

How to Serve as Route Marketing Coordinator

The Marketing Coordinator is in charge of managing all the marketing activities associated with the route, from social media, print marketing and advertising to brand management and communications.

This Guide covers the Marketing Coordinator's responsibilities. It is important for the route Marketing Coordinator to familiarise himself or herself with this Guide to understand what is required. The Guide will also help other route leaders and members, since it will give them a good understanding of what the Marketing Coordinator's role should be and what support they could offer.

This Guide should be read together with other Guides covering the various leadership positions.

Why is the Marketing Coordinator's Role Important?

As the route is a product in itself, it needs to be marketed across as many different types of platforms as possible. Online marketing is the easiest and cheapest method of marketing and, with the advent and rise of social media, the World Wide Web (the Internet) has merged with social media (Facebook, Twitter etc.) to create what is commonly known as 'The Social Web.' It is almost impossible to engage in online activity these days without coming into contact with social media.

Websites now contain links to their relevant social media channels as well as share buttons, where customers can share content and help drive online traffic back to the website. The more online traffic or "hits" a website gets, the more attractive it becomes.

This means that anyone with a social media account has the

power to share content (articles, photographs and video) on any social media channel. Some of these people have become incredibly influential with many people following what they are doing online. For this reason, social media and blogs have become essential for any business operating in the online space.

There are four main areas of responsibility for the Marketing Coordinator:

1. Brand management
2. Social media
3. Production and distribution of marketing materials
4. Traditional advertising
5. Communications

1. Brand Management

As the route's brand and logo belong to the route, it is important that the Marketing Coordinator oversees the use of the logo in all aspects of marketing. Brand guidelines are provided by Open Africa during the branding process which need to be adhered to at all times in order to protect and maintain the parent Open Africa brand to which the route belongs and the hospitality experience that it represents.

Misuse of the logo (e.g. incorrect colour, distorted size, low resolution) can severely damage or dilute the brand and potentially have a negative effect on all other brands (routes) associated with the Open Africa route network. For this reason, the brand needs to remain consistent and professional so as not to hurt or cheapen it in any way.

2. Social Media

Social media has come a long way since the days of chat rooms and has increased collaboration, provided a platform for people to share ideas and connected people across the globe. It has become an important tool and it's important for businesses to understand the impact social media can have on them.

Customers can now interact with brands, products and services directly and even become ambassadors for them and vice versa. Brands now have a direct link to their customers, making it possible to receive constructive feedback and deal with customer complaints in the moment. It can also, of course, have negative effects for brands which is why it is so important for someone to manage a business's social media accounts.

Customer Reviews have become more important than advertising, especially for tourism-based businesses. Now, consumers can write reviews online about their experience at guesthouses, hotels, restaurants and even attractions for other consumers to read. A lot of good reviews can have an extremely good influence on the success of a business while a few bad ones could mean the end. This is why it's so important to make sure your business is listed on review sites and complaints are dealt with in a timely fashion. TripAdvisor has become the world's largest and most renowned review site and interestingly, has three times as many restaurants listed on it than hotels.

Many travellers plan their trips by researching online. This means that they read reviews for accommodation and restaurants online before they decide to make a booking. They listen to what their friends have to say about destinations on social media.

Recommended Social Media Channels:

- [TripAdvisor](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)

Please see the corresponding guides on how to market using these channels.

3. Production and Distribution of Marketing Materials

The route Marketing Coordinator will manage the production and

distribution of all marketing materials and will give the final sign off once he or she is happy with the final product. As the route forms part of the larger Open Africa brand it is imperative that all marketing materials are sent to the Marketing Manager at Open Africa to ensure the parent brand is maintained and not damaged or diluted in any way.

Digital versions of materials such as banners, brochures and signage will be provided to the Marketing Coordinator for future printing needs. The files will be editable to allow for any changes or updates.

4. Traditional Advertising

While traditional print advertising can become costly, many local publications often provide discounted rates which can be a useful platform for routes to advertise. An advertorial is always the preferred type of advert as it looks like an article, can contain images and is generally more widely-read than small adverts placed in advertising sections of publications. Advertorials can vary in length from half a page to a page, to even 8 pages long, depending on the available budget. In the event of an advert being bought for the route, the Marketing Coordinator should manage the process and provide the publication with all the necessary artwork, hi-res images, text (copy) and hi-res logos.

5. Communications and media exposure

The Marketing Coordinator will be responsible for communicating with journalists and encouraging them to visit the route. This also entails coordinating the trips and ensuring that the rest of the route members play their respective parts. See the separate guide on how to invite and host journalists.