

This month's newsletter will focus on **why destination intelligence matters and how tourism partners can utilize data to deliver a targeted experience to visitors**. Big data and advances in computing power have transformed the world's biggest industries, and tourism is no exception. Data analytics has become the strategy of choice for organizations of any size looking to secure competitive differentiation and seek out new revenue opportunities.

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The Importance of Destination Intelligence

Whether you are local authority, private sector or a DMO, isn't one of the main objectives of all tourism operations to provide high-quality, cost-effective tourism services? So, in a nutshell, performance management and assessment are critical elements of a successful and effective operation. Understanding your own performance and having the opportunity to compare it with peer destinations, while absorbing key learnings and trends, provides destination managers with a sound basis for informed planning and decision-making.

While there are numerous tourism partners like UNWTO, WTTC, Skift or ForwardKeys providing invaluable tourism insights to both destinations and operators from a macro perspective, these will rarely be tailored to the specific local needs. Therefore, primary research is becoming a key area of investment for any organization aiming to make effective and efficient decisions. Surveys to capture travel consumer behaviour, destination perception, or feedback on the status of the local tourism industry should at least be run on an annual basis in order to properly get the pulse of the tourism community. This gives destinations

the opportunity to monitor their performance year by year and to compare it with others. Moreover, the value of such insights increases exponentially as similar research investments are carried on over the years, allowing for a proper trend analysis, as well as evaluating the sustainability of strategic initiatives.

Pressure on budgets at national and local levels means that investment in tourism research must be well planned and meet user needs. In this sense, destinations are increasingly focusing on ensuring the continuity of data trends, where these are required by businesses and partners across the visitor economy, as well as improving the comparability of data and intelligence. While tourist boards' previous focus was on attracting as many travellers to their destination as possible, modern destination marketing and management currently prioritizes quality over quantity. DMOs still aim to keep the visitor volume to their destination up, but the key change is that now it is about attracting the right kind of visitor – the kind who will have a positive impact on the destination from a social and environmental perspective. And to target your specific audience, there is no other way than destination intelligence.

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How Can Tourism Partners Leverage Data to Deliver a Targeted Experience to Visitors?

Whilst the rapid evolution in traveller behaviour presents challenges for the tourism industry, there are also significant opportunities on offer. Destinations that can understand today's travellers, predict their behaviour through data, and respond with innovative, effective marketing campaigns, will be well-placed to capitalize on the appetite of an ever-wider range of travel consumers. Today's sophisticated data analytics help destinations understand their main origins of traffic and track those that are declining and growing. This information provides the foundation upon which they build marketing campaigns, aimed at securing traveller volumes.

Data analytics present an unparalleled opportunity for destinations to connect the dots between the different stakeholders who serve and manage various aspects of the traveller experience – from airlines to cruise companies, to hotels and tour companies, to attractions and public services. Today, the traveller experience across these stakeholders is extremely fragmented. As more data becomes available and data analytics become more sophisticated, destinations will be better equipped to understand the needs of the global traveller as they evolve: from what they are inspired by, to what and how they purchase services

both pre- and on-trip, and how they feel about their stay. By connecting all of these real travel insights, DMOs will become more effective in measuring how well the destination as a whole is addressing needs, preferences and demands throughout the full traveller experience.

The investment in business intelligence allows for more focused development of the destination and all its tourism partners. In fact, all industry stakeholders hold benefit from destination intelligence collection, hence a common best practice from progressive DMOs is to analyze and synthesize the data findings and make the available to the public domain. While large tourism corporations may have the luxury of building internal research capabilities, providing relevant local destination intelligence to small and medium-sized operators contributes to building a smarter tourism community.

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RTO9 News



2022 AGM & Tourism Summit

If you missed out on our AGM & Tourism Summit, don't worry! Presentations for all sessions and panel discussions are available below.

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Practicing Truth and Reconciliation in Business

Date: Thursday, October 20th 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM, Kingston

RTO 9 welcomes Carey Calder, a facilitator with Nakaganis Consulting in Ottawa, and Colleen Nolan, HR Development, Training, and Development Specialist with Indigenous Tourism Ontario to lead this engaging workshop exploring ways to create meaningful action to address Reconciliation within your business.

[SAVE YOUR SEAT](#)



Where is Everyone? Attract and Retain Your Future Workforce

Date: Monday, November 7th 8:30 AM - 11:00 AM, Kingston

It's an employee's market. How do you find people who want to work? Discover alternative resources and strategies to help build your team.

[SAVE YOUR SEAT](#)

RTO 9 Announces Support for Tourism Recovery in South Eastern Ontario

RTO 9 delivers over \$4.6 million for 79 businesses and organizations, with support from the Government of Canada's Tourism Relief Fund, to attract visitors and support future growth

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Tourism Organizations on Both Sides of the Border Applaud Government of Canada's Decision to End Travel Restrictions

With three land border crossings connecting South Eastern Ontario to the U.S. Thousand Islands and Upstate New York regions, the easing of restrictions is a step in the right direction for businesses that rely on cross-border traffic.

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

Market Insights

Tourism HR Canada Monthly Tourism Snapshot

Tourism HR Canada provides a monthly Jobs and Employment Report. For the latest release covering August 2022, here are the key highlights:

- Tourism sector employment and labour force levels declined as Canada's summer season came to a close, compared to the previous months.
- The tourism unemployment rate for August (4.3%) slightly increased compared than the previous month of July (3.5%).
- Compared to pre-pandemic data from August 2019, the tourism labour force shed 178,200 participants and 206,200 fewer workers are employed in the sector - not only are there fewer tourism employees than in August 2019, but are also working fewer hours, despite a positive trend through the previous summer months.
- When compared to August 2021, employment levels improved across most tourism industry groups (travel services, recreation and entertainment, transportation, and accommodation) showing the recovery of the industry this summer – except for food and beverage, which decreased.
- Ontario's tourism labour force unemployment rate is lower than the total labour force (4.1% vs. 6.3%), which is attributed to a decline in both full-time and part-time employment.

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US Sentiment for Travel to Canada

Destination Canada's latest US Sentiment Report reveals how US residents feel about travelling to Canada (August 15-23, 2022). Here are the highlights:

- As Canada and the US continue onto the travel recovery path, US sentiment towards travel to Canada has mirrored that trend with a relative increase since January, with 55% of respondents indicating confidence in travel to Canada.
- As inflation arises as a global travel issue, 42% of US travellers currently feel that transport costs are a consideration that would prevent them from visiting Canada.
- Similarly, 63% of respondents indicated that they consider Canada to be easy and safe to travel to, while 80% are excited to embark in a leisure travel trip within the next 12 months.
- Despite this confidence, likelihood to travel remains low with 65% indicating that they are not likely to take a trip to Canada in the next 9 months (September 2022 – May 2023) but showing a positive trend throughout this period.
- For those who were likely to travel to Canada, 31% are likely to travel to visit Ontario, with the province being ahead of BC (22%) and Québec (22%) in terms of likelihood to travel.

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Media Spotlight

Canada Removes All COVID-19 Travel Restrictions

Canada has removed all remaining COVID-19 entry restrictions including testing, quarantine, isolation requirements, border requirements for all travelers entering Canada.

ArriveCAN, the government-initiated mobile app in which travelers must input their health information, including vaccination status, is now voluntary for those who may want to save time at the airport by uploading customs declaration documents in advance. Fully vaccinated international travelers have been allowed to enter Canada since September 7, 2021. Unvaccinated citizens and permanent residents were permitted to enter the country but must self-quarantine for 14 days.

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Ontario Investing an Additional \$90 Million into Skills Development Fund

The Government of Ontario announced that they are investing an additional \$90 million in the Skills Development Fund (SDF), with a focus on upskilling workers and supporting at-risk communities to help tackle the labour shortage.

Organizations eligible for funding include employment service and training providers, labour, community, business and industry organizations, municipalities, hospitals, Indigenous Band offices, Indigenous skills and employment training agreement holders, and service system managers.

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Ontario Strengthening Entertainment Industry in the North

The Ontario government is providing \$6 million through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) to support the film industry in Northern Ontario. This investment will help create jobs, attract talent and boost economic growth.

The NOHFC promotes economic prosperity across Northern Ontario by providing financial assistance to projects – big and small, rural and urban – that stimulate growth, job creation and skills development. Since June 2018, the NOHFC has invested more than \$559 million in 4,748 projects in Northern Ontario, leveraging more than \$1.82 billion in investment and creating or sustaining over 7,500 jobs.

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Toronto's Hotel High Prices Not Expected to Decline Anytime Soon

Hotel prices across downtown Toronto have skyrocketed and as the busy tourist season winds down, industry experts say there's no sign they'll come back down anytime soon. Inflation, rising wages, labour shortages are partly to blame, according to hoteliers. Rising prices at Toronto hotels are mirrored in cities across the province and the country. Statistics Canada reported in July that traveller accommodation prices in Canada rose by 48% in July compared to a year earlier, with prices in Ontario increasing by 70%.

Although hotel operators say with travel bouncing back amid loosening public health measures at this stage of the pandemic, their revenues have been higher than in the past two years. But they warn there is still some uncertainty, especially when it comes to business travel.

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Featured Operators/ Destinations



The Travel Foundation and 4VI Announce Pioneering Global Partnership

[The Travel Foundation](#) and [4VI \(formerly Tourism Vancouver Island\)](#) have agreed to a deep, multi-year partnership founded on a shared mission: to demonstrate new approaches in the global tourism industry that address the impacts and challenges of climate change and inequity.

The new partnership will see the Travel Foundation and 4VI working as extensions of each other's teams, delivering on both global leadership and local impact. Together they will focus on solutions that enhance 4VI's new business model (transition from DMO to Social Enterprise), while helping to ensure tourism is a force for good on Vancouver Island. They will also explore the wider challenges and opportunities the global tourism industry faces as it navigates toward a future that centres the needs of communities and the environment.

The partnership has specific and concrete aims under three pillars:

- **Innovate:** The partnership will create innovative systems-based solutions to the biggest challenges in the global travel industry through the development of scalable initiatives
- **Invest:** The organizations will secure new sources of funding to power our efforts toward the development and scaling of these initiatives
- **Impact:** Partners will jointly develop tools to measure and report on initiatives and ensure that successes and lessons learned are highly visible and widely disseminated.

The Travel Foundation is the UNWTO's implementation partner for the Glasgow Declaration initiative and is currently supporting a broad range of global projects, including supporting business and governments to collaborate on destination stewardship plans in destinations in North America and Europe.

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Opportunities



2022 Ontario Tourism Summit

Join this year's Ontario Tourism Summit, hosted by TIAO, at Deerhurst Resort in Muskoka on October 25 & 26 – If you or part of your team would like to join virtually, this option is also available. The OTS22 will be welcoming tourism professionals from around the province to gather, share, and collaborate with the focus on Reinvigorating Our Industry. While this year has allowed our industry the forward motion of opening back up, there are still challenges of repairing, rebuilding, and refocusing.

This year's summit is about Localization, Innovation and Confidence, with focus on the areas impacting our industry, our decisions, and how our industry is embracing the need for change and explore new opportunities.

Key speakers include:

- Dr. Sylvain Charlebois – Canadian Researcher from Dalhousie University, who will be addressing the impact of supply chain on our industry
- Grant MacDonald – Sports Tourism expert
- Jon Bromstein – Head of Industry of Google

Are you a tourism operator? Check if you qualify for a [complimentary membership](#) and enjoy members-only registration rates.

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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 with your ideas.

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