

Driving Tour Hints and Tips

1. Verify with the prospect, in advance, the number of guests accompanying the prospect on the trip, if any, and select a vehicle to comfortably accommodate all participating.
2. Prior to the driving tour, make sure the vehicle is sufficiently fueled and reasonably clean – especially the interior of the vehicle.
3. Consider tag-teaming on the tour, when possible, with a driver and narrator. Give thought to who would be ideal hosts and tour guides, and be ready to call on a back-up host or guide.
4. Identify special features. Think about:
 - ▶ What distinguishes your community from other places the prospect has likely visited.
 - ▶ Assets, special attractions, and destinations that attract visitors (potential customers) and help make the community “tick.”
 - ▶ Major employers, and their connections to the downtown or district.
 - ▶ Recent developments that demonstrate public and private sector investment in the community.
 - ▶ Facilities and services that the prospect is likely to visit and use, especially if located outside of the business district (e.g., city hall, utility offices, etc.).
 - ▶ Other local business districts or commercial areas.
 - ▶ Other special features, including those that might help to tell a story about the community, its evolution, and its future.
5. Plan your driving tour route options well in advance. The driving tour should typically be completed within about 25 to 30 minutes, but it may be beneficial to have options prepared (e.g., fifteen-minute abbreviated tour – see item #7). Plot and rehearse your tour options and identify routes and the special features you’ll point out along the way.
6. As a means of shaving time off the driving tour, consider assembling a series of slides or a short video that showcases relevant community features and assets located in extended reaches of the community or the surrounding area. Share the presentation with the prospect as part of an initial meet & greet, and before departing on the driving tour.
7. Consider preparing a script or talking points for driving tour guides. Include and be prepared to offer a few facts about “economic drivers” and important facilities that will be highlighted along your route, such as:
 - ▶ The number of persons employed at major facilities (e.g., city and county government facilities, schools, medical facilities, manufacturers, large retailers, etc.).
 - ▶ The nature of industrial park tenants’ work or products.
 - ▶ Estimates for recent and planned private and public sector investments in developments and improvements.
 - ▶ The estimated number of annual visitors or users at community attractions.
8. Prior to departing on the tour, be sure to verify with the prospect how much time is available for his or her visit, and fit the tour around the prospect’s timeline.
9. Provide a driving tour map to the prospect that identifies the route and some landmarks or points of interest, and ask the prospect if there are any specific sites he or she would like to be included on the tour -- and be prepared to temporarily deviate from the planned route.
10. Begin the tour with a drive along downtown or district main arterial(s) and/or the perimeter to help the prospect gain their bearings and to provide a preview, of sorts, for the walking tour.

Walking Tour Hints and Tips

1. Plan your walking tour, typically about 30 to 45 minutes, to include periodic stops to make introductions, highlight special features, point out available and appropriate sites, tell a (short) story, etc.
2. Plan your tour with a time allowance of about 10 to 15 minutes for tour deviations that might be requested by the prospect, or to experience something unexpected or unusual that might be happening in the district that day.
3. Provide a map (or business directory, with a map) that highlights important features and potential sites. (Note: Property showings would typically be scheduled to occur after completing the walking tour. However, in larger districts, it may be appropriate to schedule one or more showings as part of the tour).
4. Select a starting and ending location for the tour from a location (or vehicle) where the prospect can secure his or her belongings (e.g., briefcases, backpacks, coats/jackets, etc.)
5. When possible, alert representatives at scheduled stops in advance that you will be conducting a tour with a prospect, and consider providing them with one or two talking points.
6. Highlight special features, destinations, anchor businesses, complementary businesses and attractions, public parking areas, recent public and private sector investments, planned improvements, special event staging areas, etc.
7. Budget and offer five or ten minutes at the end of the walking tour to sit with the prospect and ask for his or her impressions, to answer any questions he or she might have, or to simply offer to him or her a brief break to make calls, check emails, etc., prior to beginning the next scheduled activity.