1) Introduction of Speaker
2) Introduction of Attendees
   a. Where work, position, how long in position, favorite vacation spot
3) What is a Group sales Professional?
4) Basic terms & Definitions
   a. Group Leader
      i. A member of a club, organization, church, etc who is responsible for the travel activities of that group.
         1. Responsibilities include:
            a. Tour selection
            b. Collecting payment
            c. Liaison between group and tour operator
            d. Acts as an escort
      ii. They are not the employee of the tour operator and cannot legally act on their behalf. Sometimes it is difficult to discern that they are a group leader as many have their own business cards and make their own reservations.
      iii. They appear to be a professional travel industry professional but do not have a travel business, an office, appointments, regular business hours, etc. Usually they do not have a business or broker’s license. When dealing directly with group leaders, take time to thoroughly know them, especially when quoting pricing.
   b. Operators
      i. Are professional, licensed companies who package tours for groups that may include transportation, lodging, meals, guides, attractions, shows and other opportunities.
      ii. Two types of Operators:
         1. Motorcoach Operator – lease motorcoaches to groups for the sole purpose of transporting them from point A to point B. Generally do not sell anything but transportation.
         2. Tour Operator – package tours for groups from one destination to another.
            a. A Tour Operator does not need to own coaches but many do. If they don’t own any, they lease them from a Motorcoach Operator. Simply ask them if they own their own coaches, or who they work with for transportation. This is helpful when a coach with the name of Operator X pulls up and you are expecting a bus from Operator Z.
         3. Tour Planner
            a. Actually plans or packages a tour. Be careful here…This could be an employee of the Operator, a Receptive Operator or a Group Leader working from their kitchen table.
         4. Tour Escort
            a. Is an on-board representative of the Operator. Ensures the passenger’s welfare and satisfaction, makes arrangements and payments for tour features and handles other pertinent duties while the tour is in progress. Usually they do not act as a local guide. May or may not be authorized to order additional services
beyond what is contracted. Is a paid employee of the Operator and not a group leader.

i. Retail Groups – individuals that have booked from advertisements in newspapers, television, radio or direct mail pieces. Seats are sold on an individual basis directly by the Operator. Does not have a group leader but will most often have an escort from the Operator. Also called Public groups, Catalog Groups and Scheduled Groups.

ii. Charter Groups – groups that book an entire motorcoach for their group only. They will sometimes book a motorcoach from an Operator, plan their own itinerary and book directly with each stop.

iii. Pre-Formed Group – consists of members from the same organization or club such as AARP, a church group, bank group or a civic organization. Can be called Custom Groups. Affinity Groups or Pre-formed Groups.

c. Receptive

i. This is a professional, licensed operator that packages for groups that may include transportation, lodging, meals, guides, attractions, shows and other opportunities. The biggest difference is Receptives handle a geographic region and take care of incoming tours where a Tour Operator handles outbound tours from their home area to another area. Operators will utilize Receptives because they are cost effective and provide a “one call does it all” contact – saving time. Most cover one small area but others will go regional or national.

1. Can provide a professional guide (or tour guide). This person is hired to conduct a narrative on a specific area or attraction. Some locations require their guides to be licensed such as Gettysburg. Sometimes referred to as a “step on guide”.

d. Supplier

i. That’s you! A supplier (or Associate in some organizations) is a business that supplies meals, lodging, attractions, shopping or other tour components.

ii. Customer

1. Who is your customer? The person or company who actually pays the invoice. Be careful not to confuse with the “end user” or the person who actually uses or consumes your product.

a. This is important so there is no discussion about contract or financial arrangements. This would be a breach of ethics to give out this information to a group leader if they are going through a Tour Operator or Receptive. Also extends to discussions about refunds of deposits or cancellations.

5) Tiered Pricing

a. Is a pricing structure based on the cost of your property for each type of client. Could have as many as four different price levels.

i. Rack Rate – this is your retail price, charge to an individual or family

ii. Group rate – this is your discounted Rack Rate, charged for groups meeting a minimum attendance number (usually 12-20). May need to rethink the group number due to smaller numbers traveling.

iii. Operator rate – this is the discounted Group Rate you would charge an Operator. This is business to business – less risky, easier to administer than the group rate, so it is less costly to you. The difference between the Group Rate and Operator Rate is the operating revenue needed by the Operator to market and conduct the tour.
iv. Receptive Rate – this is the discounted Operator rate you would charge a Receptive (also called a wholesale rate). The difference between the Operator Rate and receptive rate is the operating revenue needed by the Receptive to market and conduct a tour.
   1. An Operator and Receptive make their revenue off the entire group, so you are not required to cover all of that at your property alone. The discount they receive from you is combined with the discount they receive from every stop on the itinerary to create the operating margin for that trip. Smaller properties – smaller discount. Larger properties – large discounts.

v. Don’t mix up Operating Revenue and Profit when you are thinking about the Operator finances. Operating Revenue is the difference between the purchase price and the selling price. Operating revenue is not profit. Profit is the money remaining after everything else (wages, insurance, taxes, advertising, phone bills, fuel costs, maintenance...to name a few) has been deducted from the operating revenue. The expense to running a tour company is immense...that is why tired pricing is so vital.

6) Deposits
   a. Is to establish the creditability of a reservation. If you must have them, the amount should line up with the history of the purchaser and the size of the purchase. The refund ability of a deposit should be governed by the ability to resell the cancelled space. Full refunds for cancellations 30 days prior to arrival are expected. If cancelled space is resold, the full deposit should be refunded. Discuss deposits with your management team. Are they in place to produce income on their own or just to “keep ‘em honest”? How much is your deposit? It is proportional to the bill or just some arbitrary number? If you are charging a $500 deposit for a $1,500 sell...you are way out of line!!! This is a partnership and needs to be fair to BOTH sides!!

7) Disclosure

8) Rate Change
   a. We all have to make rate changes. Be careful how you handle these changes after you have quoted and confirmed a price to a customer. The best practice is to honor the price and make the change with the next reservation. If you must implement the change, try to meet in the middle or reduce the hit to your customer. Operators will need to absorb the loss to maintain their reputation or help develop a new destination. How much do you want to retain the client?

9) Alphabet Soup

10) 24 Tons of Fun
   a. What is a Motorcoach?
      i. School buses are yellow and carry children.
      ii. Motorcoaches are comfort travel, cost around $500,000 to $600,000 per coach new. Costs incurred with coach are high. One tier is around $400.
   b. Property must be prepared
      i. Motorcoaches are big (SLIDE)
         1. Need lots of space – especially to turn around
         2. Be aware of length, height and turning radius
      ii. Motorcoaches are tall
         1. Post exact height signs at low clearances – porticos, overhead welcome signs, etc.
      iii. Motorcoaches don’t maneuver very well
         1. Doesn’t just fit – must be able to enter and exit – adequate space
         2. Eliminate reverse – in a crowded parking lot – very dangerous
         3. Check for dips and depressions in parking lot
4. Not the same as a tractor trailer – turn radius is different
5. Don’t park on gravel, dirt or stone – damage air conditioning/heating units

iv. Motorcoaches don’t like obstacles
1. Landscaping should not hinder

v. Motorcoaches don’t like surprises en route
1. Drive route yourself – be aware of obstacles such as bridge weight and overpass heights
2. Print a map of the area showing your property – send to motorcoach company prior to them coming
3. Designate a special entrance to property of able
4. Be a hero – give driver written directions to major attractions in your area and to major cities outside your area they may be going to

vi. Motorcoaches need special servicing facilities
1. Make a service sheet for driver: diesel fuel, restroom dumping facilities, repair service, bus washing service
   a. Find in the Yellow Pages, local motorcoach companies, travel plazas
      i. Call to confirm what they can and will provide
      ii. Get a contact name
      iii. Hours and after hours numbers
   b. Make sure your front line staff know where this sheet is located

vii. Motorcoaches are NOT an inconvenience
1. Welcome them with open arms and take good care of them
   a. Operator restaurant story - ...darn thing off property
   b. Wanted business but not coach cluttering parking lot
2. Designate parking for coaches – mark accordingly – enforce
   a. Cars parking in coach designated spots is a big problem
3. Don’t make them park blocks or miles away
   a. If necessary – have a shuttle to bring driver back and forth

c. Take care of the driver
   i. Driver is the first line of contact with the company
      1. Nearly all drivers complete a survey about their trip
      2. Also talk to their supervisor about the trip
         a. What if they had a bad experience at your property? What do you think they will share first?
   ii. Federal Mandated Hours of Service
      1. Can only drive 10 hours in a 15-hour period. After 15 hours they must be off duty (physically away from the coach) for an 8 hour period before returning to driving.
         a. On duty, not driving covers loading/unloading luggage, loading/unloading passengers, rest/meal stops, waiting time, etc.
      2. Regulations don’t specify mileage limits but generally can’t go more than 550 miles in a day and prove they are with regulations.
      3. All drivers are operating on a time schedule dictated by these regulations. If they receive late or slow service, the result can be more than just an inconvenience.

d. Take care of the escort
   i. There are no federal regulations regarding escorts other than those that apply from their companies.
e. Service While at Your Property
   i. Assist the drivers and escorts in serving their passengers
   ii. Meal stops – driver is usually the last one to be served but the first one that needs to be back at the coach. Driver is generally last one into the building
      1. Driver needs quick, efficient service – don’t make them wait at the back of the line
         a. Have server ready to receive their order ASAP
         b. Ask if he wants to be with the group or separate. Sometimes the driver needs a break
      2. Escorts may want to be served first and some may wish to be served last. It is all upon their company policy.
         a. Passengers will gauge their experience on the escort. When they see the escort is finished, they may hurry up thinking they are ready to return to the coach.
         b. Escorts will generally stay behind to make sure all passengers are finished and out of the property.
   iii. Lodging – escorts are given great rooms and the driver often gets the leftovers. Drivers need a GOOD night’s sleep. Be aware of the environment when assigning his/her room – away from ice machines, elevators, noisy lounges.
   iv. Don’t segregate groups from the regular customers
      1. Crammed seating, institutional-style food, windowless backrooms are NOT acceptable
      2. May wish to be seated as groups of two or four instead of a long line
   v. Gratuity policy should take care of your staff
      1. Happy servers, happy group
   vi. If a driver and escort like you property they will tell everyone. If they don’t like your property, they will tell everyone. Word of mouth is the best form of advertising.

11) Profile Sheets
   a. Steal Shamelessly!
   b. What is a profile sheet
   c. Major shows can only hand out profile sheet and business card
   d. Reflect your property
      i. Pictures – be creative
   e. 1 or 2 sided
   f. Notes Section
   g. In-house verses printer
   h. .pdf file for web site

12) FAM Tours
   a. Offered to Operators (SLIDE)
   b. Offered to Operators – Group Leaders (SLIDE)
   c. Number 1 Rule – limit the visit to a short time...15 to 20 minutes
      i. Be flexible – some properties can be “properly teased” in 10 minutes some need more
      ii. No visit to one property should go over 25 – 30 minutes
   d. Be a part of a FAM to be seen
      i. Can send all types of literature, DVD’s, Websites but until you step foot into my property you don’t know what sets me apart from every other property just like yours
   e. The benefits of a FAM
      i. Exposure, Exposure, Exposure
   f. Draw backs of a FAM
i. No guarantee of success
ii. FAM’s are not cheap – especially for hotels and restaurants.
   1. Usually you will find that one booking will cover the cost

g. How do you do a FAM?
i. Work with your DMO – they should be offering FAM’s. If they are, don’t expect to be on them all. In Lancaster there are over 100 properties actively pursuing Group business so we understand we need to share opportunities.
h. If DMO is not offering FAM’s consider starting your own program.
i. If you are ready to create your own FAM program here is Rule One: There are no rules! Find what works for you and just do it! Don’t be afraid to experiment. One word of warning...don’t begin with the largest operator. Start small and don’t be afraid to make mistakes as long as you learn from them.
j. What do you sell on a FAM? In Order...
i. Tour Operator
   ii. Region
   iii. Individual Property
k. Your presentation
   i. If you can’t say it in six then don’t bother saying it!
   ii. Fine tune your, hone, and practice your sales pitch. The better you are at giving your message out the more effective it will be.
   iii. Use the 3 P’s: Professional, Personal, and Precise
      1. Professional: You need to know what to say, how to say it, and how to say it quickly without stumbling.
      2. Personal: Personalize your presentation to the person you are speaking with, “and when you bring your group to visit my property, you will see”...
      3. Precise: Dictionary – “Precise – clearly expressed or delineated; definite.” On a FAM the attendees receive tons of messages during the FAM. Yours will stand out if it’s precise and clearly expressed.
l. Make it a policy that whenever you are doing any show where Operators bring group leaders; do not give out prices to group leaders.
m. Always ask the Operator about giving out contact information
n. Most Operators will want a FAM to be complimentary. This is a sales opportunity and you have to give something to get something.
o. For heaven’s sake...Follow Up! At the very least, send a thank you to the Operator.

13) Getting Along with Others...Partnerships and Your DMO

a. Unless you are Disney World or a property of that caliber, you are not the sole reason people come to Hershey or your region. Don’t worry; you are not in this alone. You have plenty of properties in your town, your county, your region, your state that that are perfect to work with, and are after the same thing you are...Motorcoaches in the parking lot!
b. Tour Operators and Group Leaders love to travel to an area but, they don’t live there. One f the best service you can provide is to work together with other properties to create a simple itinerary. There are several reason for doing this:
   i. You know how to get around. Their best resource in knowing how to get from point A to point B is you. You can create maps, turn by turn directions, everything they need.
   ii. If you create an itinerary guess who is on that itinerary...YOU! There are no promises...they may take your itinerary and change it up and drop you off but, it’s worth a shot.
1. Partnering with other properties is Willy Wonka’s Golden Ticket to business. If you are a hotel, you’ve got to partner. If you are a restaurant, partnerships are important.
   a. Going Away to Get Together
   iii. Creating partnerships is vital to your business. Competition is good, and important, but you need to learn how to work together...even with your competitor. Look at the truly successful areas – Branson, Pigeon Forge, Lancaster County... they sell well because they sell each other.
   c. Attractions, Restaurants, Hotels , DMO
   d. DMO’s are very important. Many in the industry wish they had a CVB, VCB, Chamber, or some organization to work with. So please don’t take your DMO for granted. They are your very best resource for what is happening in the industry.
   e. Your DMO is almost always an entity given the responsibility to sell your town, county, area, or region. They have the responsibility to bring the warm bodies to the area. Your job is to work with your DMO to complete the transaction and bring those warm bodies in to your properties. It is not the job of the DMO to bring these warm bodies into your property. They must serve all their members well.
   f. When we do the shows, we do them to promote our properties, our regions, and our partnerships. We do this alongside our DMO’s but it is my job to sell my particular property not the DMO. They will sell you too but they have to be fair and try to match the proper property to what the group needs.
   g. If your DMO offers regular meetings...GO! You will be updated on the Group Sales landscape, receive training, and will keep you up to speed on the industry. They will offer FAM tours, co-op advertising opportunities, and more. They will pass along leads from trade shows, sales mission, ect.
   h. The main point is that your DMO should be your number one partner and your first go-to for information and input. Sit down with your DMO’s designated Group Sales person and ask how you can work together. Be willing to sponsor, advertise, and participate in upcoming opportunities. The more you are a team player, the more you find them willing to work with you and promote you.
   i. DMO’s

14) Shows
   a. Three basic types of shows
      i. Scheduled Appointment
      ii. Stand In Line & Wait Appointment Shows
      iii. Booth Trade Shows
   b. Scheduled Appointment Shows
      i. Before The Show
         1. Register On Time
         2. Do Your Research – Review profiles, view web sites, know what they are looking for. Choose appointments.
         3. Prepare Your Marketing Materials – Profile Sheet & Business Card
         4. Talk To Other From Your Area – See who is doing business with whom. Can you partner with them to reach them with a bigger itinerary?
         5. Internal Database – Have they visited your property before? Are there any comments about past visits?
         6. Door Prize – Something that assures a booking for your property. Give an incentive and your door can work for you.
      ii. At The Show
         1. Timed Appointments – Will have an assigned time to be on the floor. Strict seven minute increments.
2. Number of Appointments – May have a full book and if not, have an opportunity to pick up appointments.

3. Session Starts – Go directly to your first scheduled table. Will have about 5 minutes at each table. Will receive a one minute warning. When bell rings, current appointment is over and next one begins. Don’t forget to say thank you with a hand shake or hug and be off.

4. What Do I Say? – Presentation should be a conversation and not a sale pitch. What is different, unique, and out-of-the-ordinary with your property? Get to know the operator. Talk with the operator not to the operator!

5. Relationship Industry – Relationships take time. Can take up to 3-5 years to build these relationships. Don’t get discouraged.

c. Stand In Line & Wait appointment Shows
   
i. Before The Show
      1. Register On Time
      2. Do Your Research – Review profiles, view web sites, know what they are looking for. Know who you want to speak to.
      3. Prepare Your Marketing Materials – Profile Sheet & Business Card. You can offer a give away to be put on the table prior to the appointment.
      4. Talk To Other From Your Area – See who is doing business with whom. Can you partner with them to reach them with a bigger itinerary?
      5. Internal Database – Have they visited your property before? Are there any comments about past visits?
      6. Door Prize – Something that assures a booking for your property. Give an incentive and your door can work for you.

   ii. At The Show
      1. Appointments – Will choose who you would like to see first and then stand in line and wait for that operator to be free. You will have a 7 to 10 minute appointment. If line is long, jump to another operator that is free and come back. Know who will be the most popular operators so you can see at least one of them first. When your appointment is finished, don’t forget to say thank you and depart.
      2. Number of Appointments – Will vary. Be sure to see your top 10 list first and fill in if you have more time.
      3. What Do I Say? – Presentation should be a conversation and not a sale pitch. What is different, unique, and out-of-the-ordinary with your property? Get to know the operator. Talk with the operator not to the operator!
      4. Relationship Industry – Relationships take time. Can take up to 3-5 years to build these relationships. Don’t get discouraged.

d. Booth Trade Shows
   
i. Before the Show
      1. Register On Time – This is a great show to partner with others in your area.
      2. Prepare Booth Display – Many shows will have a theme and would expect you to decorate your booth to match the theme.
      3. Prepare Handout Materials – Some shows may allow pricing, others do not. If doing a group leader show...NO PRICING should be on the handout materials. Take the number of people expected, divide by 2, and subtract a third. This will give you the number of handouts and material you will need.
4. Purchase Give Aways – Many times they end up with the grandkids! Candy is always a great alternative.
5. Door Prize – Something that assures a booking for your property. Give an incentive and your door can work for you.

ii. At The Show
1. Be On Time To Set Up
2. Greet Everyone Who Comes To Your Booth – Even those who are just there for the give aways.
3. Ask if they would Like Your Info - These types of shows are difficult on the vendor but that is no reason to be rude. Ask if they would like your materials. If you just slip it in their bag, they will just throw it away and you have wasted your marketing dollars.
4. Have Better Give Aways In The Back For “Special Attendees” – If you know who is coming, send them a flyer offering them a “free” gift if they bring the flyer with them and stop at your booth. Give a larger gift to those prospects that you know will bring a group to your property.
5. Don’t Be Discouraged By The Numbers – It only takes 3 – 4 people to bring a group to your property to make up for a show. If you have spoken to four great prospects...you have done your job!
6. Don’t Tear Down Until Told To or At Designated Time

e. Follow Up
   i. Follow-Up is the opportunity to continue the dialogue by:
      1. Providing more detailed information from your discussion
      2. A Thank You for their time
   ii. Follow-Up is more than just a onetime mailing after the show. Always follow-up after:
      1. A telephone conversation
      2. An email received
      3. A conversation held
      4. A brief encounter
   iii. You follow-up because:
      1. 98% of sales are made after the 10th “No”
      2. Your neighboring properties are
      3. Out of sight, out of mind!
   iv. Write it down!
      1. Keep some type of written recording system – you can’t remember everything!
         a. Write it on the back of their business card
         b. Keep a notebook by your phone
            i. Track phone calls
            c. Note what you sent and when
         2. Use a show sheet
            a. Questions to remind you what you need to know
            b. Use check off boxes to make it quick
            c. Write down who should receive the information. The person you are talking to or meeting isn’t always the person who should get the information.
   v. Follow-Up with:
1. Calls – should be returned ASAP! If you don’t get back immediately, they will call someone else. When you are on the road – check messages, return calls or designate someone to do so.

2. Emails – ASAP! Many times the person emailing (or calling) is working on a project at that time and needs an answer. If you don’t have the time right then, send an email to ask if it is okay to get back to them and give them an estimated time and date you will do so. If they say they need the info today, do everything in your power to get it done today. If they say it is okay to get back to them, put it on your calendar with a reminder so you won’t forget.

3. Leads from you DMO:
   a. Before you just begin sending out your information, do your homework. Be sure the company comes to your area, are they a charter company verses a tour company, have you sent them info already?
   b. After a show:
      i. There is so much mail received in the office after a show that say – “you met with my DMO and they said you are interested in receiving info from me”. Ask to see the notes from the show and be sure they did ask for your information. Respond to those first and then send the others a “gentle reminder” such as a post card.
   c. Leads received in the office through inquiries.

4. Networking Opportunities
   a. Always send a quick email or a note out to those you met at a networking event. You never know where your next piece of business is coming from!

5. Leads are everywhere!!

vi. When should you follow-up?
   1. Shows
      a. Remember to ask at the show how the information is to be received.
      b. A thank you note and anything asked for at the appointment should go out no later than two weeks from the show.
         i. Handwritten notes are more personal
            1. As technology grows so does the distance between you and the customer. A handwritten note will touch the reader in a way no other form of communication will. The more you write the easier it will become and your words will flow. Not all follow-up needs to be handwritten but the first contact makes an impression.
            2. Be sure to include what show you are following up with on the outside of the envelope.
            i. If sending an email be sure to have the subject line clearly stated – ABA Follow Up from ______________.
            iii. If sending a form letter at least put a handwritten note on the bottom of the letter.
            iv. If you didn’t get an appointment with someone, send them just your profile sheet and a business card. They will follow-up if needed.
      c. Something new at your property
      d. Thank you note for bringing you business
e. If you provided them as a referral let them know who you referred to them so they can follow up if the referral doesn’t contact them.

f. “Busitis”
   i. If they are in your area and not coming to you make sure they receive a call or note from you.

2. Creative Follow-Up
   a. Make sure what you are sending can be read easily and quickly
      i. Bullet points vs. block letter
   b. Send ONLY what was asked for
   c. Handwritten vs. label
   d. Stamped vs. metered
      i. Stamped will get opened first
   e. Post Card Program
      i. Send one every quarter with new information on each card
      ii. Have a consistent look
      iii. Sell yourself as well as your area
   f. Unique & Different
      i. Shoo Fly Pie
      ii. Trash Can
      iii. NC Christmas Lights
      iv. Article seen in magazine or newspaper
      v. Holidays
      vi. Sales Missions

f. What do Operators Look for...
   i. from Destinations
      1. Sites en route
      2. Milepost information
      3. Marketing support materials
      4. Scenic route options
      5. Nearby areas of interest
      6. Adequate, varied and nearby hotels. Restaurants and attractions
      7. Communities that want business
   ii. from Attractions
      1. Adequate capacity to handle large groups
      2. Special entrances
      3. Good group seating with views for entertainment
      4. Gift shop
      5. Clean and plentiful restrooms
      6. Sitting areas
      7. Helpful & friendly staff
      8. Special concessions for groups
      9. On-site food service
      10. Adequate and preferably free motorcoach parking
   iii. from Lodging
      1. Price within a budget
      2. Location
3. Quality and service that matches needs
4. Responsive sales staff
5. Favorable group discount and comps
6. Double doubles
7. Attractive rooms
8. Safety & security
9. Large public areas
10. Good views
11. Breakfast facilities
12. Free coach parking
13. Service area

iv. From Restaurants
1. Quality food
2. Varied & interesting menu
3. Adequate seating in a good location
4. Interesting décor
5. Friendly, courteous staff
6. Efficient delivery
7. Coach access and parking
8. Group tour menu
9. Enthusiastic, responsive management
10. Mix of regular and tour patrons

g. Industry Trends
i. Scheduled Service
ii. Green Transportation
iii. Wi-Fi
iv. International - BRIC
v. Smaller Group Numbers
vi. Last Minute Bookings
vii. Safety Criteria