



INSIDER EXCLUSIVES

Secrets of Creating Women-Only Tours

By Linda Edelman

Women love the idea of getting away with women, be it with their tight circle of friends or as part of a tour that simply consists of other women they can have fun getting to know. Once again, it's all about the experience: traveling and sharing, and learning something new with a good friend, mother, or daughter are the driving factors. Women love to share new experiences, discuss female topics, and of course have fun! Rejuvenation, bonding with other women, and not having a care in the world, even for 24 hours, are huge.

Here are some helpful hints for getting started:

- Keep it short until you build trust. You will get all different age groups/demographics with different work and family responsibilities.
- Keep your groups small.
- Make activities fun.
- Remember that safety is very important.
- Create a balance between group and individual activities.
- Provide new experiences for group members.
- Market to your past customers and also realize this is an avenue to attract new clients.
- Create options for tour members. (That's mandatory! People increasingly want choices within group experiences.)

In addition, choosing the right property is key. It must have a bar and should have a spa, workout facility, yoga studio,

pool, hot tub, steam room, and boutique shopping nearby (outlets are everywhere these days), golf, hiking trails, biking, and so forth.

The more unique, interesting, and playful activities you can offer, the better your chance for success. Why? You'll attract a more diverse cross section of travelers. If your tour is made up of women who don't know each other, consider many different types of group activities so that the women can get to know each other in a fun and low-key way. Cooking competitions are one great way to make this happen.

As with any new product, sell at a price point where you do little more than cover expenses at first. Provide an amazing experience, and your clients will help market for you. Women gain strength from other women, because they have a unique curiosity and desire to disengage from societal expectations.

Show that your program will allow rehabilitation and rejuvenation of one's soul and a place for women to come together and expand their spheres and connections with themselves, and you will be on your way to creating the perfect women-only tour experiences!

Linda Edelman owns Custom Tours Inc. of Waterbury, Vt. This receptive operator covers New England, eastern Canada, and New York City. To contact Edelman, visit www.customtoursinc.com.