Marketing Antarctica

An advisory from IAATO for IAATO Member staff and agents engaged in marketing/public relations

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Welcome!

You and your company are part of the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO), a unique association comprised of over 100 members who are committed to the practice of safe, environmentally responsible private-sector Antarctic travel.

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Since 1991, we have been successfully working together to safeguard the Antarctic environment by developing a wealth of operational procedures and membership requirements.

IAATO members operate all expeditions in accordance with IAATO guidelines and comply with all relevant Antarctic Treaty and other international regulations.
IAATO itself doesn’t promote travel to Antarctica, but its member companies do. As marketing experts, you play a vital role in helping IAATO achieve its mission by managing clients’ expectations regarding their Antarctic experience. The following IAATO recommendations are intended to be a helpful resource when developing your marketing and communications strategies:

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Please do not mention specific Antarctic sites/research stations in brochures, marketing materials, blogs etc., or include sites in an ‘itinerary’ promising that visitors can visit any ‘must see’ spots. This is to help reduce pressure at landing sites. Also, itineraries can change at short notice due to weather/ice conditions or for other operational reasons.
Instead, consider using language that promotes the beauty of Antarctica and its abundant wildlife, the spontaneous, exploratory nature of Antarctic expedition cruising and the educational activities being offered.

You could mention the special qualities of certain places, but please don’t imply that clients can visit these on any particular voyage or on any particular day.
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Use language that promotes the unique qualities of Antarctica, but please do not use language such as “see it before it is gone” – IAATO works closely with the Antarctic community to protect the continent for future generations.

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In Antarctica, there are certain legal requirements that must be followed to protect the environment, many developed by IAATO. These include:

- Not disturbing wildlife on land or at sea;
- No more than 100 visitors ashore at any one time;
- Having a staff:visitor ratio of up to 1:20 while ashore;
- Ships carrying more than 500 passengers cannot make landings;
- Activities will have no more than a minor or transitory impact on the environment.

Please ensure the text and images in your marketing materials reflect these requirements.
Images and film are a powerful way to convey the splendour of Antarctica, but can be easily taken out of context by the public, media and Antarctic Treaty Nations who authorise tourism activities.

Note that long camera lenses shrink perspective and make objects appear closer than they really are.

So, when using images please:
● Check that guests and staff or their clothing/equipment do not look too close to wildlife. The minimum distance is 5m/15ft on shore.

● Check that images do not imply that vessels such as kayaks, other small boats and ships are too close to seals and whales. The minimum distance from whales is 100m.

● Images should not imply that aircraft are too close to wildlife. The minimum distance for aircraft from wildlife is 610m/2000ft above and 930m/½ nautical mile when landed.
Antarctic wildlife will sometimes choose to approach human visitors out of curiosity. If an image/footage depicts this behaviour, use supporting text to explain that the animal has *chosen* to move closer to the people/vessels/vehicles being shown.

Check seals do not have their heads raised looking at people or vessels, particularly if their jaws are open. This implies they have been disturbed.

If in doubt, check with company experts.
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- Check that the wildlife shown in images occurs in the area of Antarctica that you are marketing. For example, don’t show king penguins unless you know the tour is visiting South Georgia. King penguins are rarely seen on the Antarctic Peninsula.
- Please do not show images of emperor penguins unless you know that the tour is specifically hoping to visit an emperor penguin colony.
- Engage with company experts, such as biologists or the company’s field staff personnel, to ensure marketing materials are as accurate as possible.

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- Check that people or vessels and small boats do not appear on or too close to glaciers or ice bergs (ice can disintegrate or move at any moment).
- Images taken from a distance of a small boat below a tall glacier with a long lens will make it appear like the guest can touch the glacier front even though they might be 400m away.

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There are no ‘hotels’ in Antarctica. IAATO does not support any permanent infrastructure solely for the purposes of tourism in Antarctica. We only use semi-permanent facilities, such as field camps and blue ice runways, that can be removed with only a minor or transitory impact on the environment, or facilities that are shared with National Antarctic programmes like gravel runways.

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● Ensure people are wearing appropriate clothing and safety equipment. Use caution showing people in or near crevasses/ice caves.
When working with travel agents or other tour operators and wholesalers who book onto your trips, please ensure they are aware of the recommendations shown in this presentation for their own marketing and PR.
These recommendations apply to all marketing and PR, including brochures, social media, press releases, films, blogs, travel posts and logs etc. Companies are recommended to have a Social Media Policy in place to ensure all staff have clear guidelines on what they are permitted to say about core values, colleagues and products.
Visiting Antarctica is a great privilege. We all have a responsibility to protect the unique Antarctic environment and the reputation of our special industry. We’re all creating ambassadors for Antarctica’s future protection.

Thank you!

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