

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TOURISM COMMISSION

# FAMILS



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## WHAT IS A FAMIL AND HOW DO I HOST ONE?

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### What does famil mean?

The word 'famil' is an abbreviation of the term 'familiarisation visit' and is used frequently in the tourism industry. It is a sales and marketing activity that tourism operators can use to provide selected participants an opportunity to experience a tourism product (at no cost or at a reduced rate), in return for increased exposure to the participant's audience or client base.

### Who should I invite to host on a famil?

The type of people who might participate in a famil generally fall within one of two categories - travel industry representatives (travel trade) or media & influencers.

#### MEDIA & INFLUENCERS

Invited media may consist of television crews, journalists, TV or radio personalities, social media influencers, key opinion leaders (KOLs), celebrities, photographers, videographers, and others. The primary purpose behind hosting a media and/or influencer famil is to encourage positive publicity about your business or experience and generate earned media coverage. When determining which media outlet or influencer to invite on your famil, ensure you request information about the type of exposure you might receive, including the publication circulation or audience reach, demographic, and the expected release date of any proposed coverage that will feature your business or tourism product. When engaging social media influencers, it is important to ascertain their total reach and engagement level (current industry standard is 3%) and ensure they agree to tag your business or provide a link to your website where possible. It is also essential to be clear on the audience demographic of the media outlet or influencer, and whether this aligns to your target audience; ultimately determining whether this is a good fit for your business. In addition to media and social media influencers, you may be presented with an opportunity to host VIP guests who have a strong affiliation with your desired audience. This may include celebrities (e.g. actors, professional athletes) international delegates or other influential personalities who are visiting South Australia for a special event or project. It is also essential to be clear on the audience demographic of the media outlet or influencer, and whether this aligns to your target audience; ultimately determining whether this is a good fit for your business.

### Key questions to ask to help qualify a media or influencer request:

- Can you provide insights on your publication/ social media channels?
- What are your key audience demographics?
- What publication/s will my business be featured in?
- Will you feature any other competitor businesses?
- How big will the feature be?
- When will the coverage go live?
- Is there a possibility for the feature to be further promoted across other platforms (e.g. social media accounts)?
- How many posts and/or stories can you commit to delivering in advance?
- Do you have examples of similar work you have done in the past?
- How can I further leverage this content for my business?

#### TRAVEL TRADE

Often referred to as 'distribution partners', invited travel industry members are likely to be sales representatives or product managers from travel retailers, wholesalers or inbound tour operators who can sell your product to their customers. Refer to the [Working with Distribution Partners](#) document for more information about these types of partners. It is important to ensure any distribution partners you may consider inviting on a famil are actively marketing to your audience. A quick review of their website or consultation with the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) will help you to determine whether your product aligns with other tourism activities that they promote. You may also consider inviting other relevant industry stakeholders on a Travel Trade Famil. Some examples may include relevant associations (e.g. Australian Hotels Association, local business association), hotel concierges or Visitor Information Centre staff, or representatives from tourism organisations (e.g. your regional tourism body, the South Australian Tourism Commission, Tourism Australia).

#### TOP TIP

Your invited guests / participants are here to gain greater knowledge and an understanding of your business or tourism product from a professional perspective.

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## WHY WOULD I HOST A FAMIL?

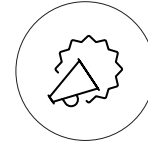
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The goal of a famil should be to provide participants (i.e. media & influencer or travel trade) with the best experience possible. The participants will be able to use their positive impressions and familiarisation of your business/product to create complimentary editorial or commentary about their visit, and through this, inspire and motivate their audience or clients to book with you and visit your local area. FAMILs have the potential to generate more exposure for your business than what you would pay for through traditional marketing and advertising. For example, when determining whether a media or influencer famil is a valuable investment for your business, compare the cost and potential benefit with that of paying for social media advertising or purchasing a full-page advertisement in your preferred publication. One journalist who has a positive experience may potentially include reference to your business or product in multiple editorials/stories. In contrast to paid media, first-person endorsements from editors and social media influencers are seen to be more authentic and trusted among the public. Meanwhile, a travel trade famil might give your travel distribution partner(s) a clearer understanding of your product and give your business preference over other competing products for their clients' travel itineraries.

### TOP TIPS

- Be selective in who to approach or accept to host on a famil. Consider the potential return on investment (ROI) and don't feel obligated to comply with requests from media, influencers or travel trade who are not able to reach your desired audience.
- Assess the potential risks of hosting a famil and be aware of potential issues that may arise from certain activities or situations (e.g. difficult questions, participant phobias, safety).
- Ensure you evaluate any famil you host to determine successful and less popular inclusions, as well as the ROI achieved via media, social media or sales values.

### FOUR KEY REASONS TO HOST A FAMIL



#### 1. Exposure

Potential for your business/product to reach new national and/or international customers.



#### 2. Details

An editorial piece or travel agent commenting on your business/product allows for more of the important details to be conveyed, particularly when compared to traditional advertising.



#### 3. Credibility

Word of mouth referrals, including that of a trusted travel agent, celebrity or journalist has much more value to a consumer than an advertisement.



#### 4. Value

The cost of hosting a famil may offer a much higher return on investment (in terms of bookings and media value) than traditional marketing methods.

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## WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A FAMIL?

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Media, influencer and travel trade famils often have different requirements.

### MEDIA & INFLUENCER FAMILS

- Media & influencer famil itineraries should remain flexible to allow time for content creation, interviews and other story leads that may arise during the visit. Journalists and crews often redevelop story lines as they meet new characters or learn more about the product and area they are visiting.
- Offer film crews the time, patience and flexibility they need to capture the best side of your business. Some crews may require extras to appear in footage, so be prepared to call in some staff (wearing plain clothes) or locals to help out at short notice.
- Factor in some free time to allow the influencer or journalist to write or post information online (e.g. social media, blogs).

### TRAVEL TRADE FAMILS

- Travel trade representatives come to South Australia to assess product, compare fares, see attractions and inspect local accommodation to ensure it is suitable for their clients. Their itineraries usually include express versions of the visitor experience, as they will have many businesses and products they need to familiarise themselves with, in a short time frame.
- Offer a condensed site tour and meet and greet, rather than the full visitor experience. Often, travel industry members will not be able to spend longer than one hour with you and your business, so ensure you show them the best highlights and make it memorable.
- Don't go over time, as this may reduce the time the participants have available to visit other operators, causing them to rush, and potentially cultivating a negative experience overall.

### TOP TIPS



#### Don't over-cater

Although it often stems from good intentions, many operators feel the need to offer generous portions and extensive menus to showcase their dining experience. This can lead to longer than necessary dining periods and participants feeling overfed. In a time of increased awareness around sustainability, this is an important factor to consider. Keep it simple and serve your best dish/es or a small tasting menu, alongside a printed or digital copy of your full menu for participants to refer back to.



#### Showcase a range of beverages

Ensure you have alcohol free beverage alternatives on offer and if your business is a cellar door, attempt to set yourself apart by showing what is unique about your offering, aside from your wine/beer/cider/gin products.



#### Offer private ensuite rooms

If you are an accommodation provider, famil participants generally expect to have a private room and ensuite. The only exception may be travel industry groups where the participants are already familiar with each other (i.e. those travelling from the same business).



#### Factor in free time

Where possible, offer free time to allow for last minute inclusions, such as an opportunity for the participants to meet and chat with an interesting character, browse and purchase retail options, or familiarise themselves with nearby attractions.



#### Be mindful of jetlag

Keep in mind that international famil participants may have recently arrived into the country, and could be experiencing jet-lag. They may also be travelling on an action-packed itinerary, so give consideration to different timezones and impacts on participant energy levels.

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## WHO SHOULD HOST A FAMIL?

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The success of the famil will be determined by how it is hosted, and the results will be reflected in the experience famil participants receive. Therefore, the famil host has a crucial role to play. They are the guide, group leader, educator and business representative. The goal of the host is to fulfil the objectives of the famil, to satisfy the participants' requirements, talk positively about the business (and region), as well as remain respectful to other operators who may be sharing the famil itinerary. Hosts have a duty of care over all participants, the business, local community, and environment. The host is often the first impression participants will have of your business.

Put your best foot forward and ensure that you nominate someone who:

- Knows every detail about your product, and preferably has a strong understanding of the local area's tourism region, its history, current events, local personalities and other similar products and initiatives/developments.
- Is outgoing and confident, yet patient and flexible. Ideally, they will have a sense of humour, be tactful and diplomatic.
- Is comfortable interacting with individuals and in group situations, and is able to engage with people from all cultures and demographics.
- Is prepared and has approval to be recorded for journalist interviews.
- Has time to commit to the famil. The host should be the first to arrive and the last to leave.
- Is genuine and supportive of fellow tourism businesses within their region and understands the shared value of the region receiving positive exposure.

### TOP TIPS FOR THE HOST

#### ✓ Be professional

Dress the part, maintain a neat and tidy appearance suitable to the experience being offered. Ideally, you should wear a uniform and name badge.

#### ✓ Speak clearly

Depending on where your participants are from and whether English is their first language, you may need to practice speaking more slowly and distinctly (without the use of Australian lingo), or potentially talk through an interpreter.

#### ✓ Prepare talking points

Familiarise yourself with the route/itinerary ahead of time. Practice your commentary at different touch points to ensure you cover off key points of interest and have the most up to date information available. Prepare interesting anecdotes about your business and region, which is particularly useful for engaging participants during down-time or commutes.

#### ✓ Ask questions

Use this opportunity to get an understanding of their business, clientele and what they are looking for.

#### ✓ Smile

Be enthusiastic, educational, entertaining and share your passion and excitement for your tourism offering. Take pride in your work, portray a positive outlook and be pleasant, no matter the circumstances. Aim to start and end the tour with high energy, as your participants will feed off this, leaving them with a lasting impression.

#### ✓ Stick to the objective

Ensure you have a clear understanding of the famil's objective and all stakeholder expectations. Be aware of the participant's client base/audience and the relevant key themes or messages to be reiterated in your commentary. Alert all staff of the famil details and any special requirements.

#### ✓ Put the participants first

Memorise their names, be aware of any special requirements they may have (e.g. religious, cultural, dietary, phobias, language barriers) and be prepared to provide modifications. Be sensitive and alert to their interests and needs, and show that you value the importance of them being there. Share your time with everyone equally and go above and beyond to exceed each individual's expectations.

#### ✓ Be adaptable

If something isn't working, attempt to steer it in another direction, otherwise politely cut that section of the itinerary short.

#### ✓ Be safe

Operators should be mindful of the consumption of alcohol while hosting famils. Businesses must operate in accordance with state licencing regulations.

#### ✓ Be positive

Famils are a great opportunity to promote your offering, tourism region, other local businesses and our state in a positive and respectful manner.

#### ✓ Stay on message

When hosting media on famil, only say what you would be happy to see published with your name attributed to the quote.

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## FURTHER INFORMATION

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### What information should I provide for participants?

It is helpful to provide your participants with as much information as possible, to help direct the narrative, as well as to ensure that you are managing their expectations. Media in particular will be very inquisitive and ask many questions: attempt to anticipate these questions and provide the relevant information for them in advance.

Information to provide prior to the famil visit:

- Details of the itinerary (including key times and your designated meeting point)
- Recommendations for places to go in participants' free time
- Advise appropriate attire for the famil and for any suggested activities participants may undertake in their free time
- Prepare a Media Kit

### MEDIA KIT CHECKLIST

- Details about your business - include operating hours, information on how to get there (including via public transport) and links to your website and social media channels.
- Details about the product you are showcasing on this famil - mention inclusions, minimum & maximum numbers, rates, what to bring, etc.
- Key messages, milestones, new additions/developments to your offering.
- A link to high resolution images and videos of your product that participants can use to promote your business.

### INFORMATION TO PROVIDE ON ARRIVAL

- Remember to introduce yourself and any of the team involved in the famil (driver, chef, etc).
- Share your WiFi details and help them to connect.
- Provide a detailed brief of what to expect on the day, including any time you have allocated for toilet breaks or free time.
- If appropriate, bring and refer to maps to demonstrate where you are situated, where you are going, and nearby attractions.

### TOP TIP



Don't forget to follow-up!  
Remember to collect business cards from famil participants so that you can follow up with them directly afterwards.

### SATC's Media, Influencers & Trade Familiarisation Program

The South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) operates a Media, Influencers and Trade Familiarisation Program which targets a cross section of local, national and international media, influencers and travel trade to visit South Australia. Participants are selected based on their suitability to support SATC's campaign work as well as Tourism Australia's International Media Hosting Program.

The SATC offers different levels of support to famil participants, ranging from the provision of information and contacts, through to fully funded itineraries.

The SATC has a small team of Famil Coordinators who are the main points of contact for SATC-led activities. They are responsible for designing itineraries and making travel arrangements (including booking with local tourism operators).

### TOP TIPS

- If the SATC or Tourism Australia approaches your business to be included in a famil itinerary, consider who is attending and what value this could add for your business. You are not obligated to participate. The SATC's famil program should be viewed as a sales and marketing opportunity. If you choose to welcome SATC or Tourism Australia hosted guests, it is generally accepted that you will put your best foot forward on the day and provide your best possible rate.
- By partaking in SATC's famils program, your product and/or service has the opportunity to be showcased to consumers across national and international marketing channels, as well as through trade outlets. The SATC Famils Program should not be considered a revenue stream.
- If you would like to be included in SATC's Trade Famil Program, you must first have commission factored into your pricing, enabling you to sell your product through travel distribution partners. Learn more via the [Working with Distribution Partners](#) fact sheet. To find out more, contact [trade@sa.gov.au](mailto:trade@sa.gov.au).
- South Australian tourism operators wishing to be a part of SATC's Media & Influencer Famil Program should consider what 'hook' they can offer visiting journalists and / or influencers; perhaps you have launched a new experience or redeveloped your space. Send your ideas through to [PR@southaustralia.com](mailto:PR@southaustralia.com).

## CONTACT US

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