wish to know these things (which would contribute to the sales effort in this case).

With a little planning we could produce the right information for the right reader (our target customer). This may mean that we need more than one version of our brochure. It should also mean that each copy of each version becomes much more effective in helping us towards our stated objective which was to sell tours. Different organisations produce brochures for other purposes. Collect for yourself examples of these which may include:

- Brochure designed to give good impression of company (but no directly selling anything). International motor companies, multi national company share prospectuses, large jewellers and gold dealers, hotel groups, national tourist boards, sometimes on in for this awareness raising style.
- Brochure designed to sell one product on price along (supermarket/newspaper special offer) says almost nothing about the company, everything about the product price.
- Brochure designed to inform only, but not to impress (local bus timetable). This style is often used when there is little or no competition from different service providers.

You may be able to identify others and if you make a habit of gathering leaflets and brochures of all sorts, and of reading them analytically, you will soon be able to see which ones have misfired, thus wasting a large percentage of their precious production budget.

32.7.2 How Big a Brochure?

When we know what we want our brochure to do, it becomes fairly simple to work out what we need to say and how much space we need to say in it. A simple supermarket offer will need a small piece of paper, printed on one side only. A complex programme of tour possibilities will take up more space and may run into numerous pages. We may also wish to include pictures (more about choosing these later). With a little thought we can work out how many pages we are likely to need to say and show what we have determined. A good plan is to make a mock up of your brochure and to plan exactly what will appear on each page.

Before you start to design your brochure find out your printers system, and your display system sizes and fit your design around them. That is the way to minimize waste.

You also need to consider the size of print you wish to use. You can save space by using small print and so fitting more words to a page but it may become very difficult to read. On the other hand very large print may be taking up so much room that your message must be abbreviated. Your printer can show you examples so that you can choose something appropriate. The sizes are known as "point" so soon you will be familiar with the ones you like and will be able to say "I want it in 12 point with the headings in 16" for example. Your printer can also help you to calculate how many words will fit to a page in each size so that you can prepare the right amount of words which are called copy.

We are now at the stage when we have decided that we are going to produce a brochure, we know why, and we know who our readers will be. We also know how large the finished document will be. At this stage we must make positive decisions about the design of the brochure. All of this depends on the image which we want to convey. We need to think carefully about what we wish to say about our company, and our product. In the travel business we compete on the both of these platforms so our brochure must reflect this.

Look again at the examples of brochures which you collected before and feel them with your fingertips.

A thick paper, glossy finish, and bright colours may say "expensive" and "modern". A thick paper, with a matt finish may also say "expensive" but perhaps it may also say "natural" or "eco", when antique or soft colours have been used.

A thin, glossy, paper may say "quality" but less up market.

A thin, matt, paper may say "cheap and cheerful".

We need to choose the one that suits our product. What image do we want to convey ?

Paper is bought at a price per kilo or pound, so the thinner each sheet is the more sheets you get to the kilo and the cheaper each sheet. Paper which has been treated to make it shiny also costs more per kilo.

So, our decision to use plain, matte paper of a thin quality saves us money. But does it also say that our tour is of low price and quality ? For an impromptu fishing trip a thin, matte leaflet like this may be appropriate, but for a luxury tour ? What about a decision to use thick, shiny paper for a snorkeling trip ? or for a day trekking in the Himalayan foothills ? What about thick matte paper for this one, would this appeal to the right sort of client ?

If you are in the habit of mailing brochures then the finished weight of your proposed brochure, in its wrapper or envelope, should be calculated at this stage. You may find that by using a fractionally, almost unnoticeably, thinner paper you can reduce the weight to below a postage price band thus saving a little money on eachy. These little amounts will multiply fast if you send out hundreds or thousands of copies each year. Matters are less critical where distribution is manual.

32.7.3 Colour and Photos

Some products are well suited to simple black type on white. Nighttime ghost walks, story telling, and zebra watching tours are near perfect examples. Paper colours can be used to emphasize a product. What about an evening beach barbecue described in black type on orange paper ? or a rain forest walk in brown ink or green recycled paper ? or a monsoon experience in blue on silver grey ?

In these examples we are using the colour of the paper to tell a more effective story for the same price as any other paper we could have chosen.

Another way of using small amounts of colour is to spot print. Here we print one patch of colour in one or two coloured inks in addition to the basic ink colour we are using.

Such spot colour patches can be used to good effect when we want to show up our logo, or to make a sketch or drawing stand out. If we then go a step further by printing on coloured paper, as we have suggested for this diving design, the whole thing has become quite colourful but we have not yet entered the expensive realms of full colour printing.

The question we should ask ourselves is "does using the spot colour contribute more to the overall effectiveness ?"

As the spot colour costs us more, it should certainly be contributing more, or we should not be using it.

Full Colour Processing

In the travel business we often like to use colour photographs to show a product which is far away from our clients (we will look more at the choice of pictures in a moment). It is important to understand that this is an expensive decision and that photos, where they are used, must contribute significantly to the overall effectiveness of the brochure and not merely be pretty decorations.

Note that when you want pictures it is not actually always necessary to use photos. Sometimes original drawings or paintings can be obtained more cheaply and are more atmospheric. Try your local handicrafts center or art school for a source different material.

If you have decided to use photographs then be aware that each photo must start life as a colour diapositive, taken on as large a format film as possible. (Diapositive means that the way you see the colours on the film is as they are in real life, i.e. white writing on black board. Negative film would appear as black writing on white board, i.e. the colours reversed). The ideal is roll film size 120,57 mm square and a professional grade lens is needed. Less good quality lens or film will result in a poor quality result when the picture is blown larger on paper. 35 mm film may give a pleasing result, but rarely! Personal holiday photographs will not stand up to printing. As a tour operator you must learn to handle a camera professionally.

Each transparency (studios commonly call them trannies) must be prepared for the printing process by a sophisticated computer process whereby it is divided into a set of four plates. These are known as sets of colour separations and there is a sheet in the set for each of magenta (red), yellow, cyan (blue) and black. Mixtures of these colours give all the colours of the rainbow. The four plates each determine where the ink is to be placed on the paper and by printing four times over the same area, each time with a different one of the four plates, a full colour (sometimes called four colour) process is obtained. (Remember junior school when you mixed the primary colours of yellow and red and got green). The principle is the same, we just use black as well in printing.

A clever printer can adjust the press so that the final colour mix is as required. Poor skill in this area accounts for too much red (orange skinned people, for example) or improbably blue or a very cold looking sea when the blue balance is wrong.

A good set of separations is expensive but can be used over again. It is therefore a good economy to choose photos with more than one use and without the inclusion of things which will "date" them too soon. (For example fashionable clothes, or car registration plates should be avoided if the picture is needed next year but traditional costume or scenery will last longer).

Very few small printers can make colour separations so the pictures will be sent away (slow) and the printer will mark up the quotation he gets. It will cost you the same to separate a bad as a good shot so make sure it is a good one!

Now that you are aware that each photo has to go through this process you can see why a brochure which makes lavish use of them is much more expensive to produce than one using only a few. Again we must ask the question "what is each contributing to the overall effectiveness?" (the answer to the obvious question concerning how much a set of separations costs is that it depends vastly when and where the work is done).

What is a good photo ?

First it must be in focus, and with good colour contrasts. Secondly it should be up to date, and last, and most important, it should be relevant.

Your pictures should contribute to the overall purpose of the brochure which is - to sell!

So, if you are selling rickshaw tours show tourists in your rickshaws!

If you are selling diving, show happy divers in warm seas, if you are selling tours by minibus show a (clean, polished) one with a smiling, polished driver and so on.

Faces make wonderful pictures, especially characterful older people, or young children. They are much more interesting than boring and expensive models. Use your smartly uniformed staff, your family and friends, your clients.

Remember that if you are having colour photos taken you should ensure that they are colourful. Avoid blue boats on blue sea, green clothes in the forest etc. You can easily import colour to pictures by dressing people in bright clothes or by asking them to carry accessories (umbrellas, bags, beach or climbing equipment, rucksacks, flowers). Common everyday scenes are full of colour, saffron robed monks, wayside fruit stalls, temple flowers, the dome of a mosque against sunset a brightly painted tuk-tuk. They speak volumes about your home area. Beware of endless blue sea or sky, white sand, green fields. Your competitors worldwide have those too !

Remember that it is misleading to show pictures of things in your country that you are not going to offer to visitors on your tours. At worst you may be breaking the law, but anyway it causes disappointment and wastes your budget.

Sources of Photos

You can get photos from several places:

- you could employ a photographer to take a series of shots (payment by day or hour)
- you could buy single selected shots from photographers (check copyright)
- you could borrow from commercial photo libraries for a fee (be sure that you know where else the photo has been sold. You do not want the same shot as your competitor has used!)
- you can borrow free from an hotel, airline or tourism department. Sometimes they will even lend you the separations.

32.7.4 Words and Printing

The words in a brochure are called the copy. In deciding the size of your brochure you have already determined how many words you need. Now you must decide what information is required and you must write it in sales language.

Remember to be careful not to give the wrong information to the wrong people. If you are selling a day trip then say:

- That it is a day tour
- Where it goes
- Why someone would want to go there; do not assume clients already know what there is to see when you give place names.
- How they will be transported (luxury air conditioned minibus may be appealing. By camel may also be exciting !)
- The price of the tour, and
- How to book.

Make sure that your words are:

- Clear
- Accurate
- Grammatically correct in the language concerned, and
- Easy to follow.

Do not start giving irrelevant advice (passports, etc. for a day trip unless necessary).

Remember what you offer in your brochure is what your customer is buying. You must fulfil your promises!

You could write the copy yourself, but if you are not skilled in this area there are professionals who can help. Journalists are good with words (but newspaper reporters are rarely in the same league), specialist travel writers are expert and can be found through your NTO. Advertising agencies can also help, by finding freelance copywriters. A good compromise is for you to write a long script which contains all you want to say, add to it your calculation of the number of words required, and pass it to a copywriter who can put it in a more concise and sales oriented manner. The last stage is to have it checked by a person whose mother tongue is the one in which the brochure is written. Poor translations, wrong use of words and the like may be amusing, but does nothing for your professional image.

The finished copy goes to the printer for typesetting (or you could desktop publish it and supply it on disk which is cheaper).

When your words have been typeset by the printer he will give you proofs to read and check. His errors will be corrected free of charge at this stage. But changes you select to make, and mistakes that you failed to spot at this stage, become your errors and you will have to pay to amend them later.

Proof reading needs extreme care.

Now that you have written your copy, designed your layout, decided to have one, or two or spot or full colour processing, and whether to use trannies, and which ones, decided which paper to use, you are close to having a finished design.

How many copies to print ?

Every time a printer has to set up his machinery to run off brochures he will charge you for the work involved. This is especially expensive when the machines are to cope with four colour process work.

It is therefore much more economic to print 1000 copies once, than 500 copies twice, even though they will all have to be paid for at once.

In working out how many copies you need you should bear this economy of scale in mind, but do not be persuaded to print far more than you will ever need just to reduce the unit cost !

The part of a brochure which commonly goes out of date, and thus causes the whole brochure to expire, is the price chart. Where budget is a concern, and to save reprinting on a seasonal or annual basis, it may be advisable to print a long print run (large number of copies) of the full colour process slip which can be cheaply updated as necessary. In this case the glossy brochures must be stored carefully so that they do not deteriorate.

Getting quotations

When you are ready with the mock up and design of your brochures you can ask printers to provide quotations. They should not charge for this and you should approach three or more printers.

You will specify the design, layout, paper quality, and print run and of course the printer will want to know whether he is to supply separations or whether these are to be supplied by you. The delivery address will also be a consideration.

Do remember that printers have busy and less busy seasons and if you can use the latter you should be able to negotiate a better rate. Do not be afraid to use overseas based printers. There are many around the world who specialise in travel trade work and who can even be less expensive than your local man (look for them at trade fairs). Indeed, if the brochure is being printed specially for a foreign trade fair (i.e. World Travel Market, London, or ITB Berlin, it could save you a lot of time, trouble, and money to have the materials printed in the country concerned and delivered locally to the fair).

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) What is the significance of Brochures in Tour Operations and Tour Operators' Marketing?

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- 2) How do you select Photos for Brochures?

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32.8 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit you were familiarised with certain issues related with tour operator's marketing. Tour operations is a challenging business with ample scope for innovation and creativity. Selling dreams, attempting to convert these dreams into reality and sending back satisfied tourists is what a tour operator has to work for. Selecting your target groups, packaging the right kind of services and products, having the right distribution channels, competitive prices, target oriented promotion mix and finally adequate customer care and smooth operation of the tour are the essential

careful planning and handling, the responsibility of the tour operator is greater once the tour actually starts. Hence, the persons employed by you as escorts or guides should be well versed in the skills essential for handling these jobs. An escort is the friend, philosopher and guide for the group of tourists.

32.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) Read Sec. 32.3 and once again Block-1 of this Course.
- 2) See Sub-sec. 32.4.1.

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) See Sec. 32.5.
- 2) See Sec. 32.6 and once again Unit of this Course.

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) See Sec. 32.7.
- 2) See Sub-sec. 32.7.3.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS FOR THIS BLOCK

Michael M. Coltman	:	Introduction to Travel Tourism, New York, 1989.
Chris Cooper, etal.	:	Tourism Principles and Practice, London, 1993.
Victor T.C. Middleton	:	Marketing in Travel and Tourism, Oxford, 1993.
J.C. Holloway & R.V. Plant	:	Marketing for Tourism, London, 1988
Philip Kotler	:	Marketing Management, New Delhi, 1994.
IGNOU Courses	:	MS-6, Marketing for Managers MS-65, Marketing of Services

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS BLOCK

Activity 1

Buy a package tour as a tourist and assess the positive and negative aspects of the tour in terms of the services offered. How would you improve upon them as a tour operator?

Activity 2

Meet a tourist transport operator and assess what pains he takes to train his drivers in the area of customer care.

Activity 3

Collect the brochures of three travel agencies. Compare the products and services offered by them.

Activity 4

For one week follow the adds in newspapers related to airlines and travel agencies. Analyse them in relation to their effectiveness in conveying the message to the target audience.

Activity 5

If possible find an attachment with a travel agency/tour operator and work there for a while to gain experience.