Marketing Plan

Why do you need a marketing plan for DTS?

You need to actively market the deployment and implementation of the Defense Travel System to gain approval by the senior leadership of your installation, so that they will provide the resources (people, equipment, time, money) you will need to successfully implement. You also want to get the users of the system (travelers, AOs) on board early so that they will be enthusiastic about their participation. And finally, a good marketing plan DTS really kicks off DTS training—it's part of an overall effort to educate people about what DTS can do for them and for their organizations.

Your Marketing Plan needn't be a formal plan, although we strongly suggest that you at least outline the major parts of your plan. The framework provided here should help you to think through what you will need, and the marketing materials provided in this document can and should be modified to suit local circumstances and meet your particular requirements.

Your first stop, once you have an overall marketing concept in mind, should probably be a visit to the supporting Public Affairs Office (PAO). Get them involved early—they're the experts on this kind of thing, and they can provide you with access to the media you will need in order to execute your plan. They can also advise you on other avenues you may not have thought of to help get the word out that DTS is coming!

1. Marketing Objectives

Before you can decide on the *how* of your Marketing Plan, you should insure that you have a solid understanding of *what you hope to achieve* over the next few months. Here are two objectives that you may want to consider; you will probably have some of your own in mind as well:

- Insure that the majority in your target audiences know:
  - What DTS is
  - When it is coming
  - What it will do for them
- Gain the support of base/group/squadron leadership for DTS deployment

2. Responsibilities

You won't be too surprised to discover that the overall responsibility for marketing is yours. There may be someone in the DTA who has relevant experience in marketing who can help you put it together, but as the Lead DTA, you're in charge:

- Lead DTA

  - Develop DTS Marketing Plan
  - Coordinate with Base/Wing Public Affairs Office
  - Determine any resource requirements
  - Obtain necessary approvals/concurrences
  - Oversee execution

- Public Affairs Office

  - Review, provide expert advice on Marketing Plan
  - Provide access to media such as base newspaper, web site, gate marquee, other

- Organizational DTAs

  - Provide support to Lead DTA as indicated in Marketing Plan

3. Target Audiences

It always helps to spend some time listing the target audiences that you need to reach. That helps you to match each target audience with the appropriate media to achieve the marketing objective for each audience. Here are a few that you may wish to consider:

- Base/Wing Commander and primary staffs
- Other group/squadron commanders and staffs
- DTA/ODTA personnel
- Users—AOs, frequent travelers, occasional travelers

4. Timing/Milestones

The table below provides a suggested timeline for your marketing plan; again, you should modify it as necessary to meet your requirements. Your plan should complement scheduled DTS training to achieve saturation just prior to implementation.

When	What
D-140	Develop Marketing Plan
D-120	Coordinate with PMO for Outreach Materials
D-110	Coordinate Marketing Plan with Wing PAO
D-100	Brief Wing/CC and senior staff/commanders
D-100	Publish initial article in base newspaper
D-90	Establish base DTS web site
D-60	Distribute flyers/leaflets
D-30	Publish follow-up story in base newspaper

5. Assistance available from PMO/TRW and SAFFM

The DTS Program Management Office (PMO) and the supporting contractor, DTS, can help you implement your marketing plan. TRW has developed Outreach materials, including leaflets and briefings, to help you get the word out.

Another source of support is the Re-engineering Travel Office at the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Financial Management and Comptroller). SAFFM may have updated materials you can use in your marketing campaign, and they—along with PMO and TRW—may be able to assist in briefing senior commanders and other audiences during their visits to coordinate DTS deployment.

6. Media

There are a wide variety of ways to get your message out, in addition to those already mentioned above. Here are a few for your consideration:

- Web Site

  You may be able to develop and post a web page linked to your base Internet web page. You should start the process by coordinating with the PAO, who probably controls the base public affairs web page. The PAO may even be willing to provide webmaster support, or point you towards someone else who can help (unless you are already knowledgeable in this area, or have access to someone who is).

  The basic guidance for an informational web site is that it should be simple, clean, fast, useful, and up-to-date. While graphics can add interest and impact, the tradeoff is longer download times, and if your local area network suffers from narrow bandwidth and slow response rates, you're better off skipping the graphics.

  At Appendix A is a suggested list of topics for inclusion on your web site—but don't feel that you are limited to just these. Your only limitation is your imagination!

- Base paper

  Once more, the PAO is your entry to the base newspaper, which is a great way of communicating to the widest possible target audience: DTS travelers.

  It's a good idea to kick off your campaign with an early article (three to four months before implementation) that tells everyone what DTS is, why it's going to be a good deal, and when it's coming. At Appendix B we provide a draft article suitable for this purpose that you can modify as needed, or just fill in the blanks and turn it in to the PAO!

  We also suggest at least one follow-up article within thirty days of implementation. You may want to focus this one on the final implementation schedule, by squadron, and on the

training that will already be taking place. You may even be able to talk the PAO in to providing photographic coverage of your training…which will result in some photos to liven up your article.

- Briefings

  Information briefings to key target audiences are another good way to get your message out. As explained above, PMO and TRW will provide briefings as part of their Outreach materials.

  One target audience you will certainly wish to brief is the base/wing/group and perhaps squadron leadership. This probably means a series of briefings, and that means coordinating personal calendars of key leaders. Don't forget senior NCO leadership as well!

  A basic DTS information briefing in PowerPoint format that can be easily modified or supplemented for this purpose is available by clicking here.

- Billboards/marquees

  Your base may have a billboard or electronic marquee (fixed or portable), probably near the main gate, that could be used to provoke interest. A message as simple as "DTS is coming!" can set the stage for your marketing campaign. Your PAO will know about how to obtain access to any available billboard or marquee.

- Email

  E-mails are yet another way of broadcasting information widely about DTS. However, you must be careful not to abuse this capability; clogging up the network with repetitive messages about the Defense Travel System is likely to have an effect opposite to what you intended.

- Flyers/handouts/brochures

  As discussed above, PMO and TRW will provide Outreach materials in the form of leaflets. You may also want to develop your own flyer, or you can print or electronically distribute the DTS brochure developed by TRW that you can download at http://www.defensetravel.com/brochure.pdf (but be careful if you are distributing it electronically—it's a large file and you don't want to jam up the network).

Appendices:

A. Suggested Base/Installation Web Site Content
B. Draft Base Newspaper Marketing Article

Suggested Base/Installation Web Site Content

- Welcome to DTS - Brief explanation of Defense Travel System (something like the following)

  What is DTS?

  Defense Travel System is the new paperless travel system that allows you, the traveler, to coordinate and arrange temporary duty (business) travel quicker and easier. No longer will you have to get orders from one location, a travel advance from finance, and finally, go to the Commercial Travel Office for transportation, lodging, and (if authorized), rental car arrangements. All of these transactions will be made from the convenience of your desktop or even laptop computer. No more standing in lines to process paperwork and no more aggravation with preparing the six-page travel claim and then waiting weeks or even months for reimbursement.

- What's New? - Any recent postings or important DTS notices
- Implementation Schedule - Preferably by squadron, and showing points of contact for each
- Upcoming Training Events/Schedule
- DTA Points of Contact - Names, DTA position, telephone number, e-mail address
- DTS Help Desk -
  - Numbers/e-mail addresses
  - Hours of operation
  - What to do in case of emergency
- Links to related web sites:
  - SAFFM Travel Re-engineering Office at http://www.saffm.hq.af.mil/
  - DTS PMO site at http://www.dtic.mil/travelink/
  - TRW DTS site at http://www.defensetravel.com/
  - Others

Draft Base Newspaper Marketing Article

Defense Travel System Arrives!

Beginning in (insert month and year) , (insert location) AFB will drastically change how it processes requests and pays vouchers for temporary-duty travel.

The new Defense Travel System, which incorporates private industry practices and technology with re-engineered policies and procedures, promises a seamless, paperless, automated system that will make travel fast and easy for customers and save DOD millions of dollars per year.

Upon evaluating the existing TDY system, a DOD Travel Re-engineering Task Force found it fragmented, inefficient, expensive to administer and occasionally an impediment to mission accomplishment. The Task Force's recommendations included treating travelers as responsible, honest customers and designing a system based on performance rather than compliance.

For example, obligation authority for TDY travel has been delegated to commanders and supervisory officials. Travel-related payments will be made through electronic funds transfer, and use of government-sponsored charge cards will be maximized. The rules for TDY travel entitlements have been simplified from 270 pages to a clearly stated 19-page document.

Defense Travel System allows you, the traveler, to coordinate and arrange temporary duty (business) travel quicker and easier. No longer will you have to get orders from one location, a travel advance from finance, and finally, go to the Commercial Travel Office for transportation, lodging, and (if authorized), rental car arrangements. All of these transactions will be made from the convenience of your desktop or even laptop computer. No more standing in lines to process paperwork and no more aggravation with preparing the six-page travel claim and then waiting weeks or even months for reimbursement.

You will be able to sit at your computer and submit your travel requirements: where you want to go; when and from where you will depart and return; lodging requirements; and rental car requirements. You will electronically submit (similar to e-mail) your request to your supervisor or a specifically designated Authorizing Official (AO). Your AO is responsible for you and probably many other travelers, ensuring that the trip is in support of government business, and that money is available for the trip. He/she checks your request and authorizes the travel by signing it electronically. Any problems will be coordinated between you and your AO. If the AO has questions or problems, they can

turn to the local Defense Travel Administration.

As you can see, no paperwork was generated. That's the whole purpose behind the Defense Travel System, a paperless system! At this point, your trip is authorized and all arrangements are made, you're ready to go.

One of the standing principles of DTS is the use of the government credit card to pay travel vouchers. You'll use your government issued charge card to pay for the transportation and incidental expenses while at your TDY/TAD location.

Upon return from travel, you will again, sit at your computer, and this time fill out the travel voucher. You will electronically sign the form and send it forward to your AO. Your AO will review the form and electronically sign it, authorizing payment of your claim. The systems will split the payment between you and the credit card company. It will pay authorized charges to the credit card company and the balance to your account *within 72 hours*.
First to implement DTS at _(insert location)_ will be_(insert Hqs and/or units)_. Training for commanders, travelers, and AOs has already begun.

For more information, visit the Air Force Re-engineering Travel web site at http://www.hq.af.mil/SAFFM/ (click on "Travel"), or the Defense Travel System web site at http://www.dtic.mil/travelink.