



*The*  
***Las Vegas Tourist Guides Guild***

**CPTG - Independent Contractor Module**

**Independent Contractor / Employee**

**Tour Guide / Tour Director**

**Step-On / Driver Guide**

***By Art Chesmore***

**Starting Your Business**

**Define your Interest**

Are you interested in performing the service of Certified Professional Tourist Guide?

Are you interested in Tour Directing, or Tour Management?

What is your **Passion**?

**Specialty Tours** – Photography, art, architecture, nature, \_\_\_\_\_

What is your **Expertise**?

**Natural History, Human and Cultural History, Art and Architecture**

What destinations/venues do you have **Knowledge** of?

**Las Vegas, Nevada, Southwest USA, National Parks, United States**

Do you possess **Bilingual** skills?

**Choose your Business Name/DBA**

Select a name that will **Identify your Service**. Your business name or dba should tell the world what service you provide. For tax purposes, as a sole proprietor, your name can be your business name, and your dba (doing business as) can identify your service.



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## **Identify your Contact Information**

Will you occupy a commercial business address, or work from a home office?

Will prospects and clients contact you by telephone, or by email?

**Business Name**

**Business Address – Physical and Mailing**

**Telephone, Text and Skype/WhatsApp**, etc. number

**Email Address** – 24/7/365

**Use Consistent Contact Information** on **Business Cards, Stationary, Brochures, Website, Promotions** and **Advertisements**

## **Apply for License and IRS Federal Tax ID**

You must have a Nevada State Business License and obtain a Municipal Business License. Apply for your **DBA - Doing Business As** and your **Nevada** and **Municipal Business License** in the governmental jurisdiction that you reside, or in the governmental jurisdiction you choose for your commercial location.

Will you do business as a **Sole Proprietor**?

Will you join colleagues in a **Partnership**?

Will you **Incorporate**?

**Solicit Legal Counsel** to determine best form of business for you.

## **IRS – Employee Identification Number/Social Security Number**

**Apply for a Federal Employee Identification Number.** As an Independent Contractor you must have an Employee Identification Number (EIN) if you choose a **Partnership** or **Corporation**. You may use your **Social Security Number** if you choose **Sole Proprietor**



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## **Establish your Record Keeping System**

Maintaining accurate financial records is paramount to owning and operating a successful business.

Open a **Business Bank Account** – Don't co-mingle funds

Consider your need for an **Attorney, Accountant, Bookkeeper** or **Tax Preparer**

The National Federation of Tourist Guide Associations offers a group **Liability Insurance** policy for tour guides, **Available only for Tour Guiding Services**. If you are packaging tour products, this policy is not for you.

Consider **Umbrella Business Insurance Package**. Errors and Omission Insurance is available through licensed insurance agencies.

Your record keeping system should be simple enough to record and store all business income and expense. Develop a system for tracking **Prospects, Inquiries, Proposals Pending, Projects Pending, Accounts Receivable,** and **Accounts Payable**

Establish **Service Rates**

Manage **Client Relations**, ie. **Constant Contact**

## **Define your Brand/Logo**

Design and use a logo that will identify you and your service.



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## **Define your Service**

What will make your service **Different**

Will you offer **Single** or **Multi-Day Tours**?

Will you conduct tours as a **Step-On Guide**?

Will you conduct tours as a **Driver/Guide**?

Are you willing and able to **drive 300 to 600 miles per day**

Possess a valid **Medical Card**, and a **Commercial Driver's License** if your vehicle has a seating capacity of 15+ passengers

Will you offer the service of **Personal Tours**?

Will you offer multi-day **Tour Director/Tour Manager Services** to Tour Operators?

Will you offer **Meet and Greet Services**?

What States or Region **define your boundaries**?

Will you **market and sell packaged tours** offered by Tour Operators?

Will you **guide and manage multi-day tours** conducted by Tour Operators?

Will Tour Brokers **sell your services and products**?

Will you conduct business as a **Tour Operator**?

Additional State and Federal Licenses, Permits and Insurance Required



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## **Market your Service**

How will people learn about your service?

Will you market exclusively to tour and travel professionals?

Choose your **Website Domain**. The internet provides a level playing field. Lacking a huge marketing budget and large sales force, a website designed to reach a specialized or niche interest can be your best bet to reach prospects who wish to book tours and activities prior to their arrival in Las Vegas

Create articles of value to travelers, and post to a **Blog**

Consider **Social Networks – LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook**. Browsing and posting to social networks can be time consuming; however, finding the right media gives you another outlet to market your service or product.

Prepare a single page bio and post it to the **LVTGG Website**

Register with **Online Booking Sites**. The internet has spawned many business entities that market and sell tours offered by tour operators and tour guides from around the world. Research online booking sites that invite you to list your tours; some require up front expenditures, some receive commissions.

## **Market Segmentation – Private Clients, Tour Operators, Destination Management Companies, Meeting Planners, Transportation Companies, Travel Agents, Group Leaders**

Who will your clients be? (It might be more than one above)

Tour Operators hire Tour Directors, Tour Managers and Step-On Guides.

Transportation Companies hire Tour Guides, Greeters and Transportation Coordinators.

Destination Management Companies and Meeting Planners hire Tour Guides and Greeters.

Travel Agents hire Tour Guides.

Group Leaders hire Tour Guides.



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## **Definitions – Tour Guide and Tour Director/Tour Manager**

**Tour guides** are responsible for informing and entertaining visitors. They must be well educated in the subjects they are discussing. They must also know a great deal about the natural and human history, and cultural significance of the places they take tourists.

Guides can work in a variety of settings, including museums, historical landmarks and with a travel company. They must select the most important and interesting information about the subject and present it to the visitors in a simple, yet appealing way. Often, tour guides must adapt the information to suit the specific visitors.

Tour guides may also work with a travel company that arranges private tours across a region. In these cases, a guide may stay with a specific group throughout the duration of their tour, which can last several days to several weeks.

The **tour director**, also called a **tour manager**, is hired to travel with a group on local, domestic and international programs, tours and cruises. They take care of details including airlines, hotels, attractions, transportation companies and tour members.

Your job, as defined by your employer, the tour operator, is to, “Make sure the tour members get the tour they paid for, and more.” When you’re hired to lead a domestic or international tour, your job starts when you meet the group in the gateway city and ends when you say good-bye to the tour members at the end of the tour.

## **Designing Tours**

Visitors to Las Vegas have many pre-packaged tours to consider. Consider offering tours custom designed to meet your clients’ interests, needs, time and budget.



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## **Network**

Referrals are valuable and represent the least expensive marketing expense.

Consider membership in the **Las Vegas Territory**, and **Destination Services Association – Las Vegas**.

## **Invite Testimonials and Referrals**

Invite clients to post testimonials to **Trip Advisor**. Publish testimonials to your business **Website**. Referrals are valuable and represent the least expensive marketing expense.

## **Continuing Education**

You have a passion for your professional occupation. Expand your learning through reading, online research, attending lectures offered in your community, and consider enrollment in continuing education programs.

**Las Vegas Tourist Guides Guild**, [www.lvtgg.com](http://www.lvtgg.com), offers members training and testing to become a Certified Professional Tourist Guide. Participation in select workshops, seminars and destination training opportunities will accumulate continuing education credits that will enhance your professional status.

**International Tour Manager Institute**, [www.ITMITourTraining.com](http://www.ITMITourTraining.com), **ITMI** trains and certifies people to become tour and travel professionals. Since its inception in 1976, ITMI has proudly graduated over 8,000 students from across the globe, has a 92% graduate job placement rate.

The 15-day Tour Director Certification Course is typically held in San Francisco and consists of 40% classroom time and 60% field training. Because of the real-world, hands-on training needed, this course is only available in person and is not offered online.

**International Guide Academy**, [www.bepaidtotravel.com](http://www.bepaidtotravel.com), **IGA** is recognized by the International Association of Tour Managers (London), the World Tourism Organization (Madrid), The Green Guide Alliance, and the National Tour Association (Lexington, KY, USA). CEO's Message: "Our Company is committed to providing the tourism industry with the very best trained people who turn every tour into a more memorable travel experience. We have earned the reputation as the most trusted company in this field of training, certifying and placement of Tour Directors and Tour Guides."



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**National Association of Interpretation**, [www.interpnet.com](http://www.interpnet.com) **NAI**, is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit professional organization dedicated to advancing the profession of heritage interpretation, currently serving about 5,000 members in the United States, Canada, and over thirty other nations. Individual members include those who work at parks, museums, nature centers, zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums, historical and cultural sites, commercial tour companies, and theme parks. Commercial and institutional members include those who provide services to the heritage interpretation industry.

### **Heritage Interpretive Training Center,**

[www.heritageinterp.com/heritage\\_interpretation\\_training\\_center](http://www.heritageinterp.com/heritage_interpretation_training_center), provide professional training in heritage interpretation - at a college level - for new to seasoned heritage interpreters. Interpretation, started in 1954 with **Freeman Tilden's Book "Interpreting our Heritage."** Contact John Veverka at [JVINTERP@aol.com](mailto:JVINTERP@aol.com).

### **Lead Amazing Tours – Kelsey Tonner**

- **Be a Better Guide**, [www.beabetterguide.com](http://www.beabetterguide.com)
- **Be a Better Guide Video Series**, <https://www.leadamazingtours.com/video1>