

The Challenge

Whilst some of the national coach operators are now starting to offer on-line booking facilities to their customers, only a relatively small proportion of regional or local coach tour operators have effectively engaged with the internet to grow their businesses.

The vast majority of regional or local operators tend to use traditional marketing channels to attract customers and many promote their services to a relatively static customer database. This existing customer base is ageing rapidly as the industry struggles to attract the next generation of consumers with good customers literally dying off.

The industry recognises the need to increase the general appeal of coach tourism and attract the 'next generation' of coach holiday passenger to the industry but has not, as a whole, struck upon an effective strategy that will reach beyond the existing customer base.

Coupled with this is the general public perception of travel and tourism by coach that is all too often rooted in the past and certainly does not sufficiently recognise the quality of both service and products now offered by this 'Cinderella' of the travel industry.

Whilst e-marketing is frequently discussed within the industry as a way of reaching beyond existing customer databases, the financial commitment and level of expertise required for operators to create and effectively market their services on the internet are prohibitive for the majority of companies which are generally small or medium sized businesses.

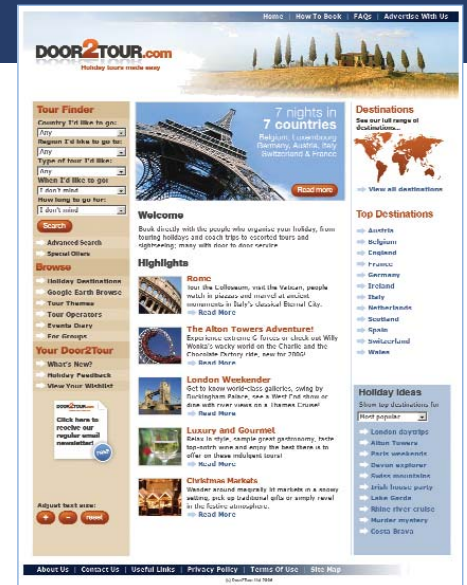
This is combined with high levels of scepticism from operators about e-marketing and the desire or ability of their existing passengers to book or seriously enquire on-line.

As stated above, the majority of coach operators are also small or medium sized businesses with opening hour constraints etc, which increasingly conflict with the desire of consumers to research and book holidays outside of traditional office hours.

In addition to this, even enlightened local and regional operators cannot easily see how to market their services effectively on the internet given its global reach. If you only pick up passengers within a 10 mile radius of your offices then the internet can seem like a very blunt instrument!

Therefore, coach operators have until now been slow to embrace or call for website solutions for their businesses that are enabled to take on-line bookings and there are consequently no consolidated websites for coach holidays that offer live availability and bookings on all tours offered. Furthermore, none of the major internet travel portals offer coach holiday sections.

The coach tourism industry is the 'Invisible Man' of today's internet travel industry, a fact that prevents operators from broadening the appeal of their product and deprives the broader public of information on an entire segment of the travel industry.



The Opportunity

The coach tourism industry traditionally attracts passengers 50 years old and upwards and this is statistically one of the most commercially attractive demographic groups for travel products.

Key Statistics from various recognised industry sources show that:

- 36% of all web users are over 45 years old.
- Travel accounts for 52% of all internet sales.
- Of all web users aged 50 and over 75% visit travel sites.
- More over 50's are now booking and paying for package holidays on-line than under 50's.
- Expedia is the largest travel portal and has over 1 million unique visitors per month over the age of 50.
- Last September the over 50's made over 1.5 million travel bookings on-line in the UK.

At the same time, the two key industry system suppliers are now starting to roll out back office systems that offer fully integrated website solutions for operators that allow them to take on-line bookings.

In essence, the opportunity is to use the internet to lift the cloak of invisibility on the coach tourism industry and expose the wider travel marketplace to the quality, convenience, choice and security that modern coach holidays present.

The Solution

The creation of **Door2Tour.com**, a cutting edge internet marketing portal for tour operators that operate tours or excursions by coach that is aimed at complementing their own marketing activities and website.

Door2Tour.com is built upon the premise of live online booking facilities for all tours on the site and structured so that all enquiries, bookings and payments for individual tours are actually handled directly between the consumer and the individual operator or their website through seamless feeds between the **Door2Tour.com** site and participating operator websites and offices. Operators therefore retain complete control of the entire booking process and as consumers deal directly with the operator they can feel 100% confident in the product that they are purchasing!

Door2Tour.com will be extremely content rich with many additional features added in order to enhance the operator's own content. These will include features such as travel guide style information, pictures, video clips and even Google Earth fully integrated into the site. And there is more to come...

Cutting edge web technology will allow **Door2Tour.com** to identify the local area from which visitors to the site originate and thus allow **Door2Tour.com** to feed only relevant leads to the most geographically appropriate operators, thereby immediately creating a level playing field for national, regional and local operators with the potential to lift the veil on the entire industry.

Extensive on-line and traditional marketing activity by **Door2Tour.com** on behalf of all of the participating operators and a risk free and highly competitive pricing structure for operators will ensure easy and quick access to **Door2Tour.com**'s numerous features for operators choosing to participate and assist in building a truly comprehensive marketing portal for consumers into a sector of the travel industry that has until now remained largely hidden.

Background Information: Albatross Specialist Products is a trading division of The Albatross Travel Group Ltd, the UK's largest coach tour wholesaler and part of the Albatross Group of Companies.

With over 21 years of experience in the industry, Albatross has a wealth of experience within the coach tourism marketplace, strong relationships throughout the industry and a unique commitment to securing the long-term future of coach tourism.

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For more information on Albatross, visit **www.albatross-tours.com**