



friendship force
INTERNATIONAL

Ideas and Guidelines for Leading an Outbound Global Journey

SO, YOU HAVE VOLUNTEERED TO LEAD A JOURNEY?

Some ideas and guidelines as you begin the planning...

In most cases an idea for a “Global” or “Themed” Journey will have been thought of by the person electing to develop and lead it. This is a big project, and the more information you have before beginning, the better prepared you will be.

By now, you will have decided on a destination (most often your own hometown vicinity) or a theme, which has great potential for success.

The one thing which defines a Global Journey is that **you** are responsible for both aspects. YOU WILL BE BOTH AMBASSADOR AND HOST JOURNEY COORDINATOR – be prepared for everything that this will mean to you.

- The first step, then, is to apply to FFI (the Planning Department) for permission to proceed with the Journey. They will forward a form for you to complete – a comprehensive outline of your plan, costs, timeline, and proposed program.
- Once you have the “go-ahead” and a Journey number, you can begin serious planning. Some people find it easier to work alone, or with minimal assistance, but you may wish to assemble a committee so that duties can be shared.
- The fees are paid direct to FFI because prices are always advertised in US dollars, and payments are made to FFI’s bank account in Atlanta, Georgia at FFI Headquarters – and then disbursed to the hosting club, or any commercial operator involved. This avoids confusion. Of course, in some circumstances, this arrangement can be varied.
- Be careful to think of every possible contingency, go over and over the plan to ensure nothing is left to chance and every cost is accounted for. *** One word of caution – in a normal Club-to-Club Journey, arrangements with any commercial suppliers/operators are made once numbers are clear, but in a Global Journey these are agreed before any recruitment. Be sure of the cancellation conditions or price increases when either reduced numbers are achieved, or cancellation occurs. Don’t put yourself in a difficult situation.***
- Make sure your program has been realistically costed. Under-estimating the costs can be terminal, but, at the same time, making the price unrealistically high will stop people even enquiring. If there are any aspects of the program which are not covered by the program cost, make sure these are clearly defined so that ambassadors do not receive a nasty shock.

- Staff at FFI are always happy to give assistance with advertising. However, you need to develop a catchy advertising “blurb” which makes it impossible for the reader to resist the invitation to participate. Make sure your wording conjures up excitement and positive experiences, while remaining truthful. A descriptive program/itinerary is vital.
- Remember, if you are providing photographs, that copyright is very important to observe – choose pictures with high numbers of pixels, sourced from suitable providers. Your own photographs work well.

Once all these preliminaries have been set in place, and the advertising has begun, you will start to receive inquiries. To be ready for this, it is wise to think of all/any questions which might be posed by interested ambassadors. Remember, being a Global Journey Coordinator means there is virtually no opportunity for you to address your ambassadors as a group – except online. This means that none of those individuals know what questions each of the others might be asking, leading to you having to answer the same question numerous times.

- Being prepared with FAQs/answers will save you much time and frustration. Develop a document which approaches common concerns with travel variations, arrival/departure requirements, activity levels, accommodation types (other than home hosting), temperature variations, clothing guidance, visa requirements for your country, etc., and circulate it when answering initial enquiries.
- Once the application forms begin arriving, ensure that you obtain a recommendation from either the club president, or a former Ambassador or Host Coordinator, to establish the suitability of each applicant for your Journey. Should a non-member apply to join, the best approach would be to either call or Skype the applicant to assess their suitability.
- Ensure that recruits have purchased travel insurance and ask for evidence of this. Travel insurance can be purchased through FFI - visit our [Member Resources page](#) under the Insurance tab for more information.
- It is worth being aware of the airlines serving your country from departure points around the world, as well as the travel time that some ambassadors may need to factor in to arrive on time for your Journey.
- Include information on any cultural differences which may affect a gathering of people from various countries.
- Keep the communication up – even in quieter times. A quick circular email, just to touch base is reassuring to your recruits.

A Global Journey Coordinator will almost certainly find that their hopes for recruiting a suitable number of ambassadors will wax and wane during the recruitment period. It often happens that the most enthusiastic inquirer will put the Ambassador Coordinator through all the hoops, with

numerous emails and a host of questions, only to withdraw. Don't let this cause any despondency, as it seems to be "par for the course."

- Once an applicant has been confirmed and has paid a substantial deposit, ask each ambassador to provide a personal "bio" (at least a half page) and a clear head and shoulders photograph. Create a document with each of these, and circulate them prior to the Journey to speed up the "get to know you" process at the beginning of the program.
- Being a slightly different type of Journey, a Global/Themed program may include activities or expectations outside the norm. In these situations, it may be advisable to develop a form which outlines the differences, and explains the reasons, so that there are no surprises. The type of information this would include would be the length and difficulty of a walk/hike, including any hills, etc. Think through your program and make sure you openly disclose those factors which may cause difficulty to an unsuspecting recruit. The ambassador should sign the form to indicate their understanding and agreement.

Congratulations on your willingness to take on the role of Global Journey Coordinator. You are the very foundation of our wonderful organization and just exactly what we need at this juncture of our development. You obviously have *vision* and a willingness to think and act outside the square. Hopefully, you will also be ready to recruit by "fishing with a net" and to dream of something just that little bit different which will attract new members and excite more new hosts to be involved.

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CHECKLIST FOR GLOBAL JOURNEYS

- Decide on Theme
- Apply to FFI Planning Dept for approval and get a Journey Number
- Thoroughly** plan for an exciting and achievable Journey
- Remember not to fill in every moment with activities – free time is most important
- Carefully** price out the program
- Be clear** on any costs not included in the price, e.g. travel between phases
- Engage any service providers carefully, taking note of any cancellation penalties
- Devise a catchy advertising regime – and have it regularly included in the Journey catalog – not only the international listings, but locally, too
- Advertisements should clearly outline any physical (or other) limitations
- Respond immediately to all inquiries
- Check all references
- Be prepared to include recruits from outside FF membership – "Fishing with a net" is an important aspect of building FF membership
- Know the airlines that service your city – and the length of time necessary for ambassadors to travel from their home to you

- ❑ Know visa requirements for your country – and inform applicants
- ❑ Be sure to request evidence of travel insurance
- ❑ Keep your Regional Support Manager (at FFI) regularly updated on progress
- ❑ Keep clear and accurate records – a spreadsheet is ideal
- ❑ Keep all recruits informed – don't leave long periods between correspondence
- ❑ Outline any cultural aspects of visiting your country from overseas
- ❑ Having a cohesive group of ambassadors as the basis of your Journey is the greatest start to a successful program – do make an effort to ensure they see themselves as a group
- ❑ Remember that in a Global Journey, ambassadors will almost never arrive at the same time. Have a strategy for this. Either have them met individually – or – have them book into a hotel and begin the Journey on the day following arrival.