



Every month we'll be sending you the latest insights, research and thoughtful perspectives on the issues that matter most to tourism businesses and operators in RTO9.

In this month's newsletter we will explore ways operators can build new networks and partnerships.

If there are topics you want to read about in a future newsletter please email lmedeiros@region9tourism.com with your ideas.



RTO 9 Tourism Summit

This year, we have reimagined our summit just for you. This means, taking it online with a virtual event happening **Friday, September 11, 2020, from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM**. All you have to do is grab your free ticket and get ready to tune in a few minutes before 9:00 am on the day of.

[READ OUR FAQ](#)

[REGISTER FOR OUR SUMMIT](#)



Monitoring the Impact of COVID-19

As communities and businesses around the world respond to the challenges presented by COVID-19, now more than ever there is a strong need for solid tourism research and data. In addition to the resources on our [COVID-19 resource webpage on Tourism Talk](#), we have been monitoring trends in key areas to help you understand the trends and respond strategically.



1. Resident Sentiment

Twenty31 is conducting extensive analysis of resident sentiment to understand perceptions of tourism and how various stakeholders, including residents, local governments, tourism businesses and travel consumers influence one another. This has implications for how tourism can safely resume and the new social contract between tourism businesses and communities where they operate.

COVID-19 HAS CLEARLY IDENTIFIED TRUST AS A DRIVER OF TOURISM RECOVERY AT THE POLICY, BUSINESS AND VISITOR MANAGEMENT LEVEL.

- Residents have a high degree of influence over Government, who in turn can implement policies that impact Tourism Businesses (e.g., conditions for tourism opening/operation).
- Residents can also moderately influence Travel Consumers to visit where they live, impacting how welcome they can make Travel Consumers feel.
- Tourism Businesses deliver tourism services and experiences, exerting some level of influence over Travel Consumers (e.g., destination choice or trip characteristics).
- Travel Consumers provide feedback to Tourism Businesses and interact with Residents, influencing Resident sentiment.



Source: Twenty31 Consulting Inc; Statistically representative online surveying of identified travel consumers in Canada (n=2,000); UK (n=1,000); USA (n=1,000)

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Destination Canada's resident sentiment report shows the level of welcome that each province/region feels towards to visitors. This data allows destinations to discover how the local community perceives tourism and its impacts as the pandemic continues. Here are the highlights for the week of August 25:

- Compared to other provinces, Ontarians continue to be amongst the least welcoming of visitors from other communities near them (52%) and from other parts of Ontario (44%). Since the first week of July, positive sentiment has increased by 7% on both measures.
- In Ontario, receptivity towards advertising promoting communities as a destination is mostly negative for travellers outside of the Province. However, since the last week of July sentiment has remained positive for advertising in other nearby communities.

For destinations and travel marketers, it is important to navigate these new community responsibilities and accountabilities. The way residents feel about tourism resumption will continue to be an important consideration as plans and next steps are made to build back tourism economies.

[READ THE REPORT](#)



2. Hotel Performance Trends

Performance recovery in the Canadian hotel sector remains slow as demand for leisure travel and group business lags. In the week of August 18 - 24, 2020, national occupancy was 42.9% and PEI and BC were the only two provinces to reach above the 50% mark. Ottawa was the only major market to reach occupancy at or above 40%. Although results are well below last year, they are encouraging when compared to the start of July where occupancy was just under 30%.

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3. Google Search Trends

According to a Google search trends analysis by US-based tourism marketing company, MMGY, consumers' mindset about travel and the types of activities they are looking is evolving. Here are some key insights:

- There is a need to for consumers to replicate the feeling of getting away - search interest for “staycation” is up 100% year-over-year (YoY).
- People are trying to understand the level of operations in a destination and where they could rest during a road trip - searches for “hotels open in” have grown globally by over 100,000%.
- Relaxation is a priority - searches for “hotels with jacuzzi” have grown globally by over 100% YoY.
- Those preferring to stay home still have a need for experiences - global searches for “virtual tour” has grown by over 500%.
- People are looking for new spins on familiar activities - searches for “drive thru zoo” and “drive thru theatre” have hit an all time high.

In Canada, searches for “road trips” and “local travel” are up. The top searched questions relate to planning a road trip, what to bring on and what to do. Google search trends provide a powerful tool to help you develop new content and messaging – be sure to highlight what makes you unique and how you can meet the needs of travellers.

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Venturing Into Partnership And Strategic Alliances

Tourism businesses around the globe are finding new ways to innovate and thrive by teaming up with local partners. There are great examples of this happening right here in the region and across the country – from loaded picnic baskets for locals and restaurant delivery cooperatives to collaborations between seaplane tour operators and award-winning restaurants in Vancouver – there are endless possibilities. If you have ever wondered how these partnerships form and why they work, here are some of the basics:

Benefits

A strategic alliance can be a great way for your business to:

- share knowledge
- accelerate growth
- enter new markets
- expand products offerings
- share costs and resources
- access better prices from suppliers

Finding partners

It's important to keep in mind that strategic alliances can be as flexible and involved as you want them to be. Finding the right partner can take time, here are some questions to ask yourself:

- Do you have the same objectives as your partner?
- Have you clearly articulated your expectations to each other?
- Will you be competing in the same market? Will your alliance affect your market position?
- Are your brands compatible?
- How long will the relationship last?
- Do you have an exit strategy?
- Do you know what kind of contract you'll be signing?

By working closely with local partners in the region you can help your business survive, and as an added advantage improve awareness and demand for unique experiences and products.

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Webinar: ‘The State of the American Traveler’

Although the timing of return to travel largely depends on the opening of the Canada-US border, this webinar will keep you up to date on travel sentiment, travel planning resources and the technology being used by US travellers during the pandemic. The webinar will explore changing trends in consumption and demand for online videos and why it matters for your business and destination.

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Webinar: ‘What Overseas Tourism Brands Can Learn from China’s Recovery’

Find some inspiration at this upcoming webinar on the Chinese travel market and its recovery path. Experts from Dragon Trail Interactive and Jing Travel will share tips, key learnings and practical examples that businesses and destinations around the world can use to help win back Chinese travellers and other key travel markets when the time is right.

REGISTER FOR THE WEBINAR



Indigenous Experiences Partnership: Raising The Profile Of Indigenous Experiences

Airbnb and the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) announced a new partnership to help promote tourism for Indigenous operators and offer Canadians and international travellers new ways to connect and learn about Indigenous cultures. The partnership includes [a new website to showcase First Nations, Inuit and Metis cultural sites and experiences across the country.](#) ITAC will also benefit through access to important travel data, insights and booking trends via Airbnb.

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Global Business Events Partnership: Dubai Elevating Its Status As A Knowledge Hub

Global business events leader, Dubai, is forming new partnerships to support recovery and recapture momentum. Dubai Business Events, the city's official convention bureau, recently signed eight Memorandums of Understanding with organizations across the public and private sector.

The goal of these MoUs is to formalize collaboration, create a strong committed network and attract more conferences, congresses and meetings to the city over the long-term. The partners represent a range of sectors and industries that can provide expert opinion for bid development and help elevate the city's status as a knowledge hub.

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Live Music Partnership: One-Stop-Shop For Music Lovers In Calgary

The Ramada Plaza Calgary, Livestar Entertainment Canada and ticketing company Showpass have joined forces to bring the experience of live music to hotel stays. Safe from their balconies, guests can listen to the music of local artists down below in the pool deck area. The approach mitigates crowds, encourages overnight stays, and provides a boost for local artists. Although the partnership was formed in response to the pandemic, the experience is now being considered as a long-term addition to the hotel's offering.

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#SAFETRAVELS



'Safe Travels' Stamp Application

The specially designed stamp will allow travellers and other Travel & Tourism stakeholders to recognise destination authorities and companies around the world that have implemented health and hygiene protocols that are aligned with WTTC's Global Safe Travels Protocols.

[LEARN MORE](#)

[RESOURCES](#)



The Great Taste of Ontario

The Great Taste of Ontario (GTOO) is a provincial recovery program involving +80 partners (including DMOs, RTOs, Sector Organizations, media and charities). The program is designed to push Ontarians to rediscover the province and boost regional economies by increasing tourism visits. It's success is dependent on a unique mix of destination development, market readiness training, procurement tracking and strategic marketing partnerships.

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FEAST ON® CERTIFICATION



Local Series

Thank you to everyone who participated in our survey and shared with us their local favourites! Here's a look at our latest blog series.

[READ THE LOCAL SERIES](#)



Building Tourism In South Eastern Ontario

Each year, RTO 9 works with a selected group of tourism operators and stakeholders in a Partnership Funding program. We are pleased to continue in this program, designed to enhance experiential tourism across South Eastern Ontario. These partnerships further our collective success in attracting tourists, (visitors that are travelling more than 40 km) to the South Eastern Ontario region, grow revenue for businesses, and foster strategic alliances.

[VIEW OUR PARTNERSHIPS](#)



Submit Your Event

Submit Your Event

Event organizers are welcomed to submit virtual events, workshops designed to draw visitors, and future events that comply with all restrictions related to COVID-19. Once we have an active events page, we will be promoting our page with paid advertising.

Add your **virtual events/workshops** to our **consumer site** below.

ADD YOUR EVENT TO OUR SITE



#SouthEasternOntario

Keep In Touch With Us Online

Using our consumer brand - South Eastern Ontario we can stay connected for future content opportunities to draw visitors to the region. Tag us in your social media post and use our hashtag **#SouthEasternOntario**.



tourismtalk.ca

Get Social With Us!

Connect and engage with our industry brand '**RTO 9**' on social media.



Get Social With Us!

Connect and engage with our consumer brand '**South Eastern Ontario**' on social media.



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