



# AGRITOURISM MARKETING TOOLKIT

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[TravelOregon.com](http://TravelOregon.com)

[Industry.TravelOregon.com](http://Industry.TravelOregon.com)



## WHY IS MARKETING MY BUSINESS IMPORTANT?

- Maximizing profitability on the farm, ranch or agritourism operation
- Great way to engage new customers
- Educate consumers about what your agritourism experience is and how they can access it, and drive visitation
- Opportunity to educate the public about agriculture
- Reconnect travelers and locals to their food, land and rural life
- Preserve farmland in Oregon
- Maintain vital, thriving rural communities

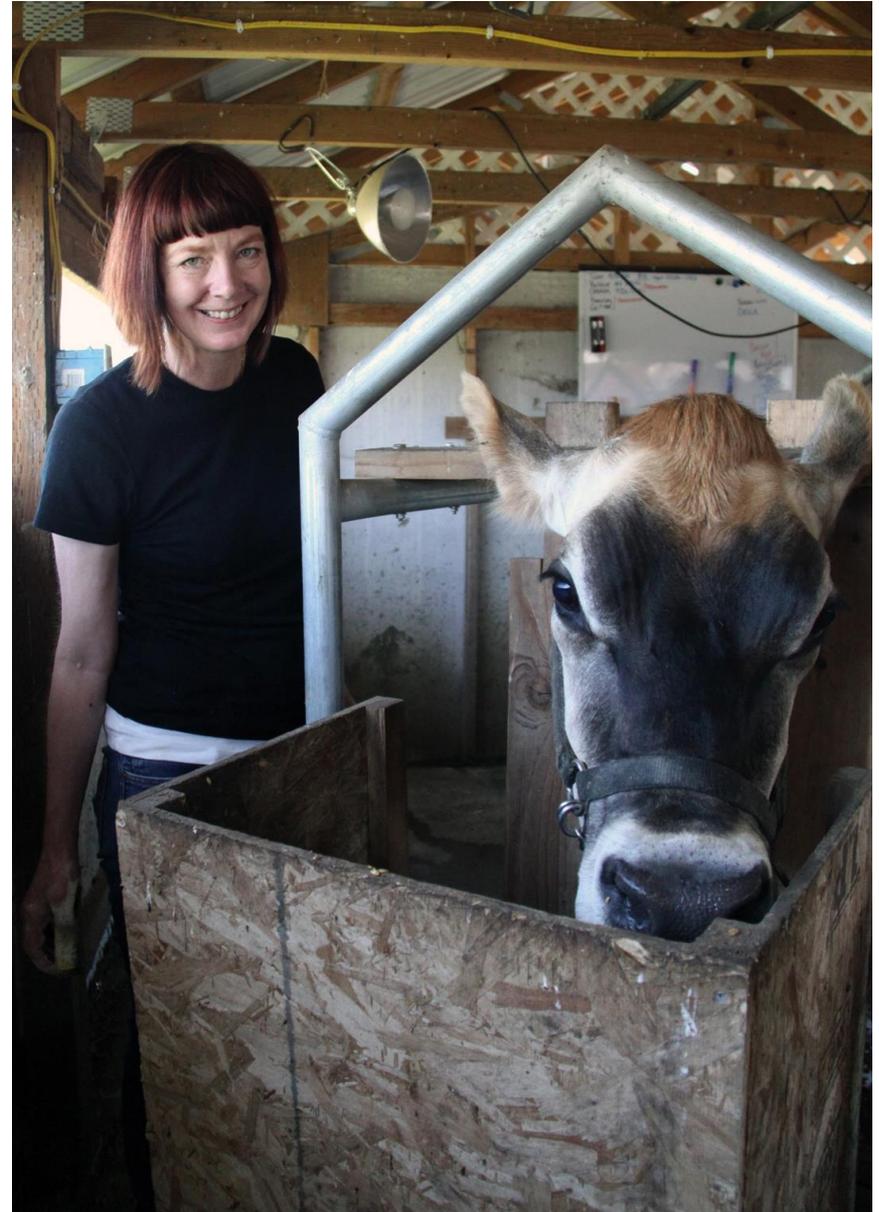


# Business Basics

If you need help accomplishing the business basics, learn more in the [Oregon Agritourism Handbook](#) or [Oregon Agri-Business Council Workbook](#).

# AGRITOURISM BUSINESS BASICS

- Secure the permits and licenses required for your business, through the state and county.
- Connect with your local planning department or DLCDC regional solution center [representative](#) around zoning and land use regulations.
- Review your insurance needs. This is not the most fun part of starting a business, but it is one of the most critical.
- Evaluate the capital and human resource investment needed to successfully operate your venture.
- Connect with your local Small Business Development Center to evaluate whether adding or starting an agritourism business is the right decision for you (find your closest center [here](#)).
- Select the right business structure. The SBA "[Starting a Business](#)" page can help.





## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL MARKETING

# MARKETING BASICS

## Tips for successful marketing

- Create an abbreviated way to describe your business (aka the [elevator pitch](#)).
- Research and analyze the potential market for your product and services. Use resources available from Travel Oregon and your local Destination Marketing Organization.
- Identify a target audience and marketing trends they respond to (e.g., Outdoors, if they're traveling with children).
- Set marketing and financial goals to focus and evaluate your efforts.
- Create a marketing budget that is realistic for your business income.
- Create a checklist summarizing the tasks necessary to put your plan into action.
- Seek out assistance or design visual images like a logo and brand that are consistent and cohesive.

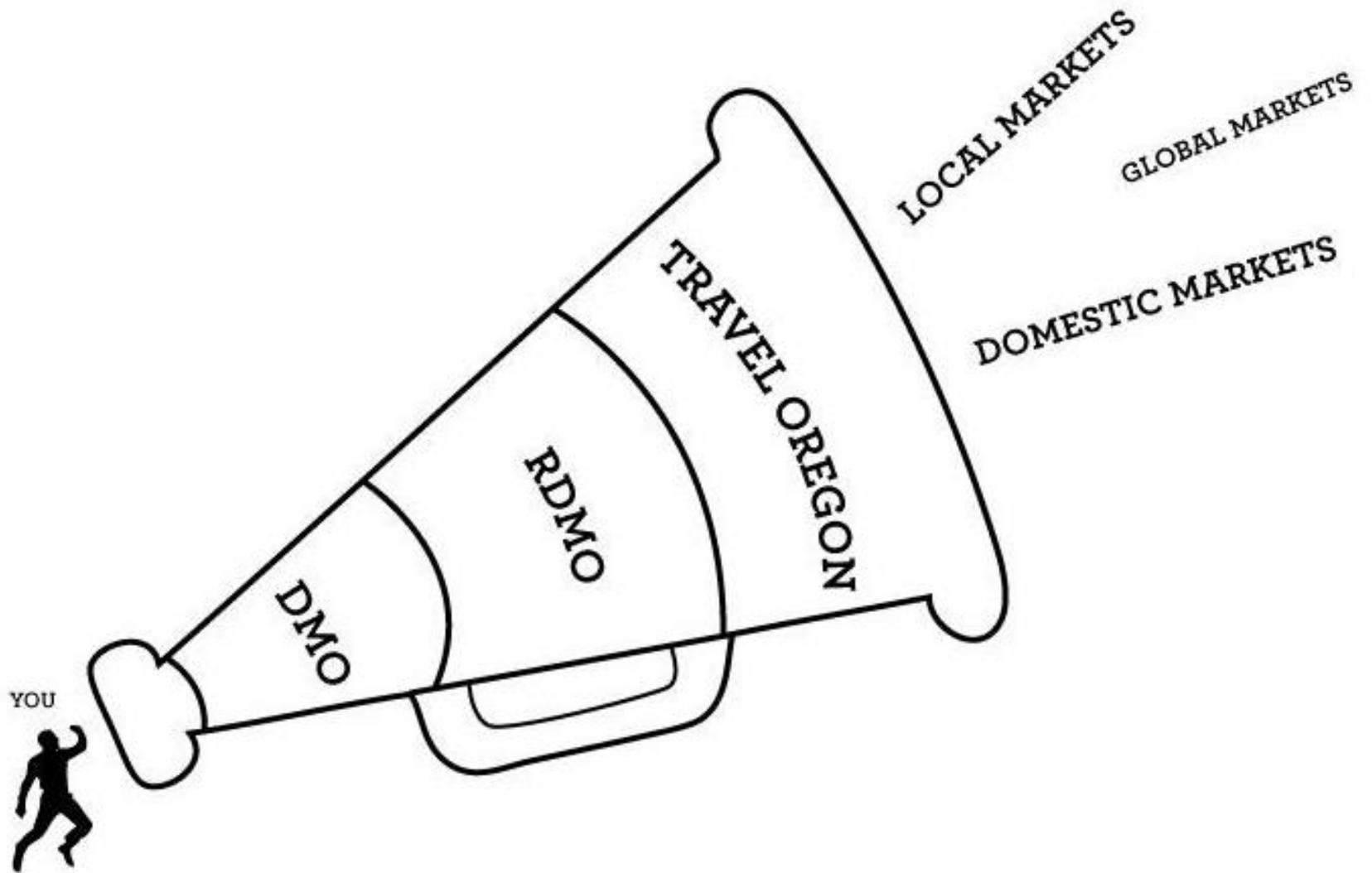


# TOURISM MARKETING IN OREGON

Who does what in marketing Oregon as a destination? It's important to understand the different roles each of us play in visitor marketing.

- **Travel Oregon**
  - Inspires people to choose Oregon for a vacation
  - Provides high-quality trip planning information statewide
- **Regional and local Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs)**
  - Motivate/inspire people to choose YOUR region of Oregon
- **Businesses and attractions**
  - Get people to choose YOUR business in YOUR destination





# TOURISM MARKETING MEGAPHONE



# TOURISM MARKETING

## What can you do to plug in?

- Develop relationships with:
  - [Your local DMO](#)
  - [Your RDMO](#)
  - [Travel Oregon](#)
- Work with your DMO to ensure your attraction is listed on their site and [TravelOregon.com](#).
- Share, share, share YOUR stories – what new experiences are you creating? Share with your DMO and RDMO.
- Let your DMO know you're interested in hosting media familiarization tours
  - Attend a '[Travel Oregon 101](#)'
  - Sign up for Travel Oregon's Industry [eNewsletter](#)



**CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE**

# BUILDING A CONNECTION

**For your marketing to be impactful, you'll need to connect to the consumers you're trying to reach. The connection is important for several key reasons:**

- Your story facilitates a connection between you and the visitor.
- Make a connection between the interests of the visitor and your lifestyle and values.
- The primary goal is not to provide information, but to provide meaning.
- Providing accurate and balanced information is your responsibility as a host – starting from this base allows for mutual respect and facilitates communication.



# ROLE OF STORYTELLING

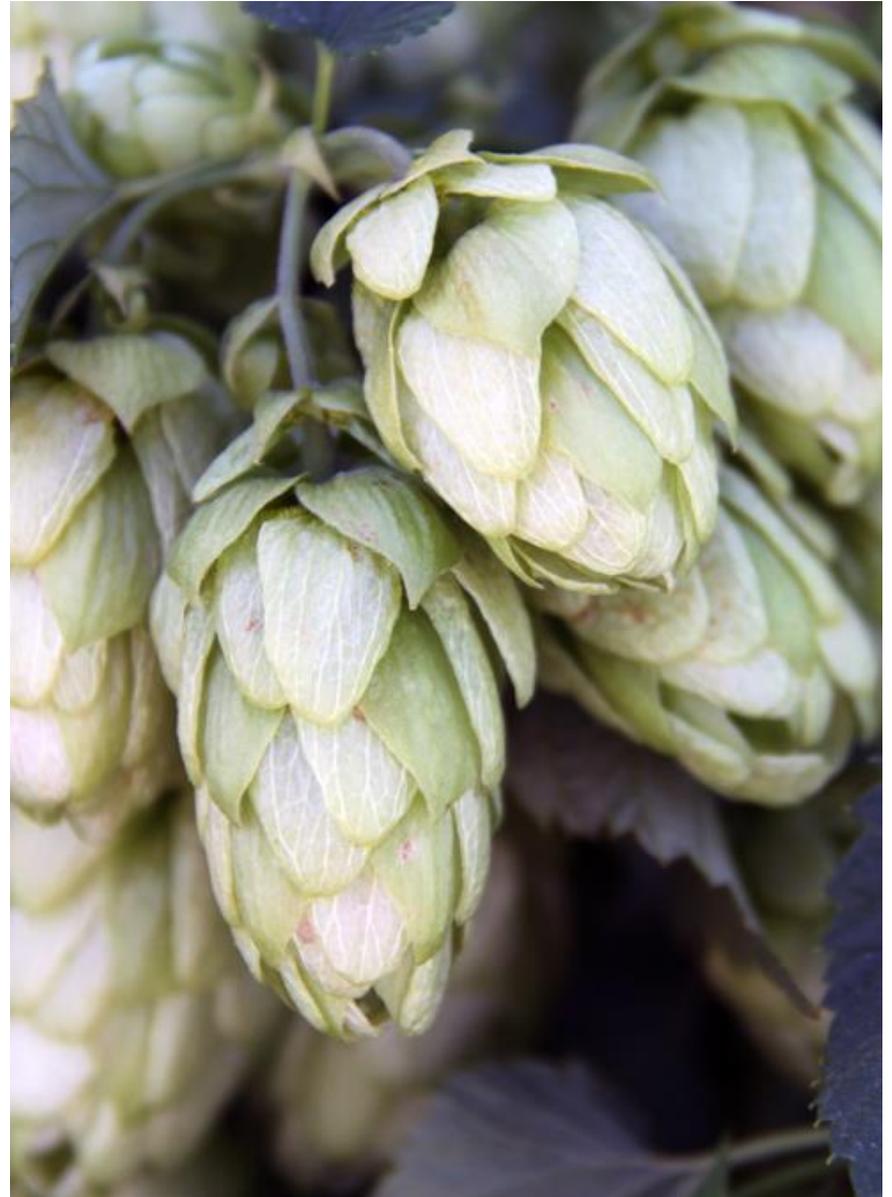
- The primary goal of telling your story is to draw people in and connect. You might tell this story to consumers through e-newsletters, to journalists, and to visitors at your location.
- Audiences (consumers who will see your marketing) must care before they can see value.
- Use your knowledge and experience to help the travelers draw their own meaningful conclusions.
- Choose stories that are relevant:
  - Compelling stories connect people emotionally to a place, activity or person they encounter.
  - Narrow down and present your story in a way that will draw interest and inspire people to do business with you.



# ORGANIZE YOUR THOUGHTS

As you prepare to tell your story and connect to consumers, take a few moments to do the following:

- Theme statement – The core message you want the reader to absorb.
- Write out your draft message – then pull out the concepts, phrases and words that best convey your message.
- Create an outline of the items you want to share.
- Watch transitions, chronology & flow.
- Use complete sentences and paragraphs:
  - Use consistent tense and point of view.
  - Use this message in any publication, online media, presentation or interaction



# USE YOUR UNIQUE VOICE

- Your style is an asset; your unique property and your history are story elements you should share.
- Write like you speak – be genuine.
- Filter – remember, once written and presented, what you have said cannot easily be retracted.
- Be judicious with slang, using it only to strengthen your story. Avoid profanities.



# REVIEW AND EDIT

- Review your work; read it aloud.
- Ask a peer to review what you have written (it's easy to miss a mistake when you've been working on a piece for a long time), or practice out loud with an audience before you share with consumers.
- Proof, proof and **proof again**.
- If you're writing a press release for an update or event, check out this [sample draft](#).
- Share your story with interested travelers and locals – feel free to include a call to action such as “come visit, join our CSA, swing by for our Wednesday tour, join us at our farm dinner, etc.”





**PHOTOGRAPHY**

# CHOOSING GREAT PHOTOGRAPHY

- Photography should feel authentic & evoke a desire to visit, explore, learn more, etc.
- Use photography with a main focus or main object to attract the eye.
- Select images with rich colors and an interesting composition to increase interest.
- Stay consistent. Use a similar style of photography across all channels (e.g., don't use photos with filters in your eNewsletter but not on your website).
- When purchasing photos, try to think about all the potential use for the image so you don't have to pay for the same image more than once.
- Stay away from stock photography that looks too posed or unnatural, as the viewer should feel like they're sharing in the moment.



# HIRING AND HOSTING A PHOTOGRAPHER

Please review the following tips:

## **PRIORITIZE PHOTO USAGE**

Start by making a list of all the ways you will want to use photography: in social media, journalist requests, collateral pieces, newsletters, event invitations, etc. Be sure to think through a year of operations to consider seasonal promotions, what's happening on the farm, events, etc. Ideally, a photographer should be able to check off as many of your needs as possible in one session.

## **BUILD A LIBRARY OF PHOTOS**

Capture photos that are generic enough that you can use them along with timely content. Landscape/scenery shots, close-ups of products, and people enjoying your experience are all good 'evergreen' content that can be used to illustrate a timely caption throughout the year. For example: "Check out the view from our deck at this weekend's open house!" with a scenery shot of a "Saving a spot for you!" showing two people in chairs by the fire enjoying your cider/cheese/product. Think aspirational – shots that will make people want to be there. If the photographer can be around during a big consumer day or event, that's great too. Get people smiling, laughing, consuming and enjoying in all the beautiful places on your property.

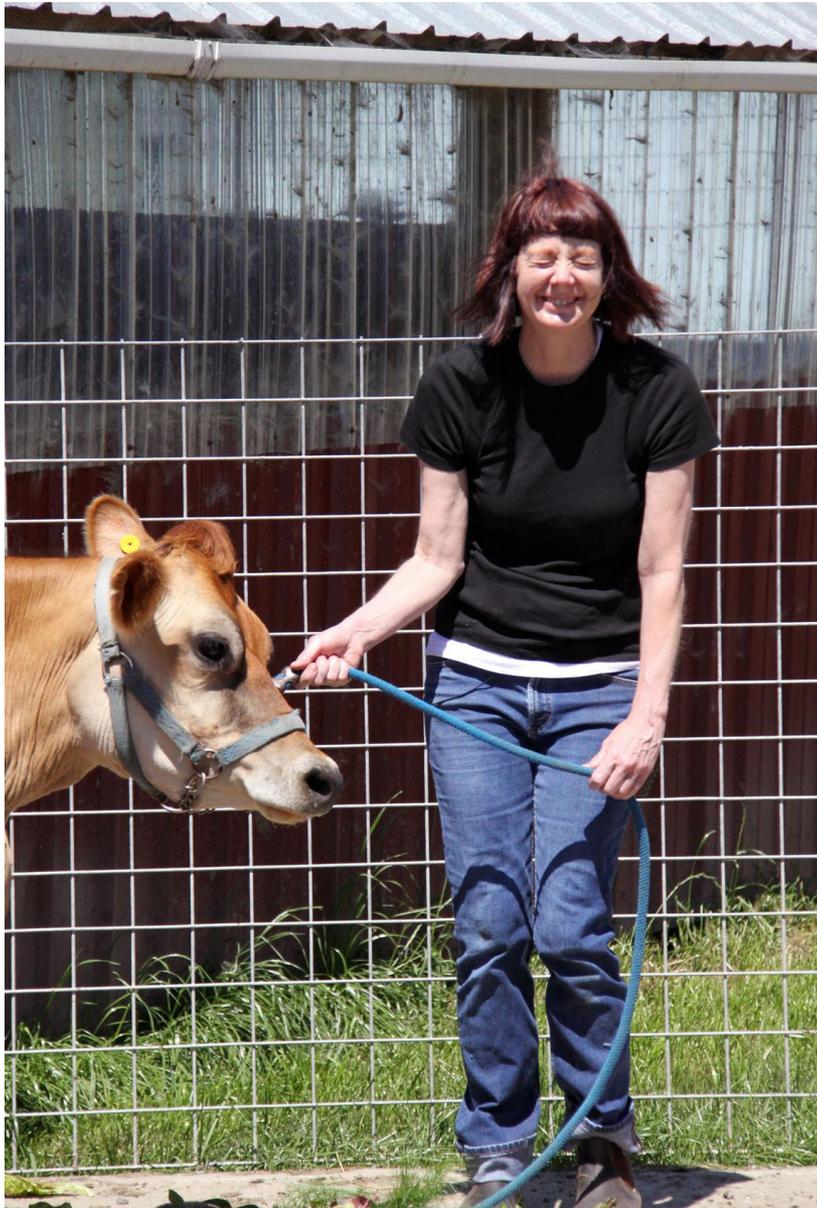


**CUSTOMER SERVICE**

# GUEST EXPERIENCE

- Make a positive impression.
- Be authentic.
- Be a good listener.
- Identify and anticipate needs.
- Guests should feel appreciated.
- Help guests understand your procedures.
- Appreciate differences.
- Know how to apologize.
- Give more than expected.
- Get regular feedback.
- Treat employees well.
- Need customer service training? Check out ORLA's Guest Service Gold program.





# FIRST IMPRESSIONS

It's about preparation and presentation!

- Make a positive impression from the first thing they see to the food and activities they enjoy.
- Remember that you have a role in the visitor's trip memories.
- Your relationship with your customer actually begins with their first introduction to your business, whether through marketing, an article, social media or your website.
- The impression develops as they contact you for reservations or more information.
- Control the message at every step.

# CURB APPEAL

What will they see when arriving at your farm, ranch or business?  
Who might not want to stay at your farm or ranch stay, bed and breakfast or glamping location?

Take a fresh look at your surroundings and try to view them through the eyes of a visitor. You may have become jaded to what you see every day. Farms and ranches are busy places that are very hard to keep picked up and clean. If you have livestock, you know that challenge is even greater.

It would take more time and employees than most of us have to keep things ship-shape, but if you focus on keeping the areas directly around where visitors will stay or spend time neat and attractive, it will make a positive and lasting first impression.





# GET CREATIVE

Flowers and careful arrangements can turn old farm equipment into an attractive decorative item. Keep weeds controlled in areas visitors frequent. In addition to improving your curb appeal, removing old boards, tools and equipment reduces the risk of injuries.



Take a look around and get creative. Can you repurpose farm equipment and implements into decorative items? Looks are very important, but they aren't everything. There are many ways to make your business welcoming and friendly.

# ADAPTING TO THE LAND

- Clear the path and clean up the logical backdrop for your obvious photo subjects.
- A little bit of clean-up and creating a great photo spot makes a big difference.
- The two characters on the right are very photogenic, but the pen and fences didn't allow for a good pic.
- Make sure your favorite "heeler" doesn't try to herd the guests. We all love our cow dogs, but a nip on the back of the leg usually spells trouble.



Images by Janet Dodson

# ACCESSIBILITY

Can people with limited mobility experience what you have to offer? Are there adaptations you can make that will allow more people to enjoy the pleasures of country life?

## Consider:

- Smoother walking surfaces in the lawn and barnyard
- Arranging furniture to accommodate wheelchairs
- Gates and doors that are wide and easy to open and close
- Ramps instead of, or in addition to, steps
- Tables that accommodate people who are in wheelchairs
- Modified experiences or activities

*For everyone's safety, look for and remove exposed nails, broken steps, protruding boards and wires hidden in the grass.*

# CUSTOMER SERVICE 101

Great hospitality starts with a great attitude



- Smile! In person, a genuine smile says “You’re welcome here!” When talking on the phone, a smile on your face can be heard in your voice.
- Every encounter is an opportunity to enhance the visitor’s experience.
- Word-of-mouth referrals are the most effective marketing tool. Helping visitors have a quality experience makes it more likely they will recommend that others visit your business and Oregon.
- Arm yourself with knowledge – be the local expert visitors are seeking with insider recommendations.
- Avoid using slang, and keep gestures to a minimum; words and gestures have different meanings across different cultures.
- Keep conversations friendly and avoid the controversial when possible. Follow the guest’s lead in selecting topics.
- Go the extra mile for your tourism partners – they will do the same for you.



**SIGNAGE BEST PRACTICES**

# HOW WILL THEY FIND YOU?

Having the right roadway signage is essential to success

- Check with Oregon Travel Experience (OTE) to see if your business qualifies for a Tourist Oriented Directional (TOD) sign. OTE manages the blue travel signs and logo signs on the freeways and state highways.  
[www.ortravelexperience.com/for-businesses/sign-programs/](http://www.ortravelexperience.com/for-businesses/sign-programs/)
- Make sure the signs at the entrance to your farm or ranch include the name you are using for your tourism business, and if your tourist-facing business is open.
- Provide clear driving directions on your reservation confirmation letter or email, your brochure and your website. Check Google Maps to see if the directions they provide are accurate and logical.
- Talk to your neighbors and businesses in town about what you are doing. They may be asked for directions, and can also refer customers your way. Leave them a supply of business cards or rack cards to distribute, and do the same for them.



# HOW WILL THEY FIND YOU?

## Entryway and on-site signage

- When guests are on your property, they will benefit from signs and symbols that direct them to points of interest, inform them of off-limits areas, highlight safety notices and guide them back to the guest facilities.
- Make sure your property is clearly marked with durable signage.
- Inform guests about where and where not to park.
- Keep it positive!
- When you have to post or state a warning, humor is fun – but make sure visitors know the risks are real.





**CREATING SUCCESSFUL EVENTS**

# CREATING SUCCESSFUL EVENTS

## Consider the basics:

- Be sure to connect with your local regulatory and government agencies to see if there are event restrictions or rules in your community.
- Check out this helpful, general event planning timeline for marketing and planning an event.
- Decide on a theme for your event, festival or gathering; then mesh the visitor's interests with the event offerings.
- If this is your first time organizing the event, consider reaching out to successful event operators statewide for guidance.
- Consider a trial run or soft opening, depending on your event type.
- Make sure you have enough staff on hand who can talk about the history of the farm as well as provide a helping hand.
- Have well-positioned signage that directs visitors to the right location.
- Anticipate safety issues, and have precautions established.
- Follow up with participants to keep them engaged through communication – you want to be able to invite them back again!



**THANK YOU**