

Communicating Your Green Credentials to Professional Travel Buyers



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Before planning your approach for informing any customer (including professional travel buyers who manage global visitors to Ireland) about your green credentials, it is essential that your ethos, processes and policies are clearly defined in written communications such as vision, mission and core values as outlined in the Guide [‘How To Tell Your Climate Action Story’](#).

Mindful that global visitors associate Ireland as an island nation with integrity and authenticity, it is important that these communications

Avoid greenwashing: i.e., communicating untruths

Express positive hallmarks: e.g., genuine care, warm welcome, empathy

Important considerations for communicating your green credentials to travel buyers

When preparing communications to meet the needs of professional travel buyers, you need to plan for the following:



Verbal
Communications



Written
Communications

As professional travel buyers operate in busy and pressurised environments, it is essential that via these communications, your green credentials are:

Evident: i.e., clearly, consistently and coherently expressed in

- Visuals: from imagery to videos
- Written and verbal content
- Positive behaviours: a business that claims to support the environment and community should manifest this capacity

Succinct and on-point: most buyers do not have the time to read lengthy content

Let's Begin with Green Accreditations and Memberships

If your business is independently certified by and/or a member of a reputable organisation, any labels, brands or awards that confirm this should be:

- Referenced via verbal communications with professional travel buyers
- Visibly displayed on written communications and presentations for professional travel buyers



Tip

Remembering that accreditations and memberships known in Ireland may be unfamiliar in the global marketplace where travel buyers operate, it can be important to provide further clarity. For example, a food or drink-related tourism business might advise:

“As an ethical food practitioner and responsible supplier, we are members of Origin Green in Ireland (www.origingreen.ie) which is the world’s only national food and drink sustainability programme.”

Regardless of accreditations or memberships, it is recommended to prepare communications that showcase your green credentials in a buyer-relevant format.

Expressing Your Green Credentials Through Buyer-Relevant Communications

As professional travel buyers operate in busy environments where they engage with multiple stakeholders and markets, it is important to create distilled communications that provide a clear and succinct insight into your green ethos and credentials. To support this process, it is helpful to note in bullet point format the responses to each of the below noted questions.



While the outcome will naturally be different for each business, it is useful to group the answers to these questions into two categories – 1) Key points; 2) Points of interest for the travel buyer and their global customer.

The following table illustrates how to address this approach:

Question: What do we do to safeguard the environment?

Key points

- We are committed to reducing waste. For example, this year versus last year, we reduced
 - Energy consumption by 10%
 - Food waste by 50%
 - Water usage by 20%
 - Eliminated all single use plastics
 - Reduced carbon emissions by 30%
- We use eco-friendly products
- We are committed to nature conservation. For example
 - Bringing back Ireland’s only native pine from the brink of extinction by planting 500 native pine trees annually
 - Being part of a community initiative to restore endangered species such as the corncrake farmland bird (this has led to a 35% population increase over the past five years)

Points of interest for the travel buyer and their global customer

- Famously located in Ireland’s sunny south east, we put that sunshine to good use through solar panels that heat our water.
 - Thanks to Mother Nature, your global customers can enjoy eco-showers that are always hot!
- We have a no-chemical policy. From our eco-cleaning products scented with wild Irish flowers to our locally sourced handmade toiletries (so pure they are good enough to eat!) your customers are treated to quality Irish handmade products that are kind to them and the eco system
- We are passionate supporters of nature conservation. Your customers are welcome to join us for a:
 - Woodland walk to witness our mission to save Ireland’s native pine tree from extinction
 - Meadow walk to discover how the shy and secretive corncrake farmland bird has been saved from extinction...

Question: What do we do to champion and support our local community?

Key points

Points of interest for the travel buyer and their global customer

- We collaborate with residents and businesses to
 - raise pride and identity
 - maximise social and economic benefits
- We create a positive and rewarding environment for employees
- We support local partners through packages that showcase their services
- We provide visitor tips and guidance that promote respectful behaviours in the local environment
- We engage with community initiatives (e.g., stone wall restoration, beach clean ups)
- We support local charity initiatives

- Every Wednesday, and Saturday evening there is a lively céilí with traditional Irish musicians of all ages in our bar and on Saturday mornings, we host an artisan craft market that has been a big success in the community
 - Your groups would be more than welcome to join in. We would love to have them!
- On the first Tuesday of every month, we join 30 other community members to assess and repair the local dry-stone walls
 - We can always do with help and the visitors you send us would be more than welcome to join.
 - As we show how it is done, it is easy (even for non-English speakers) to participate.
 - I think your customers will enjoy meeting locals over a cup of tea, cake and chat at the end.
 - On Friday mornings, our team gathers for sunrise yoga on the beach, followed by some refreshments
 - While it's an early 6am start, the customers you book with us would be more than welcome to join in. In fact, our staff would love it!

Question: What do we do to support local livelihoods and the economy?

Key points	Points of interest for the travel buyer and their global customer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchasing food/drinks by local suppliers within a defined radius • Referring the services of other providers (from places to eat to transport providers and visitor experiences) • Being part of a local event/festival that benefits the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food/drink <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We grow about 30% of our own produce and the balance is sourced within a 50km radius. ○ Our neighbours support us, so it is important to us to support them back ○ Our produce is all seasonal, you won't find any air miles on our menu and your global customers get to experience good home grown seasonal Irish produce • Every year we take a stand at the Wind & Waves community festival <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each established business shares their stand with a newcomer – this year we will be working with the Ocean Sisters who are winning everyone's hearts with their wellbeing experiences- this may be of interest to your groups... ○ I also note that you have a group of 10 booked in with us over those festival dates, it would be lovely if they could come along to join in with the locals • Based on what we have found that German guests love, for your customers I can highly recommend [...]

By using the above chart, you can:

- Create a record of all your green credentials
- Use this record to identify what is most relevant for the needs of a professional travel buyer and their global customers

Let's look now at how the planning you have done using the above chart can play out through:

- Verbal communications
- Written communications
- Customer guidance communications



Expressing Your Green Credentials via Verbal Communications With Professional Travel Buyers

In most cases, you will get between 5 and 10 minutes to communicate with a professional travel buyer. During this time there is a lot to cover including:

- Introductions
- Clarifying the business offering and experiences/services for sale
- Establishing if there is an opportunity to partner with the buyer

Pressurised timelines mean that when engaging with travel buyers, your approach needs to focus on enlightening rather than over-telling. As the buyer engages with many diverse suppliers and markets their goal is to swiftly understand the essence of your offering. Your goal should be to meet this need, while making it clear that being green is an integral part of what you stand for.

Preparation is key for achieving success and by defining the buyer-relevant communication points outlined in the previous chart, you will be ready to express in words how:

- Your business is authentically green
- Being green confirms that you care, thereby assuring the buyer that you have the capacity to care for their global customers
- Being green can create a more meaningful experience for the global visitor by:
 - deepening their understanding of Ireland
 - offering opportunities to directly engage with you, your team and community
 - gently informing them about ways to minimise their environmental impact while in Ireland and when they return home



Tip

Using the previous chart, prepare a succinct key message that defines what sustainability means to your business. For example, *“For us, sustainability is our way of being. It is reflected in everything we do... how we protect the environment, how we treat our team, how we engage with our community and how we support the local economy. This is why we only buy local, and this is why we support projects like stone wall restoration and nature conservation.”*

Via this communication, all buyers will be made aware of your sustainability practices. You can expand further (again leaning on the points prepared in the chart) for buyers who request more detail.

To ensure that your green credentials are fully understood and appreciated by a professional travel buyer, it is important that what you state verbally is reinforced

Visually: i.e., with well-chosen images and /or video that provide a positive showcase for your green credentials

Behaviourally: a professional and friendly manner naturally aligns with a green ethos



Tip

To enable the travel buyer to find out more about your green initiatives, it is highly recommended to include a relevant website link in your presentation.

Expressing your green credentials via written communications for professional travel buyers

Bullet points can be useful in this regard as they give a quick overview as outlined in the examples below:

- Green and Clean: no plastic policy, bio-degradable products, close to home produce
- Sustainability is our DNA: supporting the environment, community & local livelihoods

Coloured banners can also be effective for drawing attention to key word content

Member of Origin Green - Ethical Food Practitioner - Responsible Supplier
WE SUPPORT COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND INITIATIVES

Apart from written text, when creating content such as a PDF brochure you should also include:

- Quality images that showcase your green practices
- Relevant website links that a buyer can access to find out more about your green ethos and policies
- Accreditations, awards, or memberships of reputable organisations that can confirm your green credentials

Reinforcing your green credentials during the on-site experience

Do not forget the importance of integrity and authenticity! The Green Credentials that have been communicated and promised to the travel buyer via verbal and written communications must be visible and evident to the global visitor during their stay.

For information on how to communicate your climate action story to consumers check out our guide ['How to Tell your Climate Action Story'](#)