

## The DNE Summit International Marketplace

### Advice from New England Suppliers

Are you a first-timer to the DNE Summit? If so, below you'll find some information from Summit veterans who have grown their international business through their Summit meetings. Read below for their generous tips and advice.

=====

**Olivia Crossey, Leisure Sales Manager  
Colonnade Hotel, Boston**

#### **How to Work with Tour Operators / Receptives**

- 1) Research which Tour Operators / Receptives sell product in your area. You will find that a great deal -- if not all of them -- attend the DNE Summit.
- 2) Do your homework prior to attending the Summit! In order to benefit from all the great workshops / appointments at the Summit, you need to know your own product and the product that the Tour Operators / Receptives are selling. This will lead to a mutually beneficial appointment.
- 3) Establish a relationship with the Operator.
- 4) Establish your FIT rates at least 12-18 months in advance to accommodate the Operators planning cycle. Ensure your rates are competitive. Be prepared to discuss rates at your pre-scheduled appointments
- 5) Attend the workshops & seminars as you will always learn something new.
- 6) Make the most of the great networking opportunities at the Summit.

**What was helpful with my size Property / Tips on how to cultivate the international market:**  
The Colonnade Hotel, Boston (4 Star, 285 guestrooms)

- 1) Prior to attending the Summit, establish current business volume and potential for your individual property.
- 2) Take full advantage of the pre-scheduled appointments & the ample networking opportunities
- 3) Ensure your property has an efficient booking and inquiry response system in place.
- 4) Know your Property thoroughly & ensure the rates are competitive
- 5) Throughout the year, seek opportunities to get involved with FAM Trips and other sales efforts to show your willingness to be involved in the market

=====

**Paul Richey  
Basin Harbor Club - Vergennes, Vermont**

If your occupancy is running less than you like, then you need to Summit.

This is not a one-year investment; this is something that takes two to three years to develop. But if you are committed to growing this market it will happen, and the DNE Summit is the best and cheapest way to reach this client base.

The operators who participate in the DNE Summit book New England and are always looking for new things to do and places stay. So bring your brochures and flash drives with rates and high resolution images; put a fact sheet together so they can see what you have to offer at a glance.

Study the information provided to you and only request Buyers that will and can do business with you so no time is wasted. If you are at appointment and realize you cannot do business together, it is okay to excuse yourself and move on; everyone will appreciate this approach.

If you do not get to see everyone on your list during normal business appointments sessions, fear not -- a lot of business takes place during the social networking periods at the dinners and receptions. Do not be afraid to ask fellow hoteliers for introductions.

Make sure you have an understanding of this market: if you are not prepared to offer rates 25 % to 30 % off your published rates, it will be tough for you to do business with tour and receptive operators. Even with these rates the end user is paying what your everyday guests is paying if not a little more, because of the process: the guests will go to a travel agent, the travel agent gets packages and rates from a tour operator and a receptive holds inventory and handles billing and everyone needs to be paid to stay in business and send us new guests.

=====

**Brian Butterworth, Director of Sales  
The Red Lion Inn – Stockbridge, Massachusetts**

The main thing for a first time lodging attendee to understand is the pricing, allotment and room release policies necessary to sell FIT rooms through receptive operators / wholesalers. When I got started, the folks at DNE were happy to explain that. Along those lines, one should also understand the travel patterns of Europeans to New England (rural may be different than city). Once an attendee is comfortable with the way this market works, take time to research the attending Buyers. Are you interested in groups? Look into that, too. There is a wide variety of Buyers represented and some just won't match up with your business model. Try to reduce your prospect list that way, and make the most of your time at the Summit.

Attractions and DMO's should be taking the time to learn how their product can fit best with the operator's itineraries - supplement an existing itinerary or create a new one, Sometimes, there are ways for attractions to sell through operators and that should be explored. The Buyer representatives at the Summit may not be directly responsible for creating the itineraries, but they have always been happy to share references and explain how to make that happen. Of course, all press representatives should be contacted.

At the DNE Summit, I have never tried to close business - since this may be the only time (until next year) that I will have a chance to talk to a representative in person, so I'll use that time to gather and share as much information as possible, and settle on a follow up plan with that representative before we're done talking - in addition to starting a relationship. One of the first things you'll learn is that establishing a strong international program takes time - and this is a great first step.

=====

**Deb Cantania, Vice President  
Cantania Hospitality Group**

It's important to consider the tour operator and receptive operator your partners and to work together to build a relationship of trust. Your goals should be coming to the Summit with allotments and rates. If you don't have them for the show, make sure to send out within two weeks. I have always gotten to know tour operators by offering fam tours and joining them, also by doing shows like DNE which is a nice size show to develop friendships. Think of this show not as a one-time thing, but as a yearly commitment to show the international buyers your commitment to them. Do your homework to know who they are and what they do.

Also keep your word and protect their client: if you promise them certain rooms make sure they get those room types for them. With DNE I have really cultivated my receptive business, developed friendships and trust, and have seen my business grow.

=====

**Mark Stephens, Owner  
The Brewster Inn - Dexter, Maine**

I run a nine room B&B called the Brewster Inn in a small town called Dexter in the middle of Maine. When I first went to DNE I had no idea if it would prove useful and help me grow my business, but I decided to give it a go.

The first year in 2009 was a networking year: finding out who's who, learning what to do at DNE and, of course, what not to do. I went prepared with all the info I might need, brochures, business cards, photos of my property and the surrounding area and best of all, a big map of Maine showing where we are situated and mileages to all the big highlighted tourist areas in Maine. The beauty of Dexter is that it is the geographical centre of Maine so everywhere is within easy reach. I left DNE very happy with the progress I had made, and I had a contract in hand, too.

In 2010 I returned knowing what happens at DNE and this time I went right after the receptive operators and came away with 4 more contracts making 5 and with good possibilities for a

couple more when I return in 2011 for round 3. So far I have got numerous room nights booked from one receptive but as time goes on, the bookings will come from the other receptives that I have contracts with.

This year there will be more networking with the receptives that I am working with and any others I want to work with or just find out more about to see if we are a "good fit". I plan to devote a good chunk of my time to talking to the tour operators at DNE finding out which receptives they use and making them aware again of the Brewster Inn and that we have contracts with 5 of the biggest receptives. The benefit of this is that the tour operators know I have contracts with their receptives and can make enquiries and bookings through them for reservations here at the Brewster Inn in the future.

I may also have a special handout for all the tour operators and the receptives this year showing images of all that my part of Maine has to offer for tourism opportunities.

For new people starting at DNE in 2011, attend the workshops/seminars. Be prepared with info and images about your property and your area that would make tourists want to come. Don't be put off if you get told "no, no and no"... Listen to what the tour operators and receptives tell you as the clues to how you can be successful are right there in what they say. Talk to people that go there each year about what they do and be in it for the long haul. Success will not happen overnight. I'm on year 3 this year and it will still take this one and probably 2012 to really start to get a foothold and attract those reservation opportunities. I truly believe that I will get more reservations from more of the receptives this year and then more again in 2012 and onwards.