



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.

October's newsletter concentrates on how the return of business trips create demand for flexible business package offerings and how the return of business events benefit the local economy.

What's Inside

- [Top Business Travel Trends in 2023](#)
- [Strategies to Attract a Rising Segment: Bleisure Travellers](#)
- [2023 Business Travel Index Outlook](#)
- [U.S. and Canada's Educational Tourism Market Experiences Significant Expansion](#)
- [June 2023 Overnight Arrivals to Canada](#)
- [U.S. Sentiment for Travel to Canada](#)
- [Making Your Business Accessible](#)



Prescott & Russell joins the RTO 9 Family

We are thrilled to announce that [Prescott-Russell](#) is now part of Ontario Tourism Region 9, following discussions with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

On September 20th Bonnie Ruddock, Executive Director of RTO 9 spoke at the Prescott & Russell County Council meeting to introduce this region into the South Eastern Ontario portfolio.

We are humbled and honoured to support this region for the retention and growth as a destination and it's tourism partners, organizations and businesses.



Top Business Travel Trends in 2023

Business travel holds a significant place in today's globally connected workspace, offering the foundation for networking, market expansion, and deal acquisitions. However, as it continues to adapt to evolving trends and safety considerations, being updated and proactive is increasingly vital. The modern shifts in business travel are largely influenced by technological advancements and contemporary work attitudes. The [Global Business Travel Association](#) (GBTA) forecasts a rise in travel spending and bookings for the year 2023, indicating a progressive change in business travel dynamics. Here are the top 5 trends in 2023:

- 1. Bleisure and Workcations:** The amalgamation of business and leisure, termed as "bleisure", is gaining popularity. It's attributed to the blending of professional and personal life, especially post-pandemic. The notion extends to employees at various levels, not just executives, enabling them to enjoy a balanced experience while traveling for work.
- 2. Safety Technology Proliferation:** With a rise in global conflicts and violence, ensuring safety during business travel is crucial. The emergence of travel risk management software assists in monitoring and ensuring the safety of employees on the move. Despite its significance, there's a noticeable gap in its adoption, which is anticipated to reduce as more corporations recognize its importance.
- 3. Hub Travel:** The shift towards remote working has led to the concept of hub travel where employees travel to central locations for essential in-person interactions. This trend is challenging organizationally but is likely to grow as the benefits of remote working continue to be acknowledged.

4. Self-booking: The trend of self-booking through Corporate Travel Booking (CTB) tools is gaining traction. It allows employees a degree of autonomy in making travel arrangements within company-set guidelines, reducing the load on travel management teams.

5. Environmental Sustainability: Tools enabling carbon emission calculations for flights and carbon offset programs are emerging, allowing businesses and employees to contribute towards environmental preservation during business travels

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Strategies to Attract a Rising Segment: Bleisure Travellers

Bleisure travel, a blend of business and leisure travel, is gaining traction. Industries like technology, healthcare, public admin/government, and manufacturing see the

most bleisure travellers. To tap into this emerging market, hoteliers are advised to leverage technology, provide reliable internet in comfortable workspaces, collaborate with suitable distribution channels, enhance personalization, showcase both business and leisure amenities, promote local attractions, and devise tailored bleisure offerings. These steps could help hotel businesses attract bleisure travellers, making them extend their business trips for leisure purposes, thus boosting hotel revenues:

- **Technology:** Embracing tech solutions like IoT devices, smart speakers, and contactless check-in/check-out via smartphone apps can significantly enhance the convenience of stay, a critical factor for business travellers.
- **Reliable Internet in Workspaces:** Providing high-speed, reliable internet in comfortable workspaces is essential for business travellers to fulfill their professional obligations.
- **Partnering With the Right Distribution Channels:** Engaging with corporate travel agents and using global distribution systems popular among bleisure travellers can help in attracting this segment.
- **Improved Personalization:** Offering personalized services, such as smart heating controls and intelligent recommendations based on customer data, can improve efficiency, save time, and enhance comfort, which are crucial for business travellers.
- **Showcasing Business and Leisure Amenities:** Highlighting amenities like private meeting areas, charging ports, 24-hour services, alongside leisure facilities like spas, gyms, and bars can cater to the diverse needs of bleisure travellers.
- **Advertising Local Attractions:** Promoting local attractions, landmarks, restaurants, or entertainment venues can entice business travellers to extend their stay for leisure exploration.
- **Promoting Specific Bleisure Offerings:** Crafting and promoting bleisure packages, discounts on extended stays, and showcasing customer testimonials from bleisure travellers on social media can appeal to business travellers, encouraging them to opt for a leisure extension.

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Market Insights



2023 Business Travel Index Outlook

The [Global Business Travel Association](#) (GBTA) in collaboration with Visa published the 2023 GBTA Business Travel Index™ Outlook, revealing a faster recovery in the global business travel industry than previously anticipated. The worldwide business travel sector has recovered quicker than anticipated a year ago and is projected to exceed its previous spending peak of US\$1.4 trillion in 2024, aiming to reach close to US\$1.8 trillion by 2027. In 2022, the spending in this sector surged by 47% to US\$1.03 trillion, and a further growth of 32% is forecasted for 2023. This substantial increase is attributed to the deferred demand following the COVID-19 pandemic, improved global economic circumstances in 2022 and 2023, and the absence of anticipated recession threats.

Here are the key insights:

- **Regional Variances:** The recovery rate varies regionally, as Western Europe saw significant growth in 2022, while Asia Pacific lagged, particularly due to China's delayed economic reopening. China is, however, expected to regain its position as the #1 business travel market by the end of 2023.
- **Industry Stability Factors:** The recovery pace is largely attributed to the progress made in combating the COVID-19 pandemic, the return of in-person meetings/events, and some recovery in international business travel.

- **Sector-specific Recovery:** Industries like construction, education, and professional, scientific and technical activities showed the most resiliency in business travel spending recovery.
- **Future Challenges:** Despite the positive rebound, challenges like the Ukraine conflict, persistent inflation, tighter global financial conditions, and manufacturing sector deterioration pose risks.
- **Potential Industry Shifts:** Future business travel could be influenced by sustainability initiatives, adoption of remote meeting technologies, remote workforce growth, and blended (business + leisure) travel trends.
- **Survey Insights:** A survey included in the report highlighted business travellers' spending estimates, with an average spending of \$1,018 per person per trip. Moreover, 62% of the respondents reported blending business and leisure travel more frequently than in 2019.
- **Digital Payment Trends:** The transition to digital payments is emphasized, with 66% of business travellers provided with corporate credit cards, and 64% of these individuals have uploaded their card to a mobile wallet, facilitating easier and secure transactions.

[READ THE FULL REPORT](#)



U.S. and Canada's Educational Tourism Market Experiences Significant Expansion

Educational tourism involves travel aimed at learning and acquiring new knowledge, be it through school trips, study abroad programs, or skill enhancement holidays. It allows individuals to expand their horizons and engage with new cultures or fields of interest. The market for educational tourism in the United States and Canada has seen impressive expansion, reaching a market value of \$83.1 billion in 2022. It's expected to soar further, with projections showing a potential increase to \$304.3 billion by 2033. The predicted growth is backed by a projected sales revenue CAGR of 12.6% from 2023 to 2033. This market holds a sizable portion of the global educational tourism market, making up about 25% to 30% of it.

The rise in educational tourism in these two countries can be tied to various factors. Known for their wide array of course options and reputable educational institutions, coupled with friendly visa policies, the United States and Canada have become appealing destinations for students in search of quality education and rich cultural engagement. The availability of scholarships, internship programs, and job opportunities further adds to their attractiveness. The educational sector's dedication to international education has resulted in tailored programs with extensive support services, improving the overall student experience. The rich cultural heritage and landmarks of both countries additionally attract tourists keen on history, art, architecture, and traditions.

However, challenges such as strict visa regulations, political unrest, safety issues, and escalating costs pose as potential obstacles. Nonetheless, the collaborative endeavors between educational establishments and tourism bodies, the increase in educational tourism agencies, and the intertwining of tourism and education are aiding in maintaining a positive growth trajectory for the industry.

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June 2023 Overnight Arrivals to Canada

According to [Destination Canada's](#) June 2023 Overnight Arrivals Infographic, in June 2023, Canada witnessed a 43% increase in overnight arrivals compared to the same month the previous year, totaling 2.3 million visitors for the month. This surge brought June arrivals to 83% of the numbers seen before the pandemic. Mexico remained at the forefront of visitation recovery in June, achieving 93% of the figures from 2019, although it recorded a slight dip compared to 2019 levels for the first time this year. The cumulative arrivals for the initial six months of 2023 amounted to 7.4 million, which is 82% of the visitor numbers observed during the same period in 2019.

[VIEW THE FULL INFOGRAPHIC](#)

CANADA^{*}

U.S. Sentiment for Travel to Canada

[Destination Canada's](#) latest U.S. Sentiment Report reveals how U.S. residents feel about travelling to Canada (July 13-22, 2023). Here are the highlights:

- Despite a few variances, around 30% of Americans have consistently opined that it's a good time to spend on travel since the onset of 2023. However, there's a notable decline in their anticipated travel budgets, from an average of \$4,677 for leisure travel over the next 12 months as reported in January 2023, to \$3,505 in July 2023 — the lowest since October 2021.
- Amidst the dwindling budgets, the persistent perception of Canada as a safe and accessible destination puts it in a favorable position as an attractive alternative to more expensive European destinations like Italy and the UK, which presently are the most desired foreign destinations among Americans.

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Opportunities



FedDev Ontario Service Improvements

FedDev Ontario is spearheading economic development in southern Ontario to create a green, inclusive, and globally competitive region. It is investing in companies to encourage innovation, expansion, and diversification while supporting organizations that offer business services in various communities. The agency has introduced a streamlined application process, with funding intakes now happening three times a year, making funding opportunities more consistent. Priority will be given to projects focused on clean economic growth, supporting growing innovative companies, emerging technologies, and aiding industrial transition towards modern practices.

To help applicants understand the new funding process and priorities, FedDev Ontario is hosting virtual information sessions. These improvements aim to make the funding process more accessible, thereby facilitating economic growth and innovation in southern Ontario

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2023 Ontario Tourism Summit

Starts: 24 Oct 2023 @ 7:00am EDT

Ends: 25 Oct 2023 @ 10:00pm EDT

2023 Ontario Tourism Summit

The 2023 Ontario Tourism Summit (OTS23) will be held in Mississauga, providing a platform for tourism professionals across the province to come together. This event marks a crucial time as the tourism sector has started to operate again post-pandemic, and the swift pace of reopening presents both promise and challenges for sustainable growth. A notable highlight of the summit is the Three Fires Collaborative Quest, a joint initiative by the [Tourism Industry Association of Ontario \(TIAO\)](#), [Ontario Tourism Education Corporation \(OTEC\)](#), and [Indigenous Tourism Ontario \(ITO\)](#). This collaborative model emphasizes mutual support and sharing of resources among the partners to achieve common goals, representing a structured approach to tackle industry challenges together.

The central theme of OTS23 will revolve around Knowledge, Learning, and Confidence, aiming to provide insights into the current factors impacting the tourism sector, the necessary steps towards embracing change, and bolstering confidence in exploring new opportunities. Among the speakers, Janette Roush from New York City Tourism will discuss the role of AI in destination marketing, while representatives from the Greater Toronto Airport Authority and AbleDocs will share their expertise on future outlook and digital accessibility compliance respectively.

Date: 24 October 2023 at 7:00am EDT – 25 October at 10:00pm EDT

Location: 5875 Airport Rd, Mississauga, ON L4V 1N1

[PURCHASE TICKETS](#)

Destination Canada's International Symposium on Destination Stewardship

[Destination Canada](#) is set to host the International Symposium on Destination Stewardship from November 6-8, 2023, at the Canadian Museum of History, in Gatineau, Québec. The three-day event aims to gather stakeholders, global thought leaders, partners, and knowledge keepers from various sectors to discuss redefining tourism and destination stewardship. The Symposium will focus on the idea of evolving into destination stewards and explore how a regenerative approach to tourism can benefit residents, communities, culture, economy, and the environment. It intends to build upon the existing work in this domain and present new ideas and best practices in destination development and stewardship from around the world.

Date: November 6-8, 2023

Location: 100 Laurier St, Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0M8

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2024 International Indigenous Tourism Conference

The [Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada](#) is inviting everyone to Ottawa, Ontario, on the unceded Algonquin Anishinaabeg Territory from February 26 to 28, 2024, for a large Indigenous Tourism Conference. The conference aims to provide a space for people to share knowledge, network, and work together to help grow the Indigenous tourism sector.

Date: February 26-28, 2023

Location: 55 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, ON K1N, Ottawa, ON K1N 9J2

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Workforce Development



**BUILDING
INCLUSIVE
TOURISM**

Making Your Business Accessible

November 8th 12PM EDT

Making Your Business Accessible

In the tourism industry, attractions play a crucial role in providing enjoyable experiences to visitors. These businesses often encompass cultural, heritage, or natural aspects. A crucial aspect of making sure these experiences are enjoyable for all is ensuring accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Enhancing accessibility not only opens doors to a wider range of customers but also enriches the overall service offering of such businesses.

The upcoming webinar, "Making Your Business Accessible," seeks to address this vital issue. Attendees can expect an in-depth look into the importance of accessibility in the tourism sector, discussions on the potential positive impacts of

enhancing accessibility, and practical tips and strategies from a diverse panel of experts on how businesses can ensure their attractions are welcoming to all. Join this free webinar event and explore ways to make your business more inclusive.

Date: Wed, 8 November 2023, 12:00pm - 1:00pm EDT

Location: Online

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Featured Operator



Tourisme Montréal Unveils New Autumn Campaign, "You'll get it once you're here"

[Tourisme Montréal](#) has launched its recent advertising initiative aimed at attracting visitors to the city during the autumn season. This campaign creatively extends the narrative from the summer campaign titled "You'll get it once you're here / Il faut le

vivre pour le croire." Central to this theme is the distinctive charm of Montréal, which is better understood through personal experience. Accordingly, the campaign emphasizes Montréal's unique vibrancy through whimsical messaging in videos and displays, all of which are inspired by real feedback from thousands of visitors. Following a highly successful summer as highlighted in recent media coverage, Tourisme Montréal is now focusing on promoting the city's appeal for the fall season.

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Media Spotlight



Tourism Leaders Launch New Program to Support Truth & Reconciliation Call to Action #92

Keith Henry, the President and CEO of the [Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada](#) (ITAC), alongside tourism magnates from WestJet, Airbnb, and Rocky Mountaineer, unveiled the Indigenous Tourism Destination Fund (ITDF).

The ITDF is anticipated to significantly impact Indigenous tourism in Canada, serving not only as an investment catalyst for the industry's ongoing expansion but also as a paradigm for fostering Indigenous tourism, communities, and entrepreneurs globally. This initiative propels ITAC further towards its lofty objective of positioning Canada as a paramount player in Indigenous tourism on the global stage. With a fundraising target of \$2.6 billion over a span of seven years, the aim is to boost the growth of Indigenous tourism in Canada by augmenting the direct GDP contributions from about \$1.9 billion in 2019 to a projected \$6.0 billion by 2030.

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Successful Wrap-up of Focus Canada and Viva Holidays Roadshow in Australia

The joint roadshow by Focus Canada and Viva Holidays recently came to a close in Australia. This event brought together 13 Canadian tour operators and tourism offices, highlighting Canada's fresh, iconic, and regenerative tourism offerings. It

served as a vital platform for nearly 400 travel agents and over 20 tour operator partners to engage with a variety of Canadian representatives.

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Great News from RTO 9



RTO9 Awarded GreenStep's Sustainable Tourism Destination Certification

We are excited to share that RTO9 has been awarded the Sustainable Tourism Destination Certification by [GreenStep](#) after an eleven-month process. This achievement comes through a thorough review and assessment of our region's sustainability efforts across four categories: environmental, socio-economic, natural and cultural, and management, as guided by GreenStep's Sustainable Tourism Destination Standard. This certification is not just an achievement but a step

forward in our commitment to promoting sustainable tourism in Ontario. We are keen to continue working with other regions and stakeholders in implementing the action plan and progressing towards a more sustainable and eco-friendly tourism industry in Ontario.

Pictured from L to R: Carol Greenwood, TIAO, Vice President, Operations & Partnerships, Bonnie Ruddock, RTO 9, Executive Director Meg Dabros, RTO 9, Operations Manager.

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If there are any topics you want to read about in a future newsletter, please email Lesley McDougall lmcdougall@region9tourism.ca with your ideas.

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