

This month's newsletter will focus on the continued need for **frictionless travel and how tourism partners can provide visitors with a worry-free experience.**

During COVID-19, travellers faced an unprecedented level of disruption across most touchpoints of their travel experience, while the current travel demand increase combined with severe labour shortages are not contributing towards a smooth trip. However, all players in the tourism ecosystem are doubling efforts to enable easy travel.

## What's Inside

- [Key Trends Shaping the Future of Canada's Tourism Industry](#)
- [Destination Canada's Resident Sentiment Report](#)
- [The Difference Between Touchless and Frictionless Travel](#)
- [5 Unique Ways to Experience Indigenous Culture in Canada](#)

## What is 'Friction' in the Travel Experience?

In short, friction is those interruptions at various points during the travel journey where travellers provide identity and travel documents to transit through secure areas, board their flight and reach their final destination. Most travellers generally agree with the need for these traditional points of friction, especially given the world of heightened aviation security since the beginning of the century. However, the emergence of a new generation of identity verification solutions and technologies is creating opportunities to reduce these points of friction without sacrificing security.

Another way of thinking about reducing those friction points is to look at the way we treat our own personal identity data and how it travels with you, securely. New technologies and innovations are starting to unlock existing limitations, allowing people to move more seamlessly with reduced risk. In other words, frictionless travel is deeply tied to successful technological developments that ensure that traveller data remains secured and can seamlessly be shared

across platforms and systems along the tourism value chain – from airports, to hotels, to experiences.

## **From the 2020 Pandemic to the 2022 Disruption**

With COVID-19 naturally increasing the need for less human interaction throughout the consumer journey, frictionless travel has been accelerated and implemented with the rise of new technology providers — but travel is going to be a bumpy ride as visitors adapt to continuous uncertainty and change brought by the pandemic. The different national travel regulations and vaccine passports, as well as COVID-19 testing requirements, add to the initial challenges of navigating border crossings upon entry.

However, demand above 2019 levels in many destinations is causing complete operational and customer experience chaos this summer season. Adding severe labour shortages across the industry is creating an unsustainable tourism model - flight cancellations and delays; long airport lines at check-in, security, customs and immigration, and rental car counters; and massification of tourism attractions are some of the effects. This situation has led to the implementation of flight caps by some of the busiest airports in Europe - Heathrow (London), Schiphol (Amsterdam), and Frankfurt.

The current volume of travellers, with reduced capacity in the system, is creating new challenges in order to maintain a high standard for experiences. The customer experience is shaped across the entire end-to-end journey, from booking to travel to the return home.

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## **How Can Tourism Partners Support?**

Much like we have seen in retail sectors, as digital solutions replace services that can be easily automated, close operational gaps and streamline the customer journey, there will be greater emphasis placed on those services where personalized human interaction is more highly valued by travellers and which provide a differentiator for tourism operators.

Technology is moving the travel industry to a place where seamless travel experiences with limited, and even no, pain points are a reality. Destinations are using digital technology to increase connection, improve security and help drive

a better experience for users. With disruption-predicting artificial intelligence (AI), personalized value adds and real-time customer-centric technology, destinations can streamline the overall travel experience while introducing new solutions to collect data and better understand visitor behaviours in real time.

According to [Phocuswright's latest research](#) on Self-Sovereign Identify (SSI), this technology represents a dramatic shift for the tourism industry in the way customer information is stored and used. The goal is for it to be universally used across vendors, rather than requiring a separate profile with every vendor. Using a verifiable credential stored in a digital wallet, the traveller has control over when their personal data is shared, what parts of it are shared, which vendors/intermediaries can access specific personal data, and how long they can access it.

SSI has the potential to replace all the bespoke identities that travellers maintain with various travel suppliers and intermediaries, and lets the traveller control how their personal information may be used. This portable, digital, decentralized identity is highly secure and can be used throughout the travel process, removing major areas of friction.

Friction in the Travel Process

	Search	Shop	Book	Airport/ Airline	Hotel	In Destination Activities	Sharing/ Reviews
<b>Friction</b>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching search with personal needs</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shopping for personalized offers</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing all benefits based on status and personal preferences</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security checkpoints</li> <li>• Baggage check</li> <li>• Boarding process</li> <li>• Disruptions</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check-in identity</li> <li>• Access to hotel services</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal information for activities</li> <li>• Check-in to activities</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal info on supplier or intermediary portal or social media</li> </ul>
<b>Current Solution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplier or intermediary profile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicit preferences shared if asked or stored by supplier or intermediary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depends on booking source and history</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast pass solutions</li> <li>• Face recognition for boarding</li> <li>• Fintech solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile Check-in</li> <li>• QR codes for property access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile check-in to activity</li> <li>• Pre-fill necessary personal info via electronic form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verified reviews based on actual booking data</li> </ul>
<b>Emerging Solutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permission-based SSI to narrow search</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selected SSI personal info shared to personalize offer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant SSI info to capture benefits (membership, status)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seamless entry via SSI and IoT</li> <li>• Baggage drop-off</li> <li>• Check-in on entry</li> <li>• Disruption alts. based on specific need</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check-in upon entry via SSI</li> <li>• Verifiable stay recorded SSI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal details transmitted via SSI</li> <li>• Check-in via IOT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verifiable stay allows ability to review</li> </ul>

Source: Phocuswright Inc.

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 Powering great decisions.

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# RTO9 News

## RTO 9 Announces Partnership Fund Recipients For Fall & Winter

RTO 9 is pleased to announce that we have awarded 20 tourism operators with funding to support projects from across the region from now until March 31st, 2022.

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## RTO 9 Signs A Workplace Charter Of Inclusion With KEYS Job Centre

To show leadership and encourage other tourism employers to make Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) a priority, RTO 9 has signed a workplace Charter of Inclusion with KEYS Job Centre in Kingston. Over the coming months, RTO 9 and KEYS will be working with employers throughout South Eastern Ontario on how to create more inclusive work environments.

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## Save the Date: Workforce Development Seminar

**Date: Monday, November 7th 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM, Kingston**

David Coletto of Abacus Data, is Canada's foremost expert on generational change and social behaviour and will be leading this Workforce Development Seminar. Join us for an engaging, thoughtful, and informative conversation on the current state of the labour market. Plenty of information will be shared for employers who need to recruit and retain talent. More details to follow.



## **Workforce Development: Go the Distance With an Exciting Career in Tourism**

To encourage new entrants to the tourism labour force, RTO 9 developed a series of videos to answer the question, *"Where Can Tourism Take You"*? The videos were designed to position tourism employment as an opportunity to acquire highly-transferable skills and to build a life-long career.

*"Since the start of the campaign we are pleased to see that the videos have been played over 845,000 times and have also had significant engagement with many shares and comments. We look forward to continuing to provide information and incentives to encourage new entrants to engage in tourism careers."* Katherine Hobbs Project Manager.

[VIEW THE CAMPAIGN](#)

## **Building Partnerships with Indigenous Operators**

With 1 in 5 Indigenous people in Canada living in Ontario, we believe working together in a mutually beneficial manner will help all Ontarians prosper through the joint development of the tourism industry. Ontario is home to one of the largest Indigenous tourism industries in Canada and RTO 9's goal is to help advance the Indigenous Tourism industry in Ontario. [Learn more.](#)

The journey begins with connecting through the cornerstones of cultural insight, authenticity and meaningful connection. RTO 9 has committed to creating space for Indigenous people to tell their stories on their terms and features this on our [South Eastern Ontario website.](#)

We also monitor and share key market trends to help you respond strategically on our [COVID-19 resource page on our website.](#)

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## Market Insights

### Resident Sentiment

[Destination Canada's Resident Sentiment Report](#) reveals how safe residents feel about travelling to different places in Canada. Here are the highlights from the latest update with data collection between July 14 – August 2, 2022:

- Compared to the previous month, likelihood to travel over the next 9 months within Ontario and to other provinces and territories has remained stable. Strongest demand for upcoming in-province travel was for August (46%), as well as the strongest demand for interprovincial travel (24%). Demand for in-province travel significantly falls for September (28%), similar to demand for interprovincial travel (19%), and continues to do so in the following months.
- Demand for travel to Ontario from residents of other provinces remains stable, with residents from Québec (28%), Manitoba (24%) and Prince Edward Island (23%) being the most interested to travel to Ontario in the next 9 months.
- Ontarians' interest in travelling to other provinces is strongest for Québec (19%), British Columbia (18%), Nova Scotia (17%), and Prince Edward Island and Alberta (14%).
- Feelings of safety among Ontarians have decreased significantly towards other parts of the province, other parts of Canada and international

destinations (outside of the US). While 81% of people in Ontario feel safe travelling to within province, only 40% of Ontarians feel comfortable travelling to the US. This suggests that there will continue to be strong potential for domestic visitation for the fall/winter season. However, this will be the first shoulder season with international travel getting closer to pre-pandemic volume levels, so destinations will likely have to increasingly compete for visitors.

- Ontarians' level of comfort with welcoming visitors remains stable – with 80% of Ontarians' feeling welcoming to visitors from nearby communities, 81% for visitors from other parts of Ontario, and 78% from the rest of Canada. These levels decrease when considering to welcome visitors from the US (56%) or other countries (55%).

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## **Portrait of Travellers with Disabilities: Mobility & Accessibility**

[Portrait of Travellers with Disabilities: Mobility and Accessibility](#) is a new research report released on August 2, 2022 by MMGY Global, which is aimed as a call to action for every industry so they can better understand and meet the needs of the millions of people who use mobility aids, as well as their traveling companions. These are the key highlights from the survey of more than 2,700 respondents in the US with mobility disabilities and their caregivers and companions:

- Nearly all respondents (96%) say they have faced an accommodation problem while traveling, while 86% have experienced flight problems and 79% have experienced in-market transportation problems.
- Travellers with mobility disabilities spend USD 58.2 billion per year on travel. They are going on leisure trips with nearly the same frequency as those without mobility issues, taking an average of 3.4 trips in the past 12 months and spending an average of USD 3,546 on leisure travel during that time frame.
- The survey found lodging and transportation accessibility are cited as the two biggest barriers to travel for those with mobility issues:

- Transportation: Four in 10 have had their mobility aid lost or damaged by an airline, while six in 10 have experienced extended wait times for mobility assistance at the airport before or after their flight.
- Lodging: More than half (54%) have been given a room at check-in that did not match the room they booked, while 81% have dealt with inaccessible showers or tubs, and 52% have encountered beds that were too high for them to access.
- When asked how travel destinations can better attract visitors with mobility disabilities, 8 in 10 travellers cited increased information on accessibility available prior to visiting (84%); infrastructure expansion and enhanced maintenance for areas such as sidewalks, ramps and mobile lifts (83%); and the promotion of accessible lodging options by the destination (81%).

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## Workforce Development

### How to Work with Post-Secondary to Support a Diverse Workforce

**Date: Wednesday, September 14th 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM**

Join Michelle Caine, Centennial College, in a discussion organized by TIAO with a panel of experts to discuss how one can work with Ontario post-secondary educators to hire and mentor the growing number of international students studying tourism programs.

The panelists are Kristy Adams, Program Coordinator and Professor at Humber College & Michael Agema, CEO AGEMA Work and the perspective of an International Student Graduate.

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## Recruiting and Retaining Talent

**Date: Tuesday, September 20th 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM**

Is your sourcing/recruiting and talent management process truly inclusive?

This TIAO webinar will help you to identify the challenges and opportunities related to sourcing, recruiting and onboarding people with a disability; identify potential barriers for people with disabilities in the talent pipeline; and review best practices to develop the talents and skills of employees with disabilities and create opportunities for them to prosper within your organization (Speakers yet to be confirmed).

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## Media Spotlight



## **Culinary Tourism Alliance**

Three team members from the Culinary Tourism Alliance have recently visited the Eastern Region of South Eastern Ontario (SEO) to gather photographs, videos, interviews and information. The focus was on rural exploration, including diverse and unexpected restaurants; beer, wine and cider experiences; as well as unique accommodations like yurts, boutique hotels and farm stays.

Have a look at their first two blogs featuring tourism operators in Cornwall, SDG Counties, Brockville, Maitland and Rockport.

[PART 1, EXPLORING SDG AND CORNWALL](#)

[PART 2, EXPLORING MAITLAND, ROCKPORT & BROCKVILLE](#)

[PART 3, 4 STOPS IN GANANOQUE AND MERRICKVILLE](#)

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## **Opportunities**

### **5 Unique Ways to Experience Indigenous Culture in Canada**

From historical sites in Saskatchewan to chasing the aurora borealis in Yellowknife. Almost two million Indigenous people live in Canada today and

more than 50 different traditional languages are still spoken. Now, the Indigenous Peoples of Canada are reviving their languages and sharing their cultures in unique tourism experiences that are found all across the country. Connecting with these ancient living cultures is an opportunity to see Canada like you never have before, from the perspective of those who know it best.

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## **Akwesasne International Pow Wow**

**Date: Saturday, September 10th-11th 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM**

The Akwesasne International Pow Wow is the largest event of the year with arts, crafts, dance competitions, food vendors and more. This two-day event takes over the A`nowara`ko:wa Arena on Cornwall Island on the shores of the St. Lawrence River.

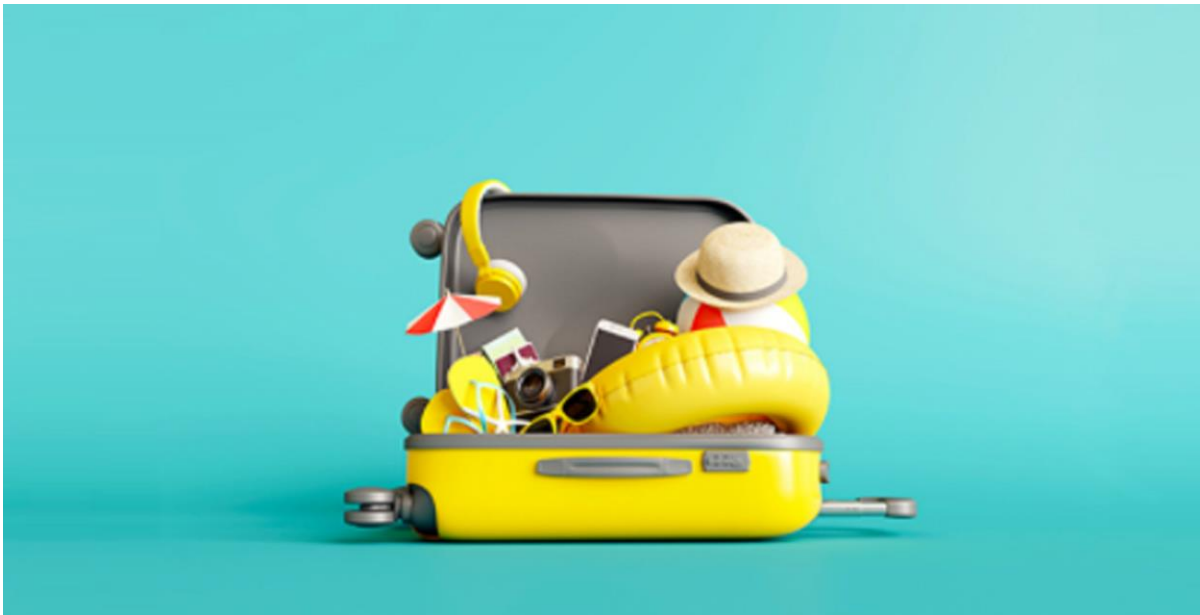
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## Weekend for Truth and Reconciliation

**Date: Friday, September 30th & October 1st, Sault Ste. Marie**

The two-day event offers a free, family-oriented showcase of Indigenous arts, culture, and heritage as well as key educational opportunities surrounding Indigenous history and ongoing reconciliation efforts. Attendees are invited to spend the entire weekend in Baawaating with exclusive coupons and promotions provided by participating partners.

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## '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.

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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 RTO 9.

If there are any topics you want to read about in a future newsletter, please email [imedeiros@region9tourism.com](mailto:imedeiros@region9tourism.com) with your ideas.

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