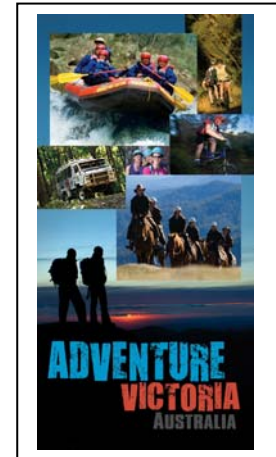


## Adventure Victoria Michael Watson

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How did a group of relatively small adventure tourism operators in Victoria's north-east break into the international marketplace? – through cooperation and a shared vision that the customer pie can be grown through collaborative effort.



Adventure Victoria is a cooperative sales and marketing campaign, supported by a centralised booking service, but there are no fancy St Kilda Road offices running it.

Watsons Mountain Country Trail Rides, Adventure Rafting, Australian Adventure Experiences and Adventure Guides Australia realised at a Tourism Victoria international travel workshop in November 2005 that they needed to pool talent and resources to enter the potentially lucrative, but fiercely competitive international marketplace. On their own they were just micro businesses that could not offer a broad enough product to attract the attention of the big players in the travel industry.

Using their own funds, plus in-kind support from Mansfield Shire Council, North East Victorian Tourism (NEVTi) advice from Tourism Victoria staff and funding assistance through the Australian Tourism Development Program (ATDP), they have since developed printed promotional material, a website and they attend international trade shows to sell their combined product to the world.

Program participant Michael Watson says the beauty of the collaboration is its simplicity. In addition to running their own businesses, each of them has taken-on a different role within the umbrella business: Business Development Manager; General Manager; Administration and Compliance; and Marketing. Clients enquire through a central information number and, depending on their particular interests and needs, they are referred to the individual provider for further information and to enter into negotiations. Adventure Victoria soon hopes to establish an e-commerce site to provide online bookings. Buyers can choose one or more of the components, to suit their programs and client profiles.

It's still early days for the product and the principals readily admit that they're still in the learning phase. They have changed their product offering several times, primarily to accommodate different trip durations.

They have also tried different bundling of products to suit different market needs.

They have already received small numbers of additional bookings, but realise that it is often a 3-5 year exercise to build solid international trade. To date they have concentrated on marketing to the Eastern Hemisphere, but soon will test the Western Hemisphere markets. Their planning also includes a fair degree of market research and client evaluation.

### Key Lessons

- The international travel trade often seek a broader product offering that what one business alone can provide.
- Look to other like-minded, quality partners to package for the travel trade.
- Success in the international trade requires perseverance and significant resources. It often takes 3-5 years before any real results are seen.
- Listen to the buyers and be flexible in your product offering to meet their needs.
- Assistant with international product development and marketing is available free of charge from Tourism Victoria.

[www.adventurevictoria.com.au](http://www.adventurevictoria.com.au)