

Measuring business-readiness – Are you visitor-ready, market-ready or export-ready?

Tourism operators who know and understand their level of business-readiness are in a position to make wise, strategic decisions. In the simplest terms, business-readiness describes how ready a destination or operator is to meet the expectations of their target customers.

The desired level of business-readiness depends on the goals of the operation. For example, a local non-profit heritage site may be satisfied with attracting largely local visitation during

select events. The level of necessary business-readiness, in that case, would be significantly less than an operator seeking to tap into the overseas travel trade market, which expects precise standards and high service levels.

The following self-assessment checklist helps operators gauge their level of readiness and understand where they fit on the path to becoming export-ready.

LEVEL #1

Visitor-ready business or experience

A visitor-ready business has all of its licenses, permits and insurance in place in order to operate legally. It should affirm criteria in points 1-7 to be considered visitor-ready.

1. Business exists and is open (year-round or seasonally):
 Yes No
2. Has all licenses, permits and insurance in place in to operate legally:
 Yes No
3. Maintains a basic website or Facebook listing with limited information and can provide contact information for owner/operator (including contact name, business name, mailing address, telephone number and email address):
 Yes No
4. Engages in some marketing efforts:
 Yes No
5. Has some type of tourism offering in place and articulates what visitors can see or do:
 Yes No
6. Has consistent hours of operation and, if closed or seasonal, responds to inquiries:
 Yes No

LEVEL #2

Market-ready business or experience

A market-ready business actively markets to potential visitors; communicates with potential visitors year round, and is ready to accept advanced reservations. It meets all of the criteria in points 1-6, plus the following:

7. Has marketing materials with year-round contact information (if seasonal, an automated response should be provided for phone and email) and provides details of what visitors can see or do (brochure, rack card, website or social media presence):
 Yes No
8. Has published prices and consumer booking, payment and cancellation policies:
 Yes No
9. Meets or exceeds industry expectations for their sector by participating in specialized training or certification:
 Yes No
10. During the operating season, a 24-hour response time is maintained for confirming bookings, and 24-48 hours for inquiries:
 Yes No
11. Is ready to accept advanced reservations online, or by phone and/or email:
 Yes No

LEVEL #3

Export-ready business or experience

Export-ready businesses market to and through travel trade distribution sales channels. Owners/operators understand and are willing to offer commission or net rate pricing, agree to travel trade bookings and have a defined cancellation policy. An export-ready business meets all of the criteria in points 1-11, plus the following:

12. Engages with industry partners, works with destination marketing organizations, media, etc. to welcome international visitors:
 Yes No
13. Is prepared to market and partner with travel trade distribution sales channels:
 Yes No
14. Understands commissions and net rate pricing, has commissionable pricing structures, accepts vouchers:
 Yes No
15. Will agree to guaranteed trade bookings and pricing as far as 18 months in advance and has cancellation policies in place:
 Yes No
16. Has detailed domestic and overseas marketing plans, and can provide editorial quality images:
 Yes No
17. Experience can be adapted to the interests, language and expectations of whichever international market is targeted:
 Yes No