



As we celebrate Tourism Week in Canada, this month's newsletter will focus on **informing SME operators about relevant and helpful advertising strategies** that they can use to further their marketing efforts.

What's Inside

- [Experience Ontario 2023 – Apply Now](#)
- [Federal Budget 2023 Announced](#)
- [Vancouver Included in TIME's List of World's Greatest Places for '23](#)

Advertising Strategies for Tourism Businesses

Looking to boost your travel and tourism marketing strategy? Here are some effective tactics to consider:

- Use geotargeting to reach nearby consumers.
- Use video to create emotional connections and entice consumers to book.
- Appeal to your audience through eye-catching creative.
- Leverage contextual advertising to reach the right audience.
- Measure campaign results with a brand lift study.
- Use messaging to highlight the value of your offering.

Geotargeting and contextual advertising can help you reach audiences that are receptive to travel, while video and creative messaging can emotionally engage your target audience. Additionally, measuring your campaign's impact with a brand lift study and highlighting the value of your offering through messaging can help build consumer confidence and trust.

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5 Ways to Use Digital Marketing to Streamline Promoting Your Business

Marketing for the tourism and hospitality industry can be overwhelming, but with a digital marketing plan, you can reach customers from all over the world and stand out from the competition. Here are the five essential elements you need to create a successful tourism marketing strategy:

1. A mobile-responsive website: Your website is the hub of your digital marketing efforts. Make sure it is responsive, attractive, branded, search-friendly, fast-loading, and drives action. Include at least four pages: Home, About, Services, and Contact.
2. An email marketing tool: Build relationships and trust with your customers through email marketing. Use sign-up forms, list segments, welcome series, and a monthly newsletter to keep your potential customers interested in your business.
3. A primary social media channel: Simplify your social media marketing by choosing one primary channel that your target audience frequents. Use authentic and original content to build your brand image.
4. Up-to-date business listings: Claim your business listings on key sites like Facebook, TripAdvisor, Yelp, and Google My Business to connect with potential customers and respond to reviews.
5. A way to easily create content: Create a blog that answers the questions your potential customers ask when planning a trip. Define target keyword phrases, create content, keep it fresh, and include a call to action.

Focusing on these five elements will give you a simple plan for your tourism advertising and digital marketing. Start building your tourism marketing strategy today and turn potential customers into loyal customers.

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RTO 9 News



RTO 9 Annual General Meeting

Join the board and staff of RTO 9 for the 2023 Annual General Meeting!

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Meet our Board Members

We are delighted to welcome **Cale Fair**, **Loren Christie**, and **Cheri Kemp-Long** to our board of directors. We are excited to have them join us and contribute their skills, expertise, and experience to help advance our mission and vision. We also welcome back Krista Le Clair as a returning Board member.

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Written content and social media

Longer-form content reinforces authority and makes you a reliable source, while social media content gives you the chance to touch base with your consumers on a regular basis without necessarily asking them to do anything (click, subscribe, etc)—you're meeting them where they are.

Outside of your own site, look to TikTok (for inspiration and search), Instagram (for product promotion), and Facebook (for clicks).

Everything you need to know about...

- Comparison articles
- Top + Number (Top 10)
- Guide to...
- Listicles
- Quizzes
- Contesting
- Daily/weekly social posts (Travel Tuesdays, Sunday Sunsets, etc)

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Creating an Online Brand: Content Marketing 101

If you missed our Webinar, you can access the recording on our Website.

[VIEW THE RECORDING](#)

Here's How To Connect With Us on Social Media

Our consumer regional brand, [South Eastern Ontario](#), gives a sense of place and the content found on our social channels, website, and newsletter, targets future visitors from outside of the region and locals that live within the region.

We encourage our tourism partners and operators to share with us their stories, products, experiences, and packages [with our South Eastern Ontario social media channels](#). Keeping us in the loop with your offerings can lead to opportunities in features on our channels or pitched to our PR Agency. Read our blog post below on what our channels are and how to connect with us.

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Market Insights

Federal Budget 2023 Announced

The Government of Canada released its 2023 budget on March 28th, titled A Made in Canada Plan: Strong Middle Class, Affordable Economy, Healthy Future. Notable highlights include multi-year investments in destination marketing to attract international events and support for local tourism projects.

Here are some other tourism and hospitality highlights:

- A new Federal Tourism Growth Strategy to chart a course for growth, investment, and stability in Canada's tourism sector.
- \$108 million over 3 years, on a cash basis, starting in 2023-24, to the Regional Development Agencies to support communities, small businesses, and non-profit organizations in developing local projects and events.
- \$50 million over 3 years, on a cash basis, starting in 2023-24, to Destination Canada to attract major international conventions, conferences, and events to Canada.
- Cutting the planned increase of the federal excise tax on beverage alcohol from 6% to 2%
- Extending the Seasonal Employment Insurance support that provides up to five additional weeks for seasonal workers in 13 economic regions, until October 2024.
- \$14 million over two years for the Department of Canadian Heritage to support the Building Communities through Arts and Heritage program which supports local artists, artisans, and heritage performers through festivals, events, and projects, including Indigenous cultural celebrations and the celebration of 2SLGBTQI communities.
- National Museums – funding for six of Canada's national museums (the Canadian Museum of Nature, the Canadian Museum of History, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, the National Gallery of Canada, the National Museum of Science and Technology, and the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21) and the National Battlefields Commission.

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The Conference Board of Canada – 2023 Ontario Budget Analysis

On 24th of March 2023, the Conference Board of Canada release their analysis of the 2023 Ontario Budget. Here are the key highlight:

- Ontario's budget has resulted in a revenue windfall, putting the province ahead of schedule in reaching surplus, despite having the highest price tag of any provincial budget ever. The budget has kept new spending to a minimum, with spending for fiscal year 2023-24 set to be \$5.2 billion higher than November's fiscal update.
- The increase in spending will be largely driven by health care, with \$81 billion allocated for it, and other areas like education, social services, and other programs will also receive funding. While the deficit outlook and debt terms are more favorable, the province's high debt load and the higher interest rate environment could impact the cost of financing beyond the budget's planning horizon.
- Budget 2023 is based on cautious economic assumptions that are lower than both private sector forecasts and Ontario's own economic outlook.
- The budget projects Ontario's real GDP to grow by 0.2% in 2023 and 1.3% in 2024, with growth expected to increase to around 2.5% in the following years of the planning horizon. However, the budget acknowledges the high level of economic risk and presents both high and low economic scenarios. Under the high growth scenario, the government would have a \$4.4 billion surplus in 2023-24, while the low growth scenario would result in a deficit for the entire planning horizon until 2025-26.

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Ontarians Eager to Travel, but Anxious About Traveling, According to TICO Survey

According to a recent study conducted by the Travel Industry Council of Ontario (TICO) between January 20-23, 2023, there is a significant desire among Ontarians to travel during the upcoming spring and summer seasons. However, the survey revealed that these potential travelers are also apprehensive about potential travel-related problems, such as flight delays and cancellations.

The survey found that 68% of respondents intend to travel within Ontario during the spring and summer months, 51% intend to journey across Canada, and 47% intend to pack their bags for an international trip. 71% of Ontarians believe that the travel process is more complicated now than before the pandemic.

Although Ontarians are eager to travel again, they are also mindful of the complexities involved. Richard Smart, the CEO of TICO, said that registered travel agencies, booking websites, and tour operators will provide travellers with vital information and extra consumer protection. The survey showed that 65% of respondents are most worried about their plans being cancelled or delayed due to factors outside of their control, while 60% are concerned about being stranded away from home.

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Media Spotlight

Government of Canada Reopening NEXUS Airport Enrolment Centres

The Government of Canada has announced that the NEXUS enrolment centres at Toronto Pearson Airport and Ottawa Macdonald-Cartier Airport will be reopening on April 24, 2023. The Canada Border Services Agency and U.S. Customs and Border Protection will be expanding the program's capacity with a new enrolment option for air travellers, which has two steps and three options for NEXUS interviews. The reopening of NEXUS enrolment centres is particularly important for the Canadian tourism industry, as it helps ensure seamless travel for US visitors and supports long-term economic growth.

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New Partnership Between ITAC and Trans Canada Trail

The [Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada \(ITAC\)](#) and the [Trans Canada Trail \(TCT\)](#) have joined forces through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to collaborate, exchange resources, and support the development and promotion of tourism destinations, including authentic Indigenous experiences and trail experiences, for both domestic and international visitors.

As part of their initial efforts, the organizations will work with their members and trail operators to create exceptional trail and Indigenous experiences via accreditation programs offered by each group. This partnership is crucial for Canada's tourism industry, as it promotes the growth of Indigenous and trails tourism, showcasing the incredible experiences available across Canada.

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Canada Allocates \$76 Million to Address Passenger Complaints

The Canadian government has announced nearly \$76 million in funding to address passenger complaints. The funding will be used to hire new employees to address a backlog of complaints, which has reached over 30,000 for delayed, cancelled flights or lost luggage, according to Canadian Transport Authority officials. The funding will be used to strengthen the operation of the federal transportation network, enabling the Canadian Transportation Agency to deliver on its mandate for Canadians. This funding will start in 2023-2024 and continue over three years. The Canadian Transportation Agency is responsible for enforcing the Air Passenger Protection Regulations, which came into force in 2019, and new regulations on refund requirements for flight cancellations or lengthy delays outside of an air carrier's control came into effect in 2022.

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Workforce Development

Canada Extends Post-Graduation Work Permits for Up to 18 Months to Retain High-Skilled Talent

In this time of economic recovery and growth, employers are facing significant challenges in finding and keeping workers. To address this issue, the Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, has announced that international graduates with expired or expiring post-graduation work permits (PGWPs) will be eligible for an additional or extended work permit of up to 18 months to gain further work experience. These measures will begin on April 6, 2023, and will enable Canada to retain high-skilled talent. Those whose PGWPs have already expired in 2023 or were eligible for the 2022 PGWP facilitative measure can also apply for an additional 18-month work permit. This will help to address Canada's labor shortage, as talented and skilled international graduates are already well integrated into Canada's labor market.

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What to Do When You Can't Find Workers for Your Tourism Business

Date: Tuesday April 11th 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Location: Online

As tourism continues to surge, the challenge of staffing becomes more pressing. But what do you do when there aren't enough workers to serve your visitors? Join Tourism HR Canada and the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) in a one-hour webinar that delves into the top three HR issues affecting the industry. Discover seven actionable steps that you can take immediately to establish a workplace that draws in and holds onto talent, while also learning why investing in your people benefits your business.

[REGISTER](#)

Figuring Out Compensation Is a Balancing Act

Date: Tuesday May 2nd 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Location: Online

Tourism operators are grappling with the issue of how much to pay their employees, especially in the current competitive job market. Is offering more money the only solution, or are there other options for creating a compensation package that is attractive to potential hires? The Tourism HR Canada and the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) are organizing a one-hour webinar that will delve into these questions and provide useful advice and resources to help businesses develop effective strategies for meeting the needs of their diverse workforce.

[REGISTER](#)

Featured Operators/ Destinations



Vancouver Included in TIME's List of World's Greatest Places for 2023

TIME has included Vancouver in its annual World's Greatest Places list for 2023, which features 50 exceptional travel destinations from across the globe. The list was created by TIME's global network of correspondents and contributors, who submitted nominations for places that offer unique and exciting experiences. This recognition is a remarkable achievement for Destination Vancouver and an excellent way to keep Canada top of mind for international travellers.

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Indigenous-Owned Travel Agency Launches in Winnipeg, Treaty 1 Territory - a First in Canada

Indigeno Travel, Canada's first Indigenous-owned travel and tourism agency, launched in Winnipeg, Treaty 1 Territory on March 28th. Co-founder, Chris Maxfield, and his friend, Darrell Phillips, came up with the idea for the agency in 2015, but after Phillips passed away in 2017, Maxfield continued the shared dream. The agency's doors are open to everyone, and its focus is on helping tourists visit hundreds of Indigenous tourism destinations. The agency also facilitates the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action No. 92,

which calls for businesses and workplaces to work towards reconciliation. Indigeno Travel has partnered with other corporations and has plans for further expansion across the country.

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Opportunities

Experience Ontario 2023 – Apply Now

The Ontario government is launching the Experience Ontario 2023 program for festivals and events taking place between now and March 31, 2024.

Eligible organizations must:

- Be Ontario-based entities in existence since January 1, 2022 or before, including those that are established by or under legislation; are federally or provincially incorporated; or are band councils as defined under the Indian Act
- Not be in default of the terms and conditions of any grant or loan agreement with any ministry or agency of the Government of Ontario
- Have a Canadian bank account in the legal name of the applicant at a Canadian financial institution conducting business in Ontario

Eligible Festivals or Events Festivals or events must meet all the following eligibility requirements:

- Take place between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024, over a minimum of two consecutive days*
- Occur in the province of Ontario
- Be open to the public at large without membership in a club or group
- Be promoted to tourists (see Definition)
- Follow all municipal and provincial guidelines, including health and safety guidelines.

*One-day festivals or events held on Canada Day are eligible for funding.

Applicants are eligible to apply for a grant of up to 50% of total eligible costs to a maximum of \$125,000.

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport will only consider one application per organization to the Experience Ontario 2023 program or the Marquee Event Fund 2023.

The application period is now open – applications will be accepted until April 28, 2023, at 5PM (EDT).

[APPLY](#)

[VIEW THE GUIDELINES](#)

Canada Invests \$74 Million in Trent-Severn Waterway National Historic Site

The Parks Canada protected areas offers visitors a gateway to nature, history and over 450,000 km² of stories across Canada. The government's investment in these locations supports natural heritage protection, job creation and climate resiliency, while ensuring visitors have high-quality and safe experiences. The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, announced on March 22nd that the Trent-Severn Waterway National Historic Site will receive approximately \$74 million over three years for critical infrastructure improvements. This investment is part of the \$557 million in funding announced by the Government of Canada in late 2022. The funding will help conserve cultural resources, mitigate flood risks and protect heritage while enhancing the attraction of the waterway as a destination for tourists. The infrastructure projects will extend the lifespan and function of these structures for decades, benefiting local communities.

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TIAO IMPACT Sustainability Travel & Tourism – ONTARIO: A Regional Event

Dates: Friday May 5th 8:00 AM - Monday May 8th, 5:00 PM

Location: 116 Barrie St, Kingston, ON K7L 3N6, Canada

The Tourism Industry Association of Ontario is hosting the first-ever IMPACT Sustainability Travel & Tourism – ONTARIO: A Regional Event from May 7th to 9th, 2023, at Queen's University Biosciences Complex in Kingston, Ontario.

The event is in alliance with IMPACT Sustainability Travel & Tourism - SUMMIT Victoria and will showcase thought-leaders of the tourism industry from across Ontario. The 2.5-day event will bring together industry leaders who are committed to making the tourism industry more sustainable. The programming will include international best practices, new research in sustainable tourism, and more.

Participants can also join the Day of IMPACT on May 7th, showcasing diverse sustainable business practices, to spark change and support sustainable tourism. The event offers resources that can be implemented immediately, as well as new connections.

[**BUY TICKETS**](#)

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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