

# Creating Advocates for the Tourism Industry

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# Outline for Discussion

Value of advocacy in tourism

Challenges of advocacy in tourism

Using research to learn about tourism advocates

Those taking on the advocacy challenges

Cultivating advocates for tourism

- What the industry can do
- What educators can do

Your insight

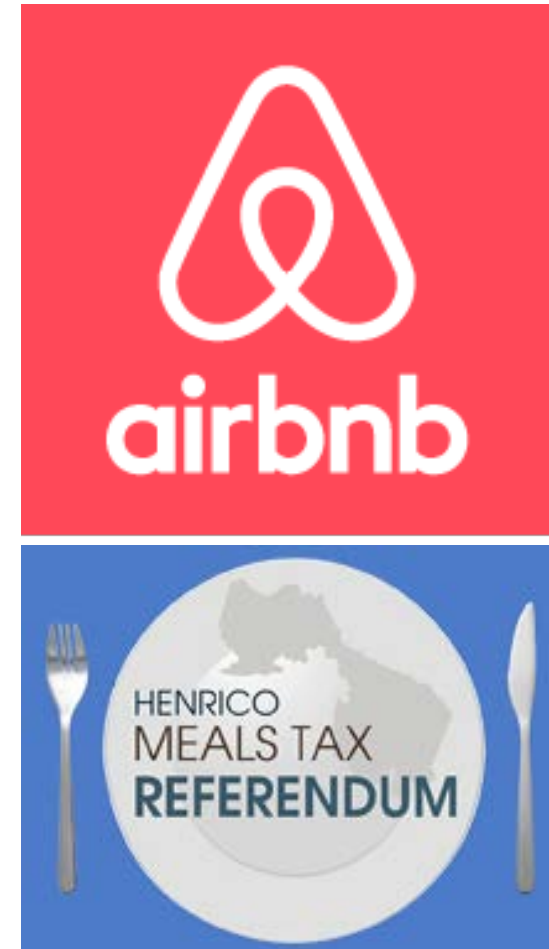
- What are your biggest challenges in advocacy?

# Value of Advocacy in Tourism

Advocacy: Representing a specific interest in an effort to play a role in the formation of public policy

Public policy influences how the tourism industry can operate

- Regulation of the sharing economy and OTCs
- Meals, lodging, sales tax levels and use
- Minimum wage
- ABC
- Funding for state tourism offices



# Advocacy Challenges in Tourism

The value of advocacy has been recognized for a long time

- But the desired influence is not always achieved within hospitality and tourism

Recommendations for gaining political influence for the industry:

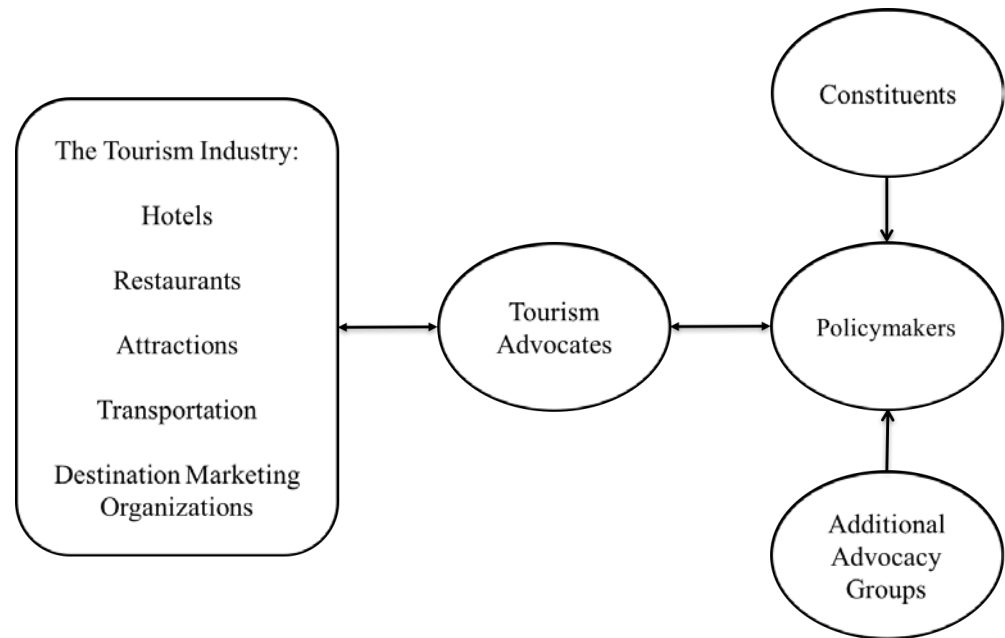
- Communicate with policymakers and educate them on the industry (Bramwell & Meyer, 2007; Stevenson, Airey, & Miller, 2008);
- Speak with one voice on political issues (McGehee & Meng, 2006); and
- Develop a unified legislative agenda (Swanson & Brothers, 2012)



# Who is Taking on those Challenges?

## Tourism advocates

- Tourism leaders (formal and informal) who seek political influence for the industry
- Serve as the liaisons between tourism industry members and policymakers
- The relationships they build with both tourism industry members and policymakers is vital



# Using Research to Learn About Tourism Advocates

## *Research questions to explore:*

Who are tourism advocates?

How do they get involved in advocacy?

What behaviors do they engage in to build relationships with tourism industry members?

What are the outcomes of their efforts?

## *Gathering data:*

Mixed method approach

- 26 semi-structured interviews with tourism advocates
- Secondary Data
  - e.g. documents and bylaws
- 128 evaluations of tourism advocates by tourism industry members
  - Online survey

# Tourism Advocates

Who are these individuals and how do they get involved in advocacy for the industry? Those with...

Supportive organizational resources

Experience in the political sphere

- Typically have had a watershed moment

Significant industry knowledge  
But not always those with the “highest rank”

Serious social capital



# Tourism Advocates

How do they build relationships with tourism industry members?

- Proactive behaviors
  - Rational persuasion- use of numbers and facts
  - Coalition-building
  - Networking
  - Spending time
- Symbolic influence
  - Shared language – “A rising tide lifts all ships”



What are the outcomes of these actions?

- Improved advocacy efforts
- Organizational benefits



# Creating the Next Generation of Tourism Advocates

- What you can do
  - Establish mentorship opportunities
  - Commit resources
  - Add advocacy to job function
  - Participate in educational opportunities
  - Facilitate networking and coalition building
- What I can do
  - Convey the influence of policy on the success of hospitality and tourism
  - Introduce avenues for advocacy
  - Initiate networking opportunities/experience with policymakers

# Your insight

*What's your biggest challenge in advocacy for tourism?*

# QUESTIONS

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