

LEVELING UP

MARKETING
YOUR
TOURISM
BUSINESS



CEDA

CENTRAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

TE MAURI O
MANAWATŪ





MARKETING YOUR TOURISM BUSINESS

Understanding who your customers are and creating the right content at the right time and through the right channels, is a key part of marketing.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THIS GUIDE

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- 2 // WHO ARE YOUR MAIN COMPETITORS?
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1 // WHO ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS?

Before you start marketing your product offering, you should first look at who your customer is.

The below table highlights key features to consider when defining your target market(s). Other features to consider are the needs and motivations of your audience.

For example, a couple on their honeymoon will have very different needs and motivations to travel, compared to a family travelling to reconnect and make memories together.

Looking at the table you could define one of your customers as the Family market, who are free independent travellers, living within 3 hours of Palmerston North, and they are motivated by the need to reconnect and discover, make memories together. They are looking for family friendly, affordable accommodation / experience options and are price sensitive and safety conscious. You can also consider key demographic features such as age (young professionals), gender (who you are talking to will impact on your messaging / visuals) and geographical location (local vs 3 hours' drive, main centres).

Other market segments include Empty Nesters, Baby Boomers / Zoomers (more active retirees). Other reasons for travel could be VFR (visiting friends and relatives), group travel, wedding, or attending an event.

MARKET SEGMENT	REASON FOR TRAVEL	MOTIVATIONS	NEEDS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Young professionals >> 3-hour drive market >> 29 years old >> Male & female 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Honeymoon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Escape >> Celebrate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Private >> All-inclusive package >> No families around
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Family market >> Wellington >> Female (43 years old) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Leisure market (FITs) >> Short break 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Reconnect >> Make memories together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Price point >> Family friendly >> Safe for everyone to enjoy

Research is key to understanding your customers. Review your google analytics account and look at your acquisition traffic, and user behaviour. You should also look at your own Facebook and Instagram insights to learn about your current followers. Get into the habit of looking at your own Facebook page to see who is engaging with your content. Keep an eye on online review sites and your own Google Business reviews.

Visit [Insights & Research | Corporate \(tourismnewzealand.com\)](https://www.tourismnewzealand.com) to access the latest domestic and international insights. A great tool when planning ahead with your marketing activity.

Make the most of [CEDA's customised Visitor Research](#) that looks into the potential and existing visitor types to Palmy and Manawatū.



USEFUL TOOLS // **Tourism New Zealand has identified domestic and international mindsets.**





2 // COMPETITOR ANALYSIS - WHO ARE YOUR MAIN COMPETITORS?

Knowing who your main competitors are, will allow you to better understand how to position your product offering and how your key product features compare to your competitors.

A useful way to present this is outlined in the table below; starting with product offering. Aim to have a minimum of 4 and look outside the region, and New Zealand wide.

- >> **Pricing and packaging** – do they have a summer/ winter rate, do they offer seasonal packages, targeted packages, value adds.
- >> **Unique Selling Point (USP)** – What are their key messages or unique selling points eg family owned and operated, 5-star Qualmark, 5-star booking.com rating, spectacular location, locally sourced artisan food.
- >> **Channels** – what channels do they operate in i.e., Online Travel Agents, Booking.com, online booking platforms etc.

COMPETITOR	PRODUCT OFFERING	PRICING AND PACKAGING	USPS	CHANNELS
Apple Lodge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> 12 rooms property overlooking lake, 25 minutes from Lake Taupō >> Features lodge stay, plus breakfast and dinner >> Kayaks and bikes for guests to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Lead in suite is \$350 a night (Dinner, Bed and breakfast) >> Currently have a honeymoon package on website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Owner operator >> New architectural built property >> Amazing location >> 5 star customer reviews >> Qualmark gold >> Sustainability messaging strong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Direct >> Booking.com >> Expedia



3 // PRODUCT OFFERING OR PACKAGING

When creating or enhancing your product offering, always consider who your ideal customer(s) are and look at what unique features of your product offering would interest them most.

You can use your competitive analysis research to help you refine or enhance your product offering.

When creating packages, think about what extra value you can offer your target audience. For example, for a celebration package look at adding a bottle of wine on arrival or a late checkout. For a family package, you might offer a special family package for 2 adults and 2 children and only offer this at a certain time of the day which is family friendly (not competing with your other customers), such as an early morning departure for an activity.

Collaborating with another operator is a great way to further enhance your product offering or develop a specific package, for example a lodge partnering with a jet boat operator.

Think about your sustainability offering when developing any product or packages. Consumers are making more purchasing decisions based on your contribution to society and the environment. Learn about the **Tiaki Promise** and look at how you can adapt key fundamentals to your product and storytelling. Travellers are looking for the 'proof point' – the irrefutable evidence of the quality, importance or uniqueness of something.

4 // PRICING

Your product needs to be priced consistently, accurately and competitively to be successful in the market. You'll also need to include all the costs associated with conducting business, with a large enough margin to ensure a profitable and sustainable operation in your price.



USEFUL TOOLS // [**TRC Sustainable Pricing and Packaging Reference Guide.**](#)



5 // DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

A distribution channel refers to the channel(s) used to connect your product or service to the end user.

There are two types of distribution channels - direct and indirect. Before deciding what channels to use, it is always a good idea to understand how the end user / customer likes

to purchase your product or service. Direct bookings refer to bookings that come to you directly, without any third-party involvement.

The below table highlights some examples of indirect channels you could use to connect with potential customers. For example, leisure may require an investment of 50% direct and 50% indirect. Indirect could focus on 50% through OTAs, 20% through Travel Trade, 20% local isite and 25% through third party sites such as NewZealand.com and ManawatuNZ.co.nz.

MARKET SEGMENT	INDIRECT
Corporate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Professional Conference Organiser (PCO) >> Convention Bureau >> Third party sites i.e., ManawatuNZ.co.nz, Venue Search >> OTAs (Orbit Travel) >> Travel agents (Tandem Travel, Flight Centre Corporate)
Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Online Travel Agent (OTA) >> Travel Trade (ITOs, wholesaler, travel agent) >> Local isite or New Zealand wide >> Third party websites such as NewZealand.com and ManawatuNZ.co.nz
Wedding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Third party wedding sites >> Wedding planner



6 // PLANNING AHEAD

When planning any marketing activity, identify your peaks and troughs.

Highlight public holidays, key celebration dates (Mother's Day, Father's Day), shoulder seasons, winter, summer periods, key destination events that bring visitors to the region, school holidays (family market), and highlight when school holidays finish (empty nesters, baby boomers). This is a great way to prepare for the year ahead. It allows you to look at when you need to turn on marketing activity to stimulate bookings and enquiries to get the most out of a peak period or to try and drive new business in the quieter, shoulder periods.

For example, the international market tends to travel from October to April and is not restricted by travel periods. Domestic leisure travel often happens around weekends, public holidays, major events, VFR (Visiting Friends and Family), special events (birthdays, family gatherings), and weddings. Conferences tend to happen April to October and management planning workshops can be all year round. Both of these are great ways to drive midweek business.

7 // ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONS

When looking at advertising and promotions, think about what marketing goals you want to achieve and how you will achieve this, e.g. online or offline.

Is it to raise brand awareness, create a targeted ad campaign, or collaborate with a local operator or third party. Building brand awareness might involve an online social media brand engagement campaign, attending consumer or trade shows, or investing in radio and print advertising, to get your brand out in the market.

If you are wanting to generate bookings for a certain period, you could do this by running an ad campaign through paid advertising, e.g., via social media, Google Search and Display Advertising. You could also look at creating an e-news to drive repeat visitation at certain times of the year. Offline advertising such as radio or print can sometimes help to complement what you are doing online through digital marketing.

7.1 // DIGITAL MARKETING

Digital marketing should be part of your overall marketing strategy and it is made up of paid, owned, and earned media.

How you use digital marketing will depend on whether you are talking to your target audience at the discovery, planning or booking stage of the customer journey.

OWNED MEDIA relates to anything that you own and have complete control over its content i.e., website, social media channels, emails, and blogs. Keep your digital assets up to date with high quality images and short-form videos. You can also use an e-news to share relevant content such as seasonal packages and major event information to encourage repeat visitation. Having a subscribe button on your home page is a great start.

EARNED MEDIA refers to media such as user generated content, the sharing of content from a third party, reposts, customer reviews. Influencers can be considered earned media (if you are not paying for it). It could also refer to someone posting a positive review on your Facebook page.

PAID MEDIA relates to any paid advertising including activity such as social media marketing and google advertising.

DIGITAL MARKETING TRIFECTA

EARNED, OWNER AND PAID MEDIA

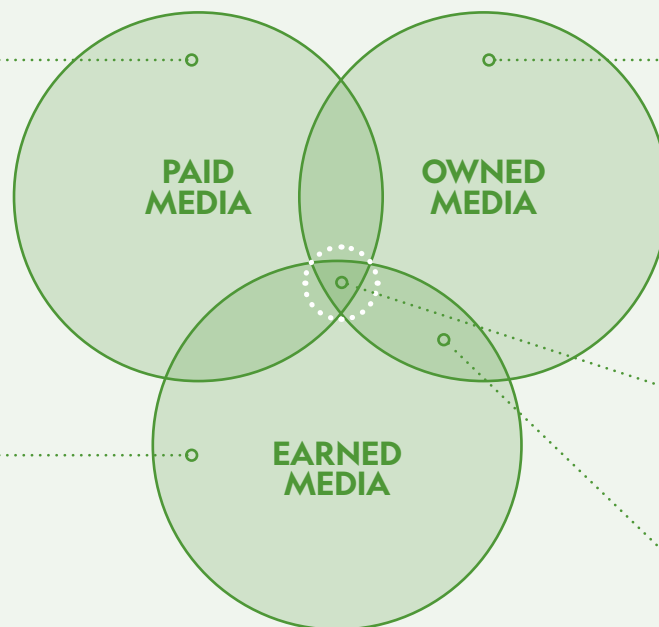
Gain more exposure to web properties with SEO and PPC

ADVERTISING

- Paid content promotion
- Pay per click (PPC)
- Display ads
- Retargeting
- Paid influencers
- Social media ads

SHARING

- Mentions
- Shares
- Reposts
- Reviews



WEB PROPERTIES

- Social media channels
- Website
- Blogging
- Email
- Mobile

Leverage earned, owned and paid media for a comprehensive marketing strategy

SEO and brand content drive earned media (sharing) and traffic

Source: [Springboard Communications](#)

7.2 // SOCIAL MEDIA

DEVELOP A SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

A social media strategy is an integral part of getting results on social media. Essentially, it's a blueprint for what you're planning to achieve, and how you're going to achieve it. It gives you clarity about what you should be posting, and who your audience is. Things to look at when developing your strategy include - who is your target market? What are your goals for social media? What are the goals for your business? How are you tracking this to ensure you're meeting your goals? Do you have a clear content strategy? Do you have a content calendar? For example, if your goal is to have more followers online (specifically of your target market), are you creating the type of content that they'd interact with to enable that to happen? Once you have a good idea of where you're currently at and where you want to get to, then the real fun begins. Our top tip to get started: create 3-4 content buckets of the types of things you'll want to post.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT PLAN

Too often operators post random posts on social media without any planning or thought which is where a Content Plan can help. A content plan helps you focus on key content pillars that are most relevant to tell your brand story. In its simplest form, a good place to start is by using the below

FOOD PHILOSOPHY	SUSTAINABILITY JOURNEY	EXPERIENCES	AROUND THE LODGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Seasonal dining >> Local artisan producers / in the community >> Menu ideas for the seasons (encourage engagement) >> Customer reviews about the food >> Food foraging (seasons) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Environmental projects the lodge is involved in >> In the community >> Human stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Highlight experiences that connect with audience(s) >> Sharing content (like minded operators) >> What you can do at property >> Destination stories (share) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Quirky activity at the lodge >> History and heritage of property / location / region >> What is happening around the lodge

table. Identifying key topics or content pillars that best tell your story. Here is an example of what might be in a content plan for a Manawatū based lodge. It is often a good idea to keep one content pillar open for last minute, unique experiences that happen i.e. the company pet antics, sunsets/sunrises (if they are spectacular), seasonal food finds on your farm, etc.

Think about the personality and tone of your content and how it best reflects your brand's personality. This will have a big part to play in how your content pillars are created and shared. Keep it real and not staged (as much as possible) and create something that your audience can connect with and dream to come and experience.

BE AUTHENTIC WITH YOUR BRAND

Always post things that portray real emotion that your audience wants to be part of. Avoid images that look staged, overly photoshopped, or sound like you're a salesperson. You want your viewer to stumble across the photo in their feed and have it pull them in so they can imagine seeing themselves there. Give your audience authentic content that inspires them to plan their next trip to Manawatū. Show your personality online. Share a story. Create an Instagram Reel that shows bits of the tour you offer. Take some behind-the-scenes shots and introduce yourself. The more human you are with your online audience; the more people will want to follow you.



USEFUL TOOLS //

Semrush - [Ask These 5 Questions to Tailor Your Content to Buyer Personas.](#)

Hootsuite - [How to Create a Buyer Persona.](#)

Hootsuite - [How to Find and Target Your Social Media Audience.](#)

7.3 // WEBSITE

SEO - SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

SEO is the process of improving your website's visibility on Google. Before you look at optimising your site, you should carry out an SEO audit. There are a number of tools available, such as Screaming Frog, SEMrush, Ubersuggest or you can approach an agency to carry out your website audit for you. An SEO audit will identify any technical or on-page SEO issues.

An example of a technical SEO issue could be page speed. To improve page speed, make sure your images and videos are not too large. The optimal file size for images on a website is no more than 200 KB, and for full-screen background images, between 1500 pixels to 2500 pixels wide, and for most other images a max-width of 800 pixels.

To check if your website is mobile friendly, you can use this free online tool. <https://smallseotools.com/mobile-friendly-test>.

To improve on page SEO, make sure there is alt text behind all of your images to improve on page optimisation. You can also carry out keyword search to help drive traffic through search and improve your Search Engine Results Page (SERP) ranking. Tools available to help find relevant keywords include SEMrush, Wordstream. Keyword research will allow you to check search volume, look at competitor keywords, review and potentially improve your meta tags, headings and page titles.

Backlinks are also a key SEO strategy. Backlinks (external links to your website) signal to search engines like Google that others see your content as relevant, and credible, helping your overall search ranking. Try reaching out to suppliers and partners, to ask if they can link back to your website with anchor text. Look for websites that have a strong authority score. You can find this through tools such as SEMrush and Ubersuggest.

Linking with directory sites such as [NewZealand.com](https://www.newzealand.com), [ManawatuNZ.co.nz](https://www.manawatu.co.nz), [Eventfinda](https://www.eventfinda.co.nz), will also help improve your ranking.

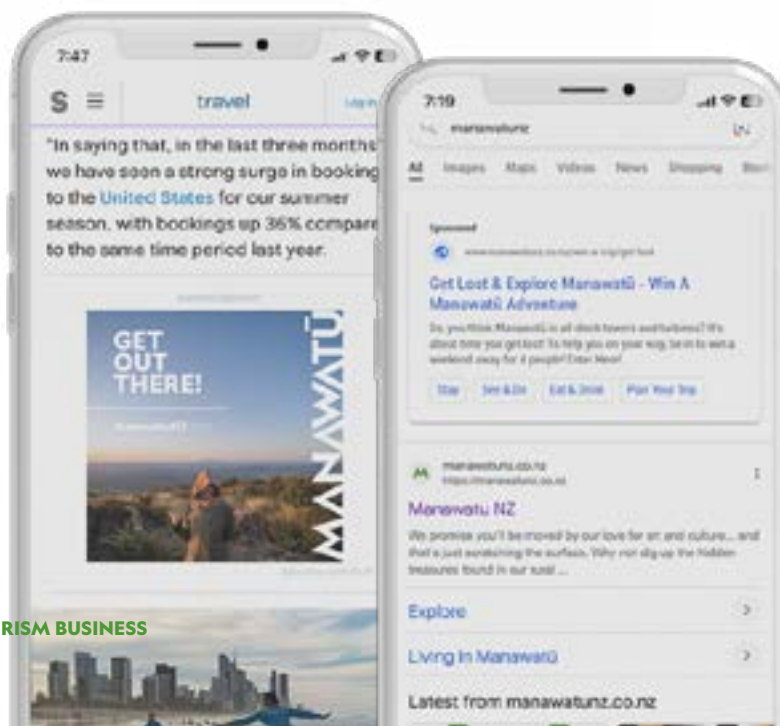
7.4 // SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) relates to paid traffic from search engines such as Google. Google Ads is the most popular platform for SEM. These ads appear on the top of Google results pages. Google Search Ads target people searching for a product or service like yours.

Google Display Ads reach people at brand awareness through to conversion stage. These are visually engaging ads displayed on websites, apps and Google-owned properties such as YouTube and Gmail.

Search campaigns allow you to place ads across Google's vast network of search results. Follow this [simple step by step video](#) to learn what search ads are, how to create a campaign, pick the right keywords, write great text ads, track your goals and review your performance.

There are many Search Engine Marketing (SEM) tools available to help promote your website, improve site traffic, and boost conversion rates. A free and simple tool to help you find relevant keywords is [Keyword planner](#). You can use this tool for your Google Advertising as it allows you to research keywords, look at bid estimates and help with your planning.



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