



transforming Communities through Tourism

a Handbook for Community Tourism Champions



produced by:  the tourism & hospitality
education network

with the support of:  **ABORIGINAL**
TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF BC
our story. your experience.



Acknowledgements

Transforming Communities Through Tourism: A Handbook for Community Tourism Champions has been produced to help community leaders throughout British Columbia realize greater benefits from tourism. It encourages readers to better understand the industry, and helps them support an effective community-based tourism planning process.

This handbook was based on *Transforming Communities through Tourism: A Workshop for Tourism Community Champions*, produced by the Tourism Standards Consortium (TSC Western Canada) with support from Western Economic Diversification Canada. This workbook was designed to accompany workshops offered in western and northern Canada. The project was managed by Tourism Training Canada.

Thanks to the TSC for permission to adapt this handbook into a stand-alone resource for the BC tourism industry.

Guidance relating to program content and delivery approaches for the original edition came from a steering committee and review panel: Roy Anderson, Tourism Saskatchewan; Carol Lumb, Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council; Bev Shuttleworth, Manitoba Tourism Education Council; Bev Shuttleworth; Lillian Tankard, Travel Manitoba; Ann Hickmann, Alberta Tourism Education Council; Louise McGillivray and Kevin Crockett, Alberta Ministry of Economic Development; Darlene Doerksen, Yukon Tourism Education Council; and John Stafford, Tourism Training Canada.

Thanks is also extended to the dozens of community leaders and future champions who used the draft workbook in pilot workshops in seven communities in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Yukon. Their valuable input has been incorporated into the version you are holding.

Research and writing for the original version was undertaken by Terry Hood (Project Co-ordinator), Caroline Fisher (Lead Writer), Geoffrey Bird, and Brian White (Project Team), from the Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Department of Capilano University, host institution for LinkBC: the tourism/hospitality education network. Ad van Haaften of Tourism Trends served as senior advisor to the project team.

This BC Handbook was made possible through generous financial support from the Union of BC Municipalities. Terry Hood of the LinkBC network coordinated this revision, in conjunction with input from a team of partner organizations. Appreciation is extended to Laura Plant and Peter Harrison, Tourism British Columbia; Linda Lee, Strategex Consulting Group; Marie Crawford, Union of BC Municipalities; Peter Larose, Council of Tourism Associations of BC; Mike Prescott, 2010 Legacies Now; Paula Amos and Brenda Baptiste, Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC; Nicole Vaugeois, Vancouver Island University/ Tourism Research Innovation Project (TRIP); and Brian White, now with Royal Roads University. Thanks to the students associated with TRIP who developed the *Community Inspiration Profiles*.

Sharing the not insignificant research and writing duties for this BC-focused handbook were Caroline Fisher and Sara Mimick. Morgan Westcott put her editors' touch to the final manuscript. A special thanks to Tourism British Columbia for use of their photo collection, and to Davenport Maps in Victoria for use of their roadmap of British Columbia.

Enjoy, and thanks to all!

Before you start: many of the resources referred to in this handbook can be found on this great online resource for communities involved with tourism development:



Please make a point of checking it out at
www.bctorc.ca

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Section 1 Getting Started

Background: BC Communities in Transition

BC's economy is changing. Over the last decade many BC communities have experienced a decline in the natural resource-based industries upon which they were founded. As the number of jobs in forestry, fishing, mining, and agriculture has decreased considerably, local businesses have struggled to survive and some residents have been forced to leave their communities in search of financial security.

To help reverse this situation, many communities have begun to explore alternative economic opportunities, often identifying tourism as an industry that can play a significant role in this diversification.

To successfully build a solid future in tourism, BC communities need to undertake effective, long-term tourism planning and development. This handbook is designed to assist communities that are considering tourism as a means of economic diversification to help create or strengthen their approach in this area.

“Forestry, mining, fishing and agriculture are still important, especially in communities where they are big employers, but they are no longer the dominant force in BC's economy. Since the mid 1990's there have been fewer people working in these industries... At present, only nine percent of BC workers have jobs in resource harvesting and extracting industries...that's down from about 13% in 1990.”

*-BC Ministry of Advanced Education A Guide to
the BC Economy and Labour Market. 2006.
www.guidetobceconomy.org*

Handbook Goals

If you and your community are involved in tourism planning or development, this resource will provide you with a wide range of foundational information to help you make good decisions moving forward. The three goals of this handbook are:

1. To provide practical information and guidance on community-based and/or destination tourism planning and development.
2. To serve as a general reference of introductory information on the tourism industry, including tourism in BC.
3. To increase the tourism knowledge and expertise of individual “tourism champions” in BC communities.

The primary audiences for this handbook are: 1) organizations and individuals in small to medium-sized communities considering introducing or formalizing tourism as a focus for economic diversification, and 2) organizations and individuals interested in enhancing their understanding about tourism.

Organizations promoting tourism development may include (but are not limited to) local governments (municipal, regional, and First Nations), industry associations, destination marketing organizations (DMOs), chambers of commerce, visitor centres (VCs), local businesses, and community non-profit organizations and service groups (NGOs). Individuals may work within one of these organizations or be an interested private citizen.

An important consideration in developing this handbook was building upon and adapting existing resources and tools in the areas of tourism planning and development. A significant amount of work has been undertaken, both within BC and elsewhere, to assist communities in developing and enhancing tourism products and support services, attracting and increasing markets, and improving tourism leadership and management structures. Information from many of these resources and tools has been incorporated within this handbook and referenced appropriately.

Handbook Structure

This book will provide you with a better understanding of tourism planning and development and prepare you to more effectively contribute to these efforts in your community. Sections 4 to 6 are core components of the handbook, and will provide you with a picture of the key ingredients and tools required to undertake tourism planning, product development and promotional strategies. The handbook is divided into eight sections:

Section 1: Getting Started

Section 2: Tourism: An Opportunity for Economic Diversification

Section 3: Understanding the Tourism Industry

Section 4: Ingredients for Successful Community-Based Tourism Planning

Section 5: Analyzing Your Tourism Situation

Section 6: Creating a Community-Based Tourism Plan

Section 7: Building Momentum for Your Community: Implementation

Section 8: You Can Make a Difference: Community Tourism Champions



Throughout the handbook you will encounter “self-check” questions intended to get you thinking about the current state of tourism in your community and region, as well as the potential to develop the industry further.

You will also come across interesting stories about BC communities and destinations. These brief Community Inspiration Profiles are intended to provide further insight into how some communities have overcome challenges when transitioning to tourism. We hope these may motivate you to be creative in your own tourism planning and development processes.

To provide further inspiration, we have also included a series of Tourism Champion Snapshots in Section 8. These stories, from BC and neighbouring provinces, demonstrate how the creativity – and tenacity – of just one individual can change the shape of tourism in a community. In this section, you’ll also find tips and strategies to help develop your own role as a tourism champion!



Section 2

Tourism: An Opportunity for Economic Diversification

Why Tourism?

As mentioned previously, many BC communities are in transition and look to tourism as an industry that can play a significant role in economic diversification. The fact that many BC communities are considering this industry as an opportunity for economic

“Unlike other land-based industries, tourism imports the market to the product. As such, it is the only industry with a positive net flow of funds from wealthier to poorer regions, and from urban to rural areas. Indeed, the majority of money spent is imported from other geographical regions, and is new to the host community.”

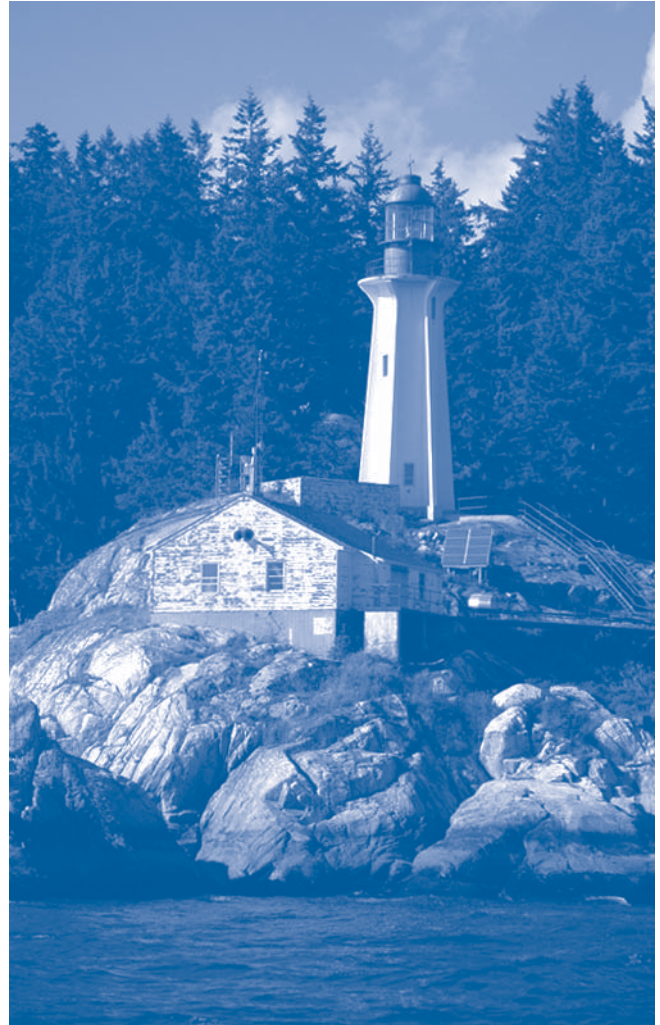
diversification is no surprise, in particular because BC communities are home to an outstanding variety of unique and spectacular natural, cultural, and/or heritage attributes. These attributes can potentially be of interest to, and shared with, visitors – whether they be snow-capped mountains, a rich agricultural sector, a history based on mining, a small street featuring authentic,

ethnic cuisines, or deep-rooted community festivals. In this sense, tourism provides an instinctive, natural diversification opportunity and helps build on this “sense-of-place”.

Some degree of tourism activity exists in most BC communities, and is a leading industry in many of our urban and resort centres, including Vancouver, Victoria, Whistler and Kelowna. The industry provides a significant opportunity for rural communities and, if developed strategically, can be vital to the health of these areas.

Tourism offers many benefits. It creates jobs, helping keep community members in the local area, and draws visitors who spend money that otherwise wouldn't be circulating through the community – helping to support local businesses. Compared to many economic sectors, tourism can be a “clean” industry and, if developed and managed in a sustainable manner, can have minimal impacts on the environment and a community's quality of life. Unlike many other industries, tourism has the ability to connect different parts of a community, relying on the cooperation of local government, entrepreneurs, non-profit organizations and private citizens alike. Working together to offer a positive experience to visitors usually includes steps to beautify a community and often leads to increased community pride. All of these benefits are described in more detail later in this section under: How Does Tourism Benefit Communities?

“A community's most important strength is the capacity of its people to work together.”



Throughout the province there are great examples of communities and destinations that have succeeded in making tourism a key focus for development – we've mentioned Whistler before – Tofino is another prime example. Others, without the advantages of signature natural or cultural attractions, have generated new tourism businesses and jobs by creating unique and appealing reasons to visit the destination. Oliver, in the Okanagan desert, has an interesting story that serves as our first community inspiration profile:

“Within a tourism context, the visitor experience is the product, delivered by many people who need to work together.”



Community Inspiration Profile: Oliver

Developing Tourism Without Sacrificing Character

At the northern edge of the Sonora Desert in the Okanagan Valley lies the town of Oliver. Oliver (originally called Fairview) can trace its beginnings back to the gold mining era. The town was established in 1890 but soon declined as the gold rush began to die.

It was not long however, before BC's Premier, John Oliver, (after whom Oliver is named) implemented a project to build an irrigation canal through the region. This allowed for agricultural activity and provided long-term work opportunities. As a result, Oliver became a successful, fruit growing community from the early 1900's onward. In the 1970's grape vineyards began to be planted to make wine.

In recent years, however, Oliver has found it challenging to encourage young people to stay in the community. The town had a strong agricultural economy, but it was becoming evident that farming was not enough to keep the community alive and healthy. As more young people left, the need for services lessened and the economy slowed down. In the early 2000's, Oliver's regional district (Okanagan-Similkameen) ranked high among those BC regions suffering from economic hardship.

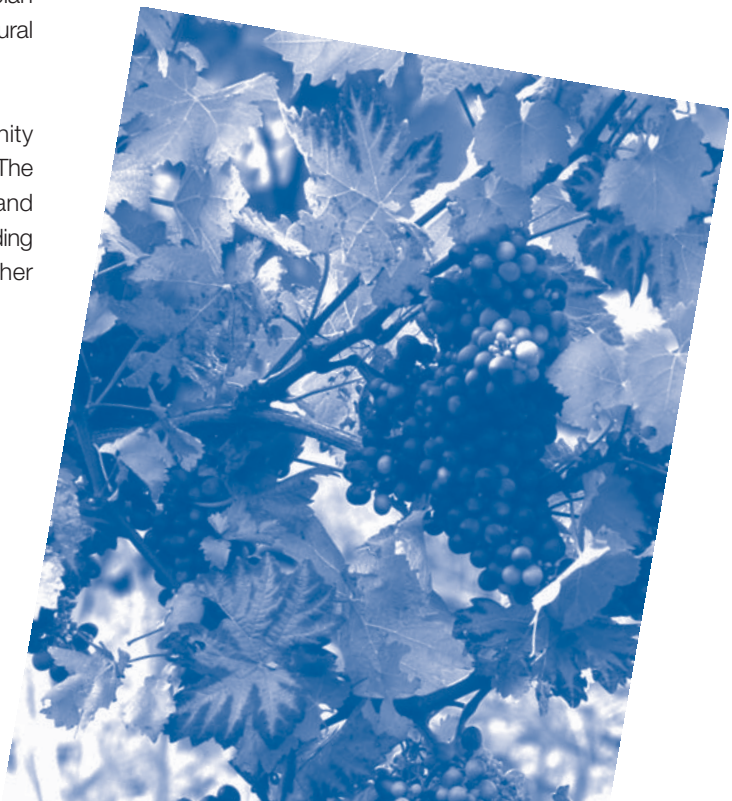
When it was noticed that more and more visitors were spending time in Oliver because of its wine, agriculture and climate, community leaders looked at tourism as an option for economic diversification. Although on the surface, tourism seemed like an easy solution, Oliver needed to carefully plan how to develop the industry without sacrificing its agricultural and rural character.

In the spring of 2000, the Oliver and District Community Economic Development Society (ODCEDS) was formed. The ODCEDS is a partnership between the Town of Oliver and the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen where funding is provided by both entities to create tourism and other economic development opportunities in the area.

Soon after ODCEDS was formed, it began establishing a destination brand for the community, which resulted in Oliver becoming the "Wine Capital of Canada". The ODCEDS then built upon the tourism brand and complemented the town's agricultural character with the following initiatives:

- *Oliver's Wine Capital of Canada Master Plan*, outlining how to develop and manage wine and agricultural tourism in a sustainable manner.
- *The Wine Village Accord* which defines what a designated "wine village" in Oliver will look like, where it will be located, what it will promote and support, its connection to rural areas, and how visitor accommodation and recreation will play key roles.
- *The Rural Oliver Determination Agreement* that acknowledges roles of rural stakeholders by describing the importance of ensuring the agricultural lifestyle will continue to be respected and enhanced.
- A document, *From Concept to Certainty: Exploring the Possibilities of an Agricultural Resort Area in Oliver, BC*, that examines the idea and vision of developing Oliver into the first agricultural resort in North America.

By using tourism development to complement Oliver's rural and agricultural character, Oliver is finding a successful way to increase its economic independence without compromising the rural and agricultural resources of the community.



By Catherine Moores,
Tourism Research Innovation Project (TRIP)

Why Tourism? (continued)

Some towns and villages, however, have struggled to attract visitors and to realize the benefits tourism can offer a community. Why? Because tourism success stories don't just happen. Communities achieve tourism success when they have:

- **A**n understanding of how the tourism industry works
- **S**olid vision
- **S**trong leadership
- **E**ffective partnerships and financing
- **T**he ability to provide what visitors want
- **S**upport from residents, local government and business

Without most of these ingredients in place, successful tourism development is unlikely to happen.

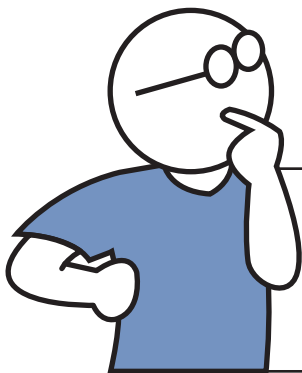
We've already mentioned why communities in our province are becoming more interested in tourism. Let's look more closely at what, exactly, tourism is.

What is Tourism?

Tourism is the business of attracting and serving the needs of people travelling and staying outside their home communities for business or pleasure.

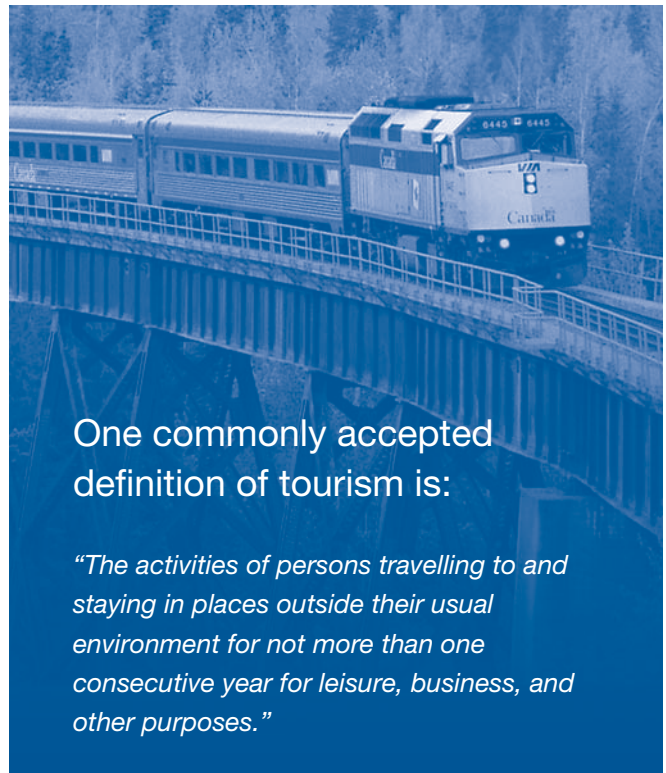
People are motivated to be tourists for a wide range of reasons, such as reuniting with family, escaping a cold winter, rejuvenating at a spa, or experiencing a different culture or cuisine.

The tourism economy includes everything from a visitor's mode of travel, to meals, lodgings, and activities they participate in during their trip. With so many products and services catering to the needs of tourists, it's not surprising that tourism is now considered the largest industry in the world.



Self-Check:

Are you considering tourism as an option for economic diversification in your community and/or region? If so, what are the main reasons behind your consideration?



One commonly accepted definition of tourism is:

"The activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes."

What is a Tourist?

There are many definitions of a tourist. For our purposes we'll accept that a tourist is generally considered to be someone who travels at least 80 km from his or her home for at least 24 hours, for business or leisure or other reasons. Tourists can be described as either foreign (inbound)—visitors who come to Canada from other countries, or domestic—Canadians travelling within Canada.

While foreign tourists are an important part of Canada's tourism business, it is Canadians travelling within our own country that generate over 75% of our tourism revenue!

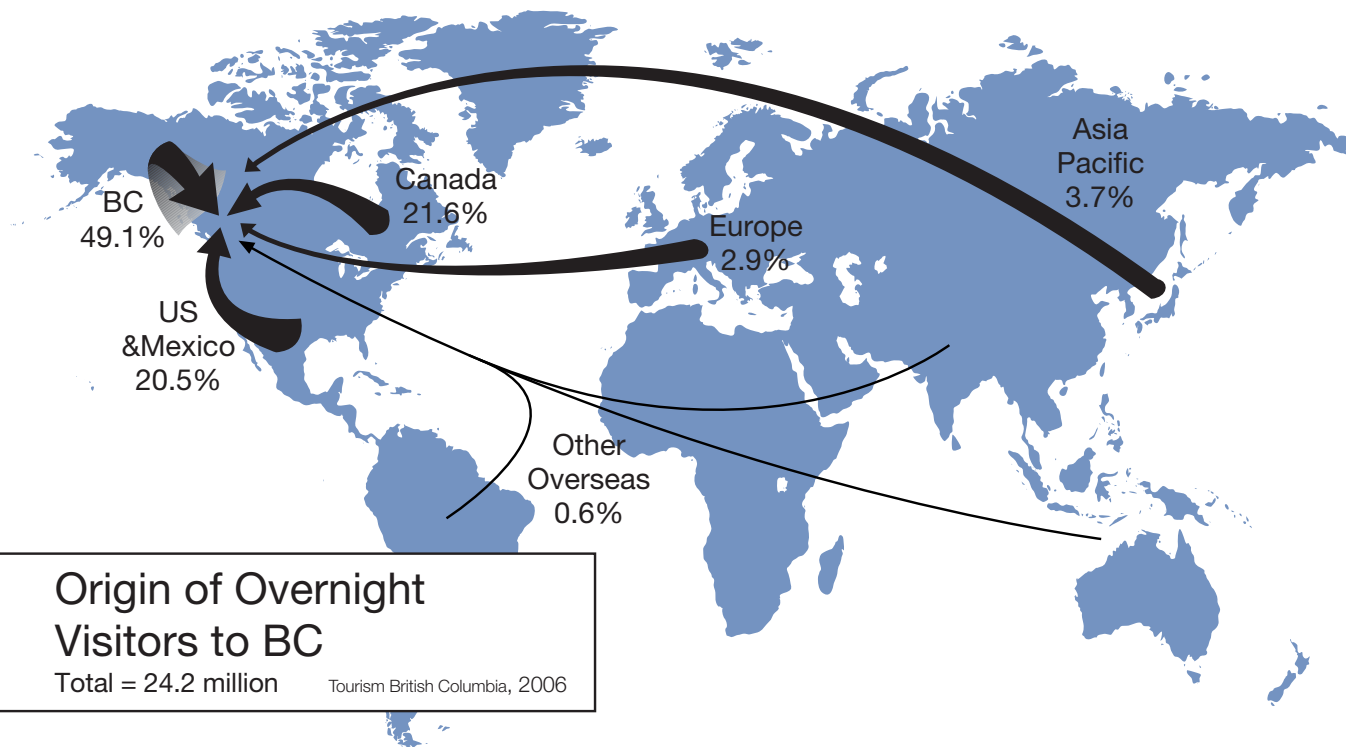
On a more local scale, same-day visitors, or excursionists, are travellers who are away from home just for the day. These people travel at least 40 km (80 km round-trip), stay less than 24 hours, and are not travelling to work or school (commuting).

When we think about developing tourism in our communities, often we imagine attracting visitors from very far away. For many communities, potential visitors originate from neighbouring areas that are only a day or two away by car! You might have heard the expression "rubber tire traffic" used in reference to those visitors who have driven to their destination, or are passing through a location – often from not too far away.

Where do BC's Visitors Come From?

The following chart highlights the fact that the majority of BC's overnight visitors (people who stay at least one night away from home) come from Canada! Almost half of these

visitors are BC residents exploring their own backyard. Another fifth come from other parts of Canada – mainly Alberta and Ontario.



The United States has been, and continues to be, a very important source of tourists to BC. A large percentage of American visitors come from Washington and California. Since 9/11 we have seen fluctuations in the number of Americans visiting BC, and with US border security issues, economic instability and varying gas prices, uncertainty with this market is likely to continue. Many travellers, including those from the US, are also experiencing issues of "time poverty". People are now busier than ever - they have more to do and less time to do it. This means that these travellers are participating in shorter vacations and making last minute bookings. Obstacles aside, US visitors still represent a high percentage of overnight custom entries to BC in 2006.

Though we often think of tourists as coming from overseas, less than 7% of BC's tourists arrive from outside North America as shown on the above chart. These visitors come mainly from Mexico, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and China. Though less than 7% of

our visitors come from overseas, BC does receive over a quarter (approximately 27%) of the international visitors that come to Canada, second only to Ontario which receives almost half.

The number of visitors in your community may vary from the above; however, it is important to know which visitors are coming to BC and how these provincial trends may influence visitation in your community.

How Does Tourism Benefit Communities?

More and more communities are looking at tourism because of the many economic, environmental, and social benefits it can offer. Let's look at each of these benefits in more detail.

1. Economic And Employment Benefits (Jobs!)

Tourism industry jobs are sometimes thought of as low paying, seasonal, and part-time. While some positions of this nature do exist, this is only part of the story. Tourism offers important, satisfying employment opportunities for a wide range of people, such as first-time workers and youth who benefit from entry-level positions where life-long skills are acquired. Students and older workers returning to the workforce often appreciate the flexibility of part-time and seasonal work available in the industry. Beyond these entry-level positions, many front-line supervisory and management roles are well-compensated.

People who do not understand the industry may not think of these critical tourism-generated jobs: pilots, website developers, accountants, tour operators, fishing guides, resort operators, and golf and ski sector positions. The reality is that tourism offers a wide range of employment options all along the pay scale. It is also worth noting that the majority of people who work in tourism do so by choice, because of the lifestyle offered by this diverse industry.

In addition, the tourism industry relies heavily on entrepreneurs. A wide variety of small businesses benefit from tourism, from bed and breakfasts, cafes and restaurants, adventure tourism companies to the less obvious – gas stations, grocery stores and marine supply stores. All of these businesses support the needs of visitors and, therefore, benefit from tourism revenue. Continued optimism exists for the future growth of small businesses reliant on tourism in BC, largely because the industry is less reliant on natural resource extraction than others. Growth in tourism businesses is largely driven by new investment from existing operators within the region and/or attracting entrepreneurs from outside the community who create and market new tourism attractions and experiences.

2. Social Benefits

Increased tourism can allow local residents to benefit from the same services and facilities developed to support tourism. In addition, local businesses typically benefit from enhanced revenue, which in turn, leads to growth in the number and size of businesses and service options for residents. For example:

- A greater number of visitors can help local restaurants improve their range of menu offerings.
- Local hotels may improve their amenities as business increases (e.g., meeting facilities, spa, marina, etc.)
- The local museum may provide better displays and longer hours to accommodate visitors and locals alike.
- Special events like music festivals, fairs and sporting events are enjoyed by residents while also potentially attracting large numbers of visitors.
- Tourist attractions that have a strong recreation and/or outdoor focus (e.g., ski, golf, adventure) also create new facilities and opportunities for locals.

Tourists not only bring dollars and physical upgrades to a community, they can bring new ideas and information which benefits local residents. In some cases, skills can also be brought to a community through organizations (e.g., Earthwatch, Katimavik, Canada World Youth, etc.) that provide visitors with opportunities to participate in volunteer, research, community development and/or educational activities.

“A strengthened tourism industry will add to local tax revenue and support additional community development.”

The scenery, heritage, and culture of a community (sometimes taken for granted by local residents) may be of real interest to visitors. When residents see how much tourists appreciate these community assets, civic pride is nourished and locals are further inspired to preserve, develop, and share these unique treasures.

The Multiplier Effect

The following diagram illustrates the powerful influence tourism can have on an entire economy. As tourism dollars flow through a community, businesses that are not usually thought of as tourism businesses (e.g., gas stations, laundromats, sign makers) benefit as well. This is known as the multiplier effect.

The jobs generated directly within the travel and tourism industry are considered primary jobs, whereas the jobs generated in the larger economy as a result of travel and tourism are considered secondary jobs. The multiplier effect means that part of each dollar spent by a visitor can end up in the pocket of a local fisherman, farmer, or hardware store employee.



3. Environmental Benefits

Tourism, in particular nature-based tourism, can place a greater focus on the conservation of natural resources within a community through the recognition of their importance to drawing visitors and providing economic benefits. In addition, tourism activities often inform and educate visitors about the value of local ecosystems and the need to protect them. For the visitor, this knowledge can transcend to also thinking about the value of, and need to protect, the natural environment within their own communities.

How Does Tourism Contribute to BC's Economy?

A range of tourism statistics are collected regularly by different tourism authorities and organizations. These provide important information for future development and marketing efforts in communities like yours. The main provincial sources are Tourism British Columbia and BC Statistics.

While this information may not be collected every year, it can provide you with a good snapshot of how tourism's economic contribution compares with other industries. It can also show trends and the pace of change in the industry.

continued next page...

Gross Domestic Product: GDP

GDP is a commonly used measure of economic performance, and refers to the total value of all final goods and services produced in a country or province in a given year.



Community Inspiration Profile: Telegraph Cove

Conservation in the Cove

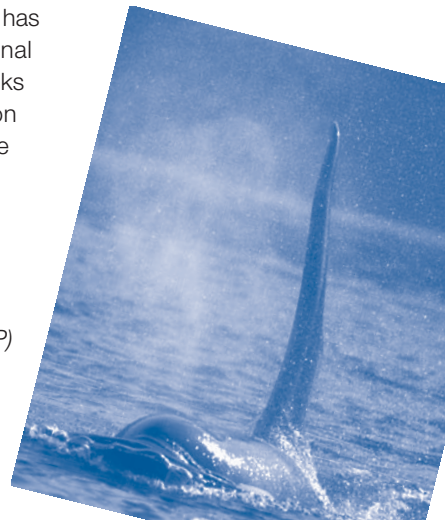
Located on the eastern coast of Northern Vancouver Island, approximately four hours North of Nanaimo, is Telegraph Cove. This picturesque village of only 20 full-time residents is home to the first whale watching operation in BC – Stubbs Island Whale Watching. Established in 1980, Stubbs Island Whale Watching offers three hour whale watching tours daily as well as multi-day wildlife viewing packages between May and October.

Stubbs Island Whale Watching is not only a successful business venture, it's also a community leader in environmental stewardship. The company was the first operator of its kind in BC to develop guidelines for ethical and responsible marine wildlife viewing. Owner Mary Borrowman stated that "killer whales have never been a job, they have been a passion." This passion is evident in the way the business operates and is a key factor for its success. When asked what makes the company different from other operators, Mary replied "Stubbs Island Whale Watching prides itself on ethical wildlife viewing, education and conservation and establishing a balance between the three."

Throughout its 20 years in operation, the company has managed to maintain its original integrity and passion for the mammals that have allowed the business to be possible. The operation is a past winner of the Starfish Award for Environmentally Responsible Tourism provided by the Oceans Blue Foundation. Most importantly, it has created a true environmentally-responsible eco-tourism experience, a leader in BC's whale watching industry, serving as sustainable model for other tourism operators in Telegraph Cove.

Today, Telegraph Cove has become an international destination, largely thanks to a positive reputation based on responsible marine wildlife viewing.

*By Richard Giele
Tourism Research
Innovation Project (TRIP)*



The Provincial Context

In 2006, tourism in BC generated nearly \$10 billion in visitor revenues and contributed over \$5 billion to the provincial Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – that's equivalent to 4% of the provincial GDP!

The Canadian Context

Tourism spending in Canada reached \$67 billion in 2006, a 6.5% increase from 2005. Three out of four of these dollars were spent by Canadians.

Total tourism gross domestic product (GDP) reached \$27 billion in 2006, or 2.0% of Canada's GDP.

Employment in Canada's tourism sector reached almost 634,000 jobs in 2006, an increase of 2% over 2005. That's big business!

The Global Context

In 2007, international tourist arrivals reached nearly 900 million, a 6% growth from 846 million in 2006. Worldwide tourism receipts from international tourism reached US\$ 733 billion in 2006.

International arrivals are expected to reach nearly over 1.5 billion by 2020.

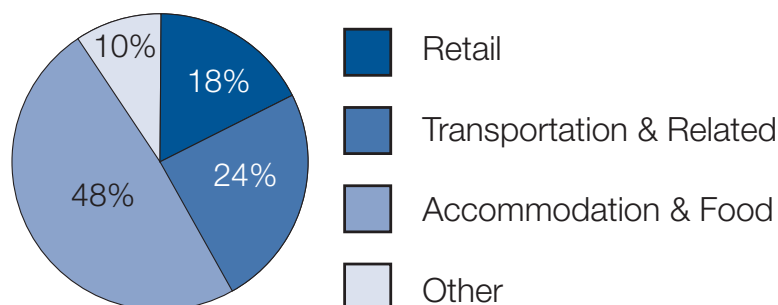
The global tourism industry currently generates 234 million jobs and contributes over 10% of global GDP. That's even bigger business!

How Does Tourism Contribute to BC's Economy? (continued)

The importance of tourism to the BC economy is expected to continue, with visitor revenues projected to achieve healthy growth. A large part of this growth will be a result of BC hosting the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. This major international event will showcase the province on the world stage and is expected to increase both visitation and tourism revenues, particularly *after* 2010 (just as Expo '86 was the catalyst that contributed to significant tourism growth after 1986).

Approximately 120,400 people were directly employed in tourism-related positions in 2006, (about one in every 15 jobs in BC). An additional 170,000 tourism-related jobs are created because of the industry (jobs in restaurants, etc. that also serve the non-visitor market). As shown in the chart below, the majority of tourism jobs (almost 50%) in 2005 were held within the "Accommodation & Food" sector, followed by the "Transportation & Related" sector.

2005 Tourism Employment: 119,900



Useful Resources:

British Columbia Tourism Data

- Tourism British Columbia Research
www.tourismbc.com
- BC Statistics, Tourism Indicators
www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/bus_stat/busind/tourism.asp

Canada Tourism Data

- Canadian Tourism Commission
www.corporate.canada.travel/en/ca/research_statistics
- Statistics Canada Tourism Account
www.statcan.ca/english/nea-cen/pub/tour.htm

International Tourism Data

- The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO/OWT)
www.unwto.org
- World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)
www.wttc.travel

Why Does Planning Make a Difference?

Understanding the potential positive impacts of tourism as a revenue and job generator is essential when considering tourism as an economic development initiative for your community.

It is also important to balance these benefits with potential negative impacts as outlined below. Some communities may decide that an expanded tourism economy is not in the best interest of its residents.

Tourism Is Not For Everyone

Not all communities are the same when it comes to tourism potential. Not all are suited to tourism development and not all want tourism.

Some communities choose not to develop tourism based on:

- Location (e.g. many miles away from main travel routes or markets).
- Lack of experiences and attractions that would appeal to enough visitors.
- Unwillingness on the part of local residents to support the industry.

If not well managed, tourism can have negative impacts. Increased numbers of unexpected visitors can place additional pressure on infrastructure such as parking, roads, water, and other municipal services. It can create situations where local residents have to compete with visitors for recreational and commercial resources. As we can see in some BC resort communities, tourism can also cause local housing shortages and an increase in real estate values that eventually push out local residents. Overuse of outdoor recreation facilities can have negative impacts on the environment, meaning the very thing that visitors come to see can be damaged or destroyed.

Think of overused and degraded trails, a pleasant rural community that experiences traffic jams in the summer, a lake that becomes over-fished or polluted from too many boats, or a resort town that has become so expensive that long time residents move away. Careful planning and an understanding of tourism's potential pitfalls can harness the benefits for residents while minimizing or eliminating those negative impacts.

Planning Gives The Community Control

Given the possibility for both positive and negative tourism impacts, it is critical to develop a solid plan for tourism in any community. A plan is the way to ensure that your community gets the most out of its tourism potential, maximizing the benefits and minimizing the negative impacts.

By understanding the consequences of tourism, a community can establish in advance how much tourism development they want. Careful planning allows a community to determine the social “carrying capacity” – the optimum ratio of visitors to residents – that they are comfortable with, along with where visitors are welcome and how much ecological impact is acceptable.

A community-based tourism plan also matches the products and resources available in your community with the interests and expectations of the markets. It can address questions such as:

- Is tourism right for my community?
- Does my community have the types of resources, attractions, and activities that will appeal to tourists?
- What type of tourism development can make the best use of available resources and appeal to potential markets?
- What visitor markets have the most potential for my community and what is the best way to attract them?

The plan must also consider the desires and aspirations of the community itself, addressing questions such as:

- Do the residents of my community support the development of tourism?
- Do our municipal politicians understand the industry?
- Do they understand the potential benefits? Will they put policies in place to help enhance tourism?
- Are there individuals willing to contribute the time and effort required to achieve the goals set forth in a tourism plan?
- Do residents of my community understand that there can be negative impacts, and are they prepared to accept them, or work together to minimize them?
- Are there entrepreneurs and investors willing, ready, and able to develop tourism-related businesses?

To Wrap Up...

This section has provided you with background information related to tourism and community economic development. Sections 4 to 6 will provide you with an understanding of community-based tourism planning. Before we get there, Section 3 will take a look at what makes tourism unique, how the industry is structured and supported, and how tourism is changing.



Section 3

Understanding The Tourism Industry

How is Tourism Unique?

Tourism is an 'experience' industry that has different characteristics from the natural resource-based economies of many communities. It is important to recognize these differences in order to help your community obtain optimal benefits from this unique industry. The following features separate the tourism industry from other economic sectors:

The Customer Comes To The Product

In the tourism industry, the customer comes to the product or service rather than the service or product going to (or away with) the customer. Unlike other purchases, the buyer doesn't immediately take the item they've paid for home with them.

As an example, compare the process of buying a new pair of shoes to that of buying a vacation package. You cannot walk into a store, 'try on' different vacations on the spot to see which one 'fits' you best, then walk out with your holiday. In fact, you may buy a tourism product - a flight, hotel room, adventure activity - weeks or months before you 'use' it.

Travel Is An Experience

While most travel requires payment for tangible products like airfare, accommodation, food and retail goods, the driving force in tourism is intangible. Tourism is based on the creation of experiences, things that can't be seen or measured, but that motivate the visitor to make a choice. These include relaxation, exposure to new scenery or cultures, adventure, entertainment, learning, visiting with family and friends, etc. A positive tourism experience includes a mixture of both tangible and intangible products. A successful tourism community must be able to understand this relationship, and be able to offer good overall experiences and memories, if they want to attract tourists.

Service As a Point Of Distinction

Visitors spend significant dollars for accommodation, food, transportation, and retail purchases while in a community. Because tourism is also an experience, the quality of service provided is as important as the product or facilities. Businesses need to distinguish themselves from competitors by offering greater attention to high quality service and understanding and responding to visitors' needs.

The tourism and travel experience takes place in many ways: it can be a part of a business trip, a weekend getaway, a day hiking trip with a dinner stop, a vacation of several weeks or a trip to see family and friends. During this time, the visitor makes several purchases. One major service or product failure can have a dramatic effect on the entire travel experience: one business can have an effect on many unrelated businesses.

Public and Private Sector Cooperation

A large number of attractions and activities (the main motivations for travel) are managed by the public or non-profit sector. Typical examples are historic sites, beaches, parks and nature reserves, trail systems, museums, and theatres. The major goal of these sites is preservation, protection, and maintenance of the attractions, and not their commercial development.

On the other hand, the private sector, often through small businesses, develops and expands the tourism sector and creates many of the associated jobs, incomes, and increased tax revenue.

A successful tourism industry, therefore, must have close, ongoing co-ordination between public/non-profit and private service providers. Cooperation helps balance the need to maintain high-quality attractions while allowing commercial activities that will create a healthy tourism economy.

How Is The Industry Structured?

This section gives you a picture of how tourism can be defined in a number of different ways. For economic measurement and statistical accounting, tourism is officially defined as an economic 'sector' with five industries, corresponding to international definition standards:

- Accommodation
- Food & Beverage Services
- Recreation and Entertainment
- Transportation
- Travel Services

As tourism was being established in the province of BC and across North America, it was often referred to as an 'industry' with 'eight sectors'. While these groupings have been replaced with the above official five economic classifications, the use of the definitions on the next page is still common, and will help you understand the range of businesses (and jobs) that tourism encompasses- many of which are likely to be found in your community:

Tourism Sector Businesses



1. Accommodation

Hotels, motels, resorts, campgrounds, hostels, B&Bs, summer camps, etc.



2. Food and Beverage

Restaurants, coffee shops, fast food outlets, pubs, club facilities, catering services, etc.



3. Attractions

Museums, galleries, parks, trails, gardens, waterparks, interpretive centres, cultural centres, Aboriginal tourism attractions, agricultural tourism attractions, etc.



4. Adventure Tourism and Recreation

Ski and snowboarding resorts, sport fishing, guiding, golf, tennis, nature-based tourism, marine tourism, outfitting, etc.



5. Events and Conferences

Special events, concerts, community or annual festivals, Aboriginal tourism events, conventions, trade shows, sporting events, etc.



6. Transportation

Air carriers, motor coaches, railways, cruise lines, car rentals, ferries, taxis, gas stations, recreational vehicles, etc.



7. Travel Trade

Reservations services, tourism suppliers, tourism information centres, travel agencies, tour wholesalers, tour guides, online consolidators, etc.



8. Tourism Services

Advertising agencies, travel writers, photographers, consultants, tourism/hospitality educators, website developers, research services, tourism sector associations, destination marketing organizations, etc.

The above sectors help us to better understand the broad scope of tourism and demonstrate its reliance on businesses and services far beyond what many traditionally think of as strictly tourism.

In addition to being categorized into industry sectors, BC's tourism industry is currently grouped into six geographic and marketing regions. Each region is unique, offering a wide variety of tourism products and services that are based on diverse

ecosystems, cultures, histories, and community lifestyles. With such enormous diversity in BC, you can understand why visitors are drawn to our province!



‘Hospitality Is Key’

The food and beverage and accommodation sectors are often collectively referred to as the ‘hospitality industry’. Approximately half of tourism industry jobs are found in these sectors.



How is the Tourism Industry Supported?






A number of organizations have mandates, responsibilities and services that support the tourism industry. These organizations range from global to local and can provide communities with a wide range of valuable information. They may provide support and information in one or more of the following areas specifically related to tourism:

- Product development and packaging.
- Marketing.
- Advocacy.
- Research and information.
- Policy development and management related to tourism resources, assets, and infrastructure.
- Education and training.
- Human resource development and management.

The chart below illustrates the range of organizations that support the tourism industry, beginning with those at the local level. These typically play the most relevant roles in a community's tourism industry. While the roles of organizations at other levels may also be important, the significance of these will increase as a community's tourism industry matures and progresses in its development.

The chart is followed by descriptions and examples of the organizations at each level, with a link to many websites. Visiting these sites can help your community further understand the role each organization plays in supporting the industry, and ways they may support your community's tourism development efforts.

Types of Support Organizations

|  Local |  Regional |  Provincial |  National |  International |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Community-based Destination Marketing Organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Chambers of Commerce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Visitor Centres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Local/Municipal Governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Community-based Product Sector / Trade Associations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Community-based Service Organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • | <p>Regional Destination Marketing Organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Regional District Governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>First Nation Governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Universities and Colleges (Tourism/Hospitality Programs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • | <p>Provincial Destination Marketing Organizations (e.g., <i>Tourism BC</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Provincial Government (e.g., <i>BC Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and the Arts</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Other Related Government Funded Agencies (e.g., <i>2010 Legacies Now</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Provincial Product Sector/Trade Associations (e.g., <i>Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC</i> and the <i>BC Hotel Association</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Provincial Industry Organizations (e.g., <i>Council of Tourism Associations of BC</i>, <i>LinkBC network</i>, and <i>go2</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • | <p>National Tourism Destination Marketing Organization (<i>Canadian Tourism Commission</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>National Product Sector / Trade Associations (e.g., <i>Hotel Association of Canada</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>National Industry Organizations (e.g., <i>Tourism Industry Association of Canada</i> and the <i>Canada Tourism Human Resource Council</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • | <p>International Government (<i>United Nations World Tourism Organization</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>Private Sector (<i>World Travel and Tourism Council</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>International Product Sector / Trade Organizations (e.g., <i>International Ecotourism Society</i>, and <i>National Geographic Sustainable Destinations</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <p>International Industry Organizations (e.g., <i>Destination Marketing Association International</i>, and the <i>International Institute for Peace through Tourism</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • |



Local Tourism Organizations

Community-based Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO) *Sometimes referred to as Destination Management Organizations*

A community-based DMO is a municipal or regional-level organization (urban or rural) that promotes individual towns and/or areas as preferred destinations for visitors. Traditionally, these DMOs have been membership-based (and some still are), however, the newer community-based DMOs being established (e.g. Tourism Squamish) are moving away from the membership model to a 'stakeholder model'. A stakeholder model views all tourism industry participants in the community or area as partners that do not have a requirement to pay membership fees. One way this revenue can be generated is by providing partner advertising opportunities.

DMOs are often involved in community-based tourism planning initiatives. The majority of BC's community-based DMOs have the primary mandate of marketing their destination, followed by those that focus on all aspects of developing, managing and marketing their destination. A few examples of small and large community-based DMOs in BC include Tourism Abbotsford, Tourism Prince Rupert, Tourism Smithers and Tourism Vancouver.

www.tourismabbotsford.ca

www.tourismprincerupert.com

www.tourismsmithers.com

www.tourismvancouver.com

Chambers of Commerce

Chambers of Commerce represent the businesses in a community. These organizations work to enhance and advance the interests of the tourism, commercial, industrial, civic and general trade sectors. In carrying out their mandates, Chambers of Commerce undertake active leadership roles in by initiating, coordinating, and developing programs for the benefit of the business community. Some Chambers play a direct role in providing visitor services and tourism marketing.

www.bcchamber.org

This site includes a listing of all local Chambers of Commerce.

Visitor Centres

More than 100 communities operate Visitor Centres (VCs) as members of the Tourism BC Visitor Centre Network. These centres provide a wide range of visitor services, including professional visitor counselling, helpful travel information and literature, and accommodation reservations. To complement the

Visitor Centre Network, many small communities also operate seasonal tourist information booths or kiosks. Visitor Centres are typically managed by a community's DMO or Chamber of Commerce.

www.hellobc.com/en-CA/AboutBC/VisitorCentres

Municipal Governments

Municipal governments often play an important role in a community's tourism industry—developing and implementing tourism-related policies, leading tourism planning and development, and managing tourism resources, assets and infrastructure. These include municipal parks, trails, and recreation and cultural facilities. Local governments also play a role in zoning and taxation policies affecting the tourism industry.

Tourism planning and development activities may be carried out by a specific tourism department or officer within the local government, or, more commonly, by an economic development department.

www.civicnet.bc.ca

This site includes links to municipal and regional governments in BC.

Community-Based Sector Associations

Some BC communities and regions have tourism-related sector associations that advocate on behalf of a specific group within the industry. These organizations are made up of similar types of businesses and individuals working together to promote and enhance their regional interests. An examples of this is the Tourism Action Society of the Kootenays.

www.taskbc.bc.ca

Community-Based Organizations

The majority of communities within BC are home to community-based organizations that play supportive roles within the area's tourism industry, including those related to coordinating local festivals and events, coordinating sporting activities, and developing and managing arts, cultural and heritage programs. Examples of these types of organizations include: local museums, sporting clubs and groups, local business associations, and civic society organizations (e.g., Lions and Rotary Clubs). The local branch of Communities in Bloom is another example - through their efforts to support beautification, visitors enjoy a more attractive, appealing community, giving them additional reasons to encourage a visit.

www.communitiesinbloom.ca



Regional Tourism Organizations

Regional Destination Marketing Organizations (RDMOs)

Once visitors have chosen British Columbia as a destination, they still have further decisions to make. RDMOs are the primary marketing organizations for the six provincial tourism regions. A RDMO will often collect and provide visitor statistics, market information, as well as develop advertising and promotional opportunities for tourism businesses. Similar to some community-based DMOs, the six tourism regions have now converted to a stakeholder model from a membership-based model.

www.hellobc.com/en-CA/RegionsCities/BritishColumbia.htm

Regional Districts

Regional districts are often responsible for managing tourism-related resources and infrastructure within, and/or connected to, municipal boundaries, including regional parks, trails, cultural and heritage facilities. In some cases these include unique tourism assets, such as industrial facilities where tourists are welcomed for public tours or educational programs.

Within some areas of BC, the regional district plays a leading role in introducing and enhancing tourism as an option for economic diversification. Examples of these types of regional districts include (but are not limited to) the Cowichan Valley Regional District and the Columbia Shuswap Regional District.

www.cvrd.bc.ca
www.csrld.bc.ca

First Nations Governments

As with regional governments, First Nations governments play a significant role in a community's tourism industry as they are responsible for managing tourism resources, infrastructure and products that exist within, and/or connect to, community and reserve boundaries. In BC, a number of First Nations governments are now working to introduce and enhance tourism as an option for cultural preservation and economic diversification. Two examples amongst many include the Osoyoos First Nations and the Ktunaxa Nation.

www.oib.ca
www.ktunaxa.org

Universities and Colleges (Tourism/ Hospitality Programs)

A wide range of BC post-secondary institutions offer certificates, diplomas and degrees in tourism/hospitality programs. These include hospitality and foodservices operations, adventure tourism/outdoor recreation, leisure and tourism business management, ski and golf resort management and events and conference planning. In addition to providing these educational opportunities, these schools are also great resources for communities, providing qualified graduates to work in tourism businesses, support services for in-depth tourism research, and community-based tourism planning and development tasks.

The colleges and universities below, along with a number of private education affiliates, are partners in LinkBC: the tourism/hospitality education network:



www.linkbc.ca

BC Institute of Technology, Camosun College, Capilano University, College of New Caledonia, College of the Rockies, Douglas College, Native Education College, North Island College, Northern Lights College, Northwest Community College, Okanagan College, Royal Roads University, Selkirk College, Simon Fraser University, Thompson Rivers University, University of Northern BC, University of Victoria, Vancouver Community College, Vancouver Island University and Yukon College.

Please visit www.studytourisminbc.ca to learn more about these programs.





Provincial Tourism Organizations

Provincial Destination Marketing Organizations

Provincial DMOs are market-driven organizations responsible for developing and promoting tourism within each province or territory. They are often industry-led and government supported. Some provinces have stand-alone organizations (such as Tourism British Columbia), while others are housed within an economic development ministry. Their mandates can include marketing, research, visitor services, education and training, product, and industry development. Provincial DMOs are often involved in supporting communities with destination planning and development. Make a point of finding out how they are doing so in your community!

Tourism British Columbia serves as BC's provincial DMO and is described in more detail at right. Other examples of provincial DMOs include Travel Alberta, Tourism Saskatchewan, Travel Manitoba, Tourism Nova Scotia and Tourism Yukon.

www.tourismbc.com

www.travelalberta.com

www.travelmanitoba.com

www.novascotia.com

www.travelyukon.com

Tourism British Columbia

Tourism British Columbia has recently been positioned as a division of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and the Arts. It has a mandate to:



- Market British Columbia as a tourism destination.
- Provide information services for tourists.
- Enhance standards of tourism accommodation, facilities, services and amenities.
- Enhance professionalism in the tourism industry.
- Encourage and facilitate the creation of jobs in the tourism industry.
- Collect, evaluate and disseminate information on tourism markets, trends, employment, programs and activities, as well as on the availability and suitability of infrastructure and of services that support tourism activities.
- Generate additional funding for tourism programs.

Tourism British Columbia is responsible for marketing British Columbia as a destination to the world, as well as providing and managing activities and programs related to:

- The HelloBC reservation system and websites.
- Consumer marketing.
- Visitor services.
- Accommodation services.
- Training services, including Tourism British Columbia's WorldHost@ Program.
- Research services.
- Partnership marketing, including the Community Tourism Foundations programs.

Tourism British Columbia's Community Tourism Foundations Programs provide tourism planning, development and marketing assistance to communities in two components:

1. Community Tourism Foundations Program assists communities to develop a comprehensive multi-year tourism plan. By providing a range of tools, proven resources and customized destination and market development assistance, the program can accommodate the needs of communities in various stages of tourism development. There are three phases to the program: initial assessment, planning, and implementation.

2. Community Tourism Opportunities (CTO) is a province-wide program that provides cooperative funding for eligible tourism activities in communities throughout BC. The program is designed to assist communities that are in a position to implement their own tourism building initiatives.

In addition to the Community Tourism Foundations Programs, Tourism British Columbia offers other services to assist communities and tourism businesses in the cooperative marketing of their tourism products and services.

www.tourismbc.com (corporate site)

www.hellobc.com (consumer site)



BC Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts

The provincial government plays a role in supporting the long-term health of BC's tourism industry. The BC Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts is responsible for fostering the sustainable development of the tourism sector by:

- Developing and implementing strategies to promote BC to achieve significant increases in tourism.
- Advancing product and sector development.
- Issuing Crown land tenures for adventure tourism businesses and all-season resorts.
- Supporting major resort development agreements.
- Managing the provincial system of forest recreation sites and trails.
- Working with industry, not-for-profit organizations and other levels of government to enhance the business climate for tourism growth.
- Undertaking market and trend research by working with Tourism BC to provide policy direction and issues management.

The Ministry works closely with key partners and industry associations to resolve issues, coordinate investments, address challenges, and build strong relationships across the tourism sector.

www.gov.bc.ca/tca

Provincial Sector Associations

Also supporting the industry in BC are numerous provincial sector associations that represent the interests of, and advocate on behalf of, specific groups. These organizations are made up of similar types of businesses working together to promote and enhance the attraction of their businesses. They often work to address provincial issues related to government legislation, business environments, and land-use as they relate to their sector and tourism as a whole.

A few examples of these organizations include (but are not limited to) the BC Lodging and Campgrounds Association, BC Hotels Association, BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association, BC Wilderness Tourism Association, BC Agritourism Alliance, BC Culinary Tourism Society, the Canada West Ski Areas Association, Conventions BC and Cruise BC.

www.bclca.com

www.bcyha.com

www.bcrfa.com

www.wilderness-tourism.bc.ca

www.agritourismbc.org

www.bcculinarytourism.com

www.cwsaa.org

www.conventionsbc.org

www.cruisebc.ca

Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia (AtBC)

AtBC is a non-profit organization committed to growing and promoting a sustainable, culturally rich Aboriginal tourism industry through the provision of training, information resources, networking opportunities and co-operative marketing programs



to First Nations businesses and communities.

AtBC supports tourism planning and development in Aboriginal communities through a number of services, many of which fall under the organization's recently completed Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Blueprint Strategy for BC. These include:

- Tourism education and training programs for Aboriginal communities and businesses to increase their market-readiness and identify new opportunities. This includes the FirstHost program, an Aboriginal tourism workshop where participants learn about the hospitality business and the special importance of the host, guest & place relationship.
- Provincial offerings of the Aboriginal Trailblazers program. This career development program provides Aboriginal youth with the training and opportunity to discover, build and share their unique story at high profile tourism venues in a way that bridges the Native and non-Native worlds, delights visitors and helps develop the Aboriginal tourism leaders of tomorrow.

- Consumer advertising campaigns to increase visitation to Aboriginal tourism sites and attractions.
- Cooperative marketing opportunities through an Aboriginal cultural experiences visitor guide and travel trade marketplaces.
- Career awareness programs.
- Aboriginal cultural tourism authenticity protocols and certifications.

www.aboriginalbc.com/corporate





Provincial Tourism Organizations

Provincial Tourism Industry Organizations

Provincial tourism industry organizations are umbrella organizations that represent a full range of tourism businesses within the industry, and often work in partnership with the provincial tourism marketing authorities. These organizations are instrumental in raising the profile of current industry issues to both the government and industry itself, such as: transportation, infrastructure, air capacity, insurance, research, education, human resources and labour shortage issues.

Examples of these organizations (described in more detail below) include the Council of Tourism Association of BC (COTA), go2 - the resource for people in tourism, and LinkBC (formerly the BC Centres for Tourism/Hospitality, Leadership and Innovation).

LinkBC:

the tourism/hospitality education network

(formerly the BC Centres for Tourism/Hospitality Leadership and Innovation)



LinkBC is the hub for a network of 20 colleges and universities offering tourism and hospitality programs throughout BC and the Yukon. LinkBC partners work

together to promote best practices in tourism education while sharing research findings, tourism knowledge and resources. LinkBC can help communities involved in destination development identify local faculty and students for research projects, internships, and co-op work placements. LinkBC manages special projects, including the development of this handbook.

Another key service of the network is the Tourism Online Resource Centre, www.bctorc.ca, a web

portal that provides tourism and hospitality professionals, students and researchers with 'one-stop shopping' for tourism-related information.



www.linkbc.ca
www.bctorc.ca

Council of Tourism Associations of BC (COTA)

COTA's membership consists of many of the BC organizations mentioned in this section. Its mandate is to advocate for the industry, and to educate government, the business community, and the public on the vital role that tourism plays in BC's economy. COTA supports communities with information and guidance on issues such as transportation infrastructure, air service, mining and forestry, land use, environmental concerns and native land claims. They also offer a risk management and insurance program (www.adventureinsurance.ca) to provide tourism operators with insurance availability at a reasonable cost.



**Council
of Tourism
Associations**

www.cotabc.com

go2 - the resource for people in tourism

This is the central human resources agency for BC's tourism industry. go2 provides a wide range of human resource development information and programs for communities and businesses. Its website has extensive resources covering recruitment, retention, management, and training issues. go2 coordinates a range of tourism career awareness and recruitment activities under as the Move-On-Up™ campaign. It has a comprehensive database of tourism jobs in BC. go2 also serves as the recognized industry training organization for apprenticeship and other workplace-based training.



www.go2hr.ca



Tourism Research Innovation Project (TRIP)

This consortium of academic and industry partners focuses on rural tourism, and is led by Vancouver Island University. Many of BC's most valuable tourism assets are in rural communities throughout the province. Over half of Canadian



tourists, 40% of US tourists, and approximately 30% of overseas tourists visit rural areas in Canada. While this trend is positive, many rural communities often struggle to incorporate tourism in their economic

development strategies. TRIP faculty and students support rural tourism development by:

- Mobilizing information and resources in tourism development within rural communities by engaging in innovative, field based tours and outreach programs.
- Developing an understanding of the realities of rural tourism development by engaging in dialogue with community leaders and tourism entrepreneurs.
- Enhancing community-based tourism by documenting case studies and innovative practices, and sharing them throughout the province.
- Developing a cluster of expertise in rural tourism development in BC by linking academic and non-academic partners.
- Reshaping policy and planning decisions, and education programming, to reflect the needs of tourism development in rural areas.

TRIP students are available to support communities with rapid rural assessments (RRAs) and other tourism development initiatives. The RRA process consists of TRIP students identifying, analyzing and reporting tourism-related conditions, challenges, and choices in order to assist rural communities in tourism-related decision-making.

Project participants are also producing tourism resources that can be helpful tools. Examples include:

- Welcome! A How-To Manual to Enhance Community Signage and Visitor Experience
- Tour Packaging
- Understanding Visiting Markets

www.trip-project.ca



Provincial Tourism Organizations

Other Government Funded Agencies

A number of organizations funded through government sources provide support and assistance to the tourism industry through programs including: tourism funding, business planning and development, and community-based tourism planning and development.

Examples of these organizations (described in more detail below) include 2010 Legacies Now, the Union of BC Municipalities, Small Business BC, and the Community Futures Development Association.

2010 Legacies Now

2010 Legacies Now provides a range of programs for BC communities that support community-based tourism development. These include projects encompassing sports and recreation, the arts, volunteer development and accessible tourism: Examples are:

- Workshops offered in partnership with Tourism BC, addressing how sport tourism can benefit a community and how the sport and tourism industries work together.
- Arts and culture programs that strive to increase community engagement in creative activities, strengthen the arts and culture sector's economic base and organizational capacity, and strengthen the sector's ability to achieve artistic excellence.
- Spirit of BC programs that promote community innovation, pride and excellence, and involve British Columbians in opportunities arising from the 2010 Winter Games.
- Accessible tourism initiatives including the development of an Accessible Tourism Strategy and accreditation rating program for tourism businesses.
- VolWeb.ca™, an online registration tool connecting volunteers with organizations across BC and the Volunteer Centre Opportunity Listings Tool which helps volunteer centres and their members manage their volunteer positions -all online, quickly and easily.



www.2010legaciesnow.com



Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Community Tourism Program



The Community Tourism Program is funded by the provincial government and administered by the Union of BC Municipalities. The Program provides funding support to all local governments for a variety of community tourism development activities. These include:

- Development or upgrading of a community-based tourism plan.
- Implementation of identified tourism activities.
- Marketing promotional tools such as signage, brochures, and websites.
- Visitor information centre improvements, festivals and events.
- Capital projects directly related to tourism.

The goal of the program is to assist local governments in increasing tourism activity that will, in turn, build stronger economies. The Program also aims to help ensure that the Province achieves its goal of doubling tourism in the next ten years, supporting the Province's Spirit of 2010 Tourism Strategy.

Phase 1 of the program has been completed, resulting in a variety of community-based tourism projects in communities across BC. Phase 2 projects are now underway.

www.civicnet.bc.ca

Small Business BC

Small Business BC offers business information and advice to a full range of existing business organizations, start up ventures, and would-be entrepreneurs. Much of this information will be of value to new tourism/hospitality businesses being developed in your community. Services include business planning advice, a research library, workshops and seminars, e-business assistance, a business book store, and international export assistance.

www.smallbusinessbc.ca

Community Futures Development Association

The Community Futures Development Association has supported many tourism-related initiatives throughout BC. It has a mandate (while working with all levels of government, appropriate industry associations and the private sector) to promote, coordinate, and facilitate community economic development initiatives.

www.communityfutures.ca



National Tourism Organizations

Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC)

The CTC promotes Canada to the world. The CTC's aim is to ensure the continued profitability of the tourism industry by positioning Canada as a desirable travel destination. It does this by providing research and other information to the industry. The CTC has developed Canada's current tourism brand message: 'Canada Keep Exploring'.



www.corporate.canada.travel/en/ca

National Product Sector/Trade Associations

These groups are most often networks of provincial/territorial sector organizations working on national efforts to promote and develop key sectors. They are often involved with professional development and raising the profile of their members on a Canada-wide scale.

A few examples of these national organizations include: the Hotel Association of Canada, Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association (CRFA), Canadian Sports Tourism Alliance, Interpretation Canada, and Aboriginal Tourism Canada.

www.hotelassociation.ca

www.crfa.ca

www.canadiansporttourism.com

www.interpcan.ca

www.aboriginaltourism.ca

Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC)

TIAC is the recognized industry authority for national tourism policies. It lobbies on behalf of tourism business interests. Membership benefits include mailings and publications, information on research and partnerships, and discounts to national conferences and forums.

www.tiac-aitc.ca

Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA)

The Canadian Chapter of the Travel and Tourism Research Association is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing the quality and effectiveness of tourism research and marketing. TTRA-Canada fosters the value and use of research in the marketing, planning and development of tourism.

www.ttracanada.ca

Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC)

The CTHRC works to address key labour market issues impacting Canada's tourism industry by bringing together tourism businesses, labour unions, associations, educators and governments to coordinate human resource development activities. The CTHRC has developed more than 50 national tourism occupational standards promoted through its *emerit* brand. The CTHRC also promotes careers in tourism through its national Discover Tourism campaign. Check them out at:

www.cthrc.ca

www.emerit.ca

www.discovertourism.ca



International Tourism Organizations

World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)

WTTC is the global voice for the private sector of the industry. The Council's mission is to raise awareness of the full economic impact of the world's largest generator of wealth and jobs.

www.wttc.travel

UN World Tourism Organization (WTO)

The UNWTO is the leading international organization in the field of travel and tourism. It serves as a global forum for governments with tourism policy issues and statistics. One of UNWTO's activities is the promotion of World Tourism Day.

www.unwto.org

International Sector Associations

Internationally, a number of organizations represent the interests of a specific sector, trade and/or group within the tourism industry. Their 'reach' is intended to be global.

A few examples include the International Hotel and Restaurant Association, The International Ecotourism Society, Meeting Planners International, and the National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations (Geotourism).

www.ih-ra.com

www.ecotourism.org

www.mpiweb.org

www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable

International Tourism Industry Organizations

International organizations address issues and/or improve specific components of the industry, such as marketing, human resources, and peacekeeping.

Two examples of these organizations (there are many!) include the Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) and the International Institute for Peace Through Tourism (IIPT).

www.destinationmarketing.org

www.iipt.org

Remember, you can find all the links to the organizations listed above, and many, many more, at LinkBC's Tourism Online Resource Centre: www.bctorc.ca





Self-Check:

What organizations within your community and region currently, or could potentially, play a significant role in tourism development? Are there any provincial or national organizations mentioned so far you might want to explore further?



How is the Tourism Industry Changing?

As BC destinations consider the best approaches for maximizing the tourism potential in their regions, it is important to understand broad international travel trends. Tourism is a dynamic industry strongly influenced by global political, economic, social, and technological changes. The international downturn in tourism after September 11, 2001 is an especially powerful example of how the industry can be affected by global events.

A more current example is the effect that e-business is having on the tourism industry (see sidebar).

Tourism must constantly adapt to an ever-changing global context, including the fluctuating health of the global economy. The trends listed next are currently influencing BC's tourism industry, and should be taken into account when planning for tourism development within your community:

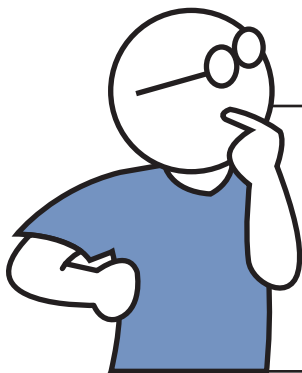
- Demand for shorter getaway vacations.
- Demand for multi-activity, authentic and unique experiences.
- Just-in-time purchases and last-minute bookings.
- More direct consumer decision-making.
- Ever-expanding global competition.
- More emphasis on safety and security.
- Growing interest in learning, volunteer and humanitarian activities.
- Increased heritage, cultural and culinary focus.
- Greater appreciation for clean, green, and natural destinations.
- The need for destinations to demonstrate responsible tourism.
- Fluctuating currencies (e.g., the US dollar) and border security issues.
- Increased travel by groups (e.g., youth, women, men, seniors and families).

E-Business: A Major Shift

Over the past decade, the Internet has experienced rapid growth and has become a mainstream medium. As a result, the Internet is now the primary source for consumers to plan and purchase travel.

The online environment is constantly evolving and word-of-mouth information has gone global, with millions of consumers sharing their travel experiences through blogs and social travel websites such as www.tripadvisor.com and www.igougo.com. In addition, a growing number of consumers are now taking the Internet with them wherever they go, through mobile devices.

Access to online information allows consumers to find directions, restaurants, accommodation, sights, activities and events based on their location, wherever they are - changing the way travellers experience their trips.



Self-Check:

What do you think the implications of these trends might be for your community? Positive? Negative? How might your community and region capitalize on these trends?

What are some current trends in BC's tourism industry? This section looks at three important and emerging sectors: Aboriginal Tourism, Accessible Tourism, and Sustainable Tourism.

1. Aboriginal Tourism

Many First Nations communities in BC are now planning tourism development initiatives, and many BC local governments and tourism businesses are considering how best to collaborate with First Nations partners. Visitors, particularly international visitors, are interested in participating in an indigenous cultural experience. Aboriginal cultural tourism involves visitors travelling to an area for an experience that involves the customs, social structure, and art of an Aboriginal culture. Cultural and heritage experiences (including Aboriginal experiences) are travel motivators for some visitors while for others, they may enhance the overall experience of being in a community and increase length of stay.

By 2012, Aboriginal tourism is expected to contribute over \$50 million to BC's economy, which is a significant increase from the approximately \$35 million it generates today. In BC, the development and marketing of Aboriginal Tourism experiences is managed by Aboriginal Tourism BC (AtBC).

The five goals of AtBC are:

1. To improve awareness of Aboriginal tourism among Aboriginal communities and entrepreneurs.
2. To support tourism-based community, human resources and economic development in Aboriginal communities.
3. To capitalize on key opportunities, such as the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, and other festivals and events, that will forward the development of Aboriginal cultural tourism.
4. Together with other tourism industry partners, to participate in market research and marketing promotion and advertising initiatives and activities that benefit the Aboriginal tourism industry.
5. To improve communication within the Aboriginal tourism industry, keeping industry partners informed of important developments and AtBC's plans and activities and providing them with opportunities to provide input to the association.

In 2006, AtBC completed an Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Blueprint Strategy for BC (Blueprint Strategy), a long-term plan for the sustainable development and growth of BC's Aboriginal tourism industry. AtBC has now embarked on a major initiative to implement the Blueprint Strategy in collaboration with Tourism British Columbia and other partners.

When planning for Aboriginal tourism development, it is important to appreciate there are a number of culturally-specific considerations. The appropriate protocols must be understood and followed when determining how and when to share culture with visitors.

Two useful resources, available through Aboriginal Tourism Canada, www.aboriginaltourism.ca, are:

- Aboriginal Tourism Business Planning Guide: Checklist for Success
- Aboriginal Cultural Tourism: Checklist for Success

The following inspiration profile shares how one community has incorporated Aboriginal experiences into their tourism offerings.



Community Inspiration Profile: Tofino

Creating an Authentic Aboriginal Tourism Visitor Experience

Based in the small, West Coast Vancouver Island community of Tofino, Tlaook Cultural Adventures provides unique, cultural learning experiences for visitors. For six years, owners Doug Wright and Gisele Martin have taken visitors throughout Clayoquot Sound in traditional, hand carved Nuu-chah-nulth canoes. These canoes are built by local First Nations family members Joe and Bill Martin. Types of tours offered by the company include sunset harbour paddles, tours of Meares Island, and salmon BBQ adventure tours.

There are many considerations to take into account when developing Aboriginal tourism products, such as balancing the issues of integrity, authenticity and heritage preservation. Gisele Martin stated that 'We want to respectfully share our culture through fun and educational experiences.' In many cases, visitors to the area are unfamiliar with the Aboriginal history, culture, heritage and current community issues.

By choosing a tour offered by Tlaook Cultural Adventures, visitors have an opportunity to learn about the importance of the local ecology, First Nations family history, spirituality, language, and songs. Tlaook Cultural Adventures is a cultural tourism product that prides itself in sharing the local beauty of the Nuu-chah-nulth culture and being the only experience of its kind in the region. Not only are the trips authentic and the boats hand carved by family members, all guides are also local First Nation members.

As a result of their dedicated efforts to offer a unique, cultural experience to visitors, Gisele Martin was recognized with the Young Adult Achievement Award from Aboriginal Tourism BC. Recently, Gisele and Douglas have experienced steady increases in visitation for their product. They have plans to expand their business to include overnight trips to a longhouse and hope to continue to be a forerunner in Aboriginal tourism.

Tlaook's success has positively impacted Tofino and the surrounding region. Visitors now come to Tofino to learn more about Aboriginal culture in the area and province, and Tlaook is both adding to the overall array of attractions available and enhancing the visitor's overall experience in the community.

*By Richard Giele,
Tourism Research Innovation Project (TRIP)*

**"We want to respectfully
share our culture through
fun and educational
experiences."**



2. Accessible Tourism

There aren't many stones unturned in the tourism industry. One area being developed is accessible and inclusive travel opportunities for people with disabilities, seniors and others who can benefit from similar products and services.

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Accessible | free of barriers, open to all. |
| Inclusive | welcoming and enabling participation from everyone. |

This untapped market has vast potential, and BC communities involved in destination development activities should consider this while in the planning stages.

Take a moment to read the Self Check below: if you answer 'no' to any of the questions, consider the opportunities that come from including an accessible tourism strategy in your community tourism plans.

According to 2010 Legacies Now, people with disabilities (both mobility and otherwise) represent a growing population of travel. The numbers add up: 530,000 British Columbians (of which approximately 400,000 are working-age), 3.5 million Canadians, 55 million Americans, 60 million Europeans, and 700 million people worldwide have some form of disability.

Benefits of encouraging accessible and inclusive facilities and attractions can be extended to other markets such as the growing number of seniors looking for accessible products and services, people with injuries, pregnant women, families with strollers, and friends, family and caretakers of people who have accessibility needs.

The benefits to your community go beyond tourism revenues. By making your community more accessible and inclusive to travelers, you are ensuring a more comfortable way of life for local citizens. You are also providing the opportunity for people with a disability to contribute to their local economy (through jobs).

Initial research suggests there are two keys to successfully incorporating accessible and inclusive tourism into your community:

1. Communicating accurate and reliable information on accessibility so that travellers can make good decisions.
2. Delivering on expectations!

Here are some helpful hints for getting started:

- If you don't know - ask!
- Engage those in the community with disabilities.
- Evaluate accessibility and inclusion in your community through 2010 Legacies Now's Measuring Up framework. Measuring Up is a guide and process that assists communities in assessing and improving how accessible and inclusive they are for people with disabilities and others. Visit www.2010legaciesnow.com/measuring_up/
- Celebrate and promote your successes.
- Promote those businesses that are demonstrating good 'accessible tourism practice'.



Self-Check: Do you know...

- ...what accessible public and visitor facilities exist within your community?
- ...if a visitor with a wheelchair can readily get into your hotels and shops?
- ...if a person with low vision can order from large print menus?
- ... if tourism and hospitality personnel received sensitivity training for providing service to someone with a developmental disability?

2010 Legacies Now, in cooperation with a number of BC's leading tourism organizations, is currently developing an Accessible Tourism Strategy to understand and serve this market more effectively. Key components of the strategy include:

- Conducting an assessment on the current state of accessible tourism products and facilities in BC.
- Market research to better understand the demand and needs related to accessible tourism.

- Development of an online resource centre for communities and businesses in BC to access information on how to upgrade their facilities to be more inclusive.
- Training opportunities for tourism operators.

For more information, visit:

www.2010legaciesnow.com/accessible_tourism/

3. Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable Tourism. Responsible Tourism. Green Tourism. These terms are all now commonly used. They demonstrate that planning for long-term sustainable development has reached a critical point in our society, and must be taken into account by all economic sectors, including tourism. More and more BC communities are recognizing the importance of incorporating sustainability into their tourism economy and businesses. A well-recognized definition of sustainable tourism is:

"Sustainable tourism actively fosters appreciation and stewardship of the natural, cultural and historic resources and special places by local residents, the tourism industry, governments and visitors. It is tourism which is viable over the long term because it results in a net benefit for the social-cultural, economic, and natural environments of the area in which it takes place."

Adapted from Tourism Industry Association of Canada and Parks Canada

Key principles guiding many sustainable and green tourism products and initiatives include:

- Requiring the lowest possible consumption of non-renewable resources.
- Sustaining the well-being of local people through employment and investment.
- Stressing local ownership.
- Supporting efforts to conserve the environment and reducing tourism's carbon 'footprint'.
- Contributing to other local sustainable development and community initiatives.
- Contributing to biodiversity.

A number of initiatives are taking place in BC at the provincial and regional levels to build a sustainable tourism industry, some of which are described next. Communities may wish to check the status of these initiatives and determine how to make best use of their ideas and suggested directions at the local level:

- **Foresight Strategy - Shaping a Sustainable Vision for Tourism in British Columbia**

The Foresight Strategy is the result of three year-long discussions, led by COTA. It presents a vision and strategy for the BC tourism industry as it moves towards sustainability. Foresight has now helped inform a larger group of government, industry and education partners that are creating a wider provincial plan for sustainability in the tourism industry.

- **BC Green Tourism Strategy**

Supported by the BC Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, Tourism British Columbia, COTA and other partners, a long-term 'green tourism' action plan is being developed, building upon efforts commenced by COTA.

- **BC Partnership for Sustainable Tourism (BCPST)**

Building on the work commenced by COTA and other provincial groups, the BCPST is a not-for-profit society that works to ensure the environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability of the sector. It includes government, industry and non-governmental partners interested in tourism's long-term viability. The partnership will:

- Contribute to a comprehensive, province-wide sustainable tourism strategy.
- Develop and track key indicators.
- Implement tourism actions to address climate change.
- Develop incentives program.
- Develop and implement a BC-focused certification program.
- Educate and inform industry and other partners.
- Answer outstanding questions through research.

Wilderness Tourism Association

The Wilderness Tourism Association of BC (WTA) was born out of a need to have an organization that would be focused on land use issues faced by nature-based tourism operators. Today, in addition to the issues of tenure and forestry, the WTA also helps operators with land use conflicts, making park use affordable, and preserving wild salmon. Please visit www.wilderness-tourism.bc.ca



Self-Check:

...How will your community incorporate sustainability into your tourism community planning efforts?

...How does your community meet its tourism development needs today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their social, environmental, economic needs?

...What are your current thoughts about sustainable tourism in your community?

Useful Resources:

Environmentally Responsible Tourism,
Tourism Business Essentials Manual, Tourism BC
www.cotabc.com/publications/cota_publication_details.aspx?id=10

Foresight Strategy,
Council of Tourism Association of BC:
www.cotabc.com/sustainability

Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (partnership of UN,
UNEP, UNWTO and others)
www.sustainabletourismcriteria.org

Green Tourism Ideas and Travel, Green Hotels Assoc.
www.greenhotels.com

Green Your Business Toolkit, Tourism
Industry Association of Canada
www.linkbc.ca/torc/downloads1/green_your_business_en.pdf

Journal of Sustainable Tourism
www.multilingual-matters.net/jost

Sustainable Tourism Practices, TIAC:
www.tiac-aitc.ca/english/sustainabletourism.asp

Sustainable Tourism Practices
World Tourism Organization
www.worldtourism.org/frameset/frame_sustainable.htm

To Wrap Up . . .

Section 3 has explained some of the unique features of the tourism industry. It has provided you with a picture of how the industry is structured and supported—at the local, provincial, national and global levels. It has helped give you a sense of the ‘lay-of-the-land’ by including examples of tourism-related organizations and how they support the industry.

The section also described trends in three specialized areas of tourism growth opportunity - Aboriginal Tourism, Accessible Tourism, and Sustainable Tourism. Now that you have a basic understanding of the overall tourism industry, let's look at some approaches that will help your community or region successfully plan your tourism economy!

Section 4: Ingredients for Successful Community-Based Tourism Planning

In this section, we describe some key ingredients to consider before you begin the community-based tourism planning process. We also introduce key organizations in BC that can assist your community-based tourism planning and development efforts. Sections 5 and 6 will go on to describe some important elements in community-based tourism planning and emphasizes there is no one standard approach to developing your local tourism economy.

Community-Based Tourism Planning

Planning is an essential component of tourism development. It is a way for a your community to work towards receiving the most from tourism in a sustainable manner, maximizing the benefits while minimizing the negative impacts.

The Community-Based Tourism Plan

A community's full tourism potential is usually only realized when individuals work together to create a 'blueprint' or 'roadmap'. A community-based tourism plan is a written document produced by a group of key individuals in a community that represent a broad cross-section of interests related to tourism. The plan provides a framework for business, local government, cultural organizations, other community-based groups and community members to:

- Collectively analyze tourism resources.
- Identify and capitalize on opportunities.
- Address obstacles to overcome.
- Set the future stage for sustainable community-based tourism development and promotion.

Community-based plans can minimize or eliminate the negative impacts that could result from tourism, while optimizing the benefits. Effective tourism planning can be used to balance the economic opportunities with the cultural and natural sensitivities of the area. Community-based plans can also identify the educational requirements and support needed by residents to start their own tourism enterprises or to obtain employment in the region.

In many cases, these tourism plans are a recognized component of the community's local economic development strategy.

More Than One Way: No Two Communities Are The Same

Every community has a different social, cultural, and political history, as well as different organizational structures that shape tourism planning and development in unique ways. Your tourism planning and development process should acknowledge this and be tailored to suit the history and aspirations of your community.

In Sections 4, 5, and 6, we provide you with an understanding of important overall ingredients to assist in successful community-based tourism planning. These ingredients should be considered guidelines, since not all of the pieces may be applicable to your community, nor do they always happen in the order presented. There are as many right ways to plan as there are communities. It is important for those involved to carefully identify what will work best in your situation.

A number of useful resources exist within Canada and internationally that describe the community-based tourism planning process in more detail. These include:

- Community Tourism Foundations® Development Program
Tourism British Columbia
www.tourismbc.com/business_development.asp?id=4566
- Regional Tourism Strategic Planning Manual
Alberta Economic Development
www.linkbc.ca/torc/downloads1/RegionalTourismStrategicPlanning.pdf
- Tourism Toolkit Summary
New Zealand Ministry of Tourism
www.tourism.govt.nz/Our-Work/Local-Government-/tourism-planning-toolkit/
- Tourism Center
University of Minnesota
www.tourism.umn.edu/education/ctd/
- Tourism Community Planning and Development
University of Wisconsin-Madison
www.wisc.edu/urpl/people/marcouiller/projects/clearinghouse/Tourism%20Resources.htm



Points To Consider

- **Funding** is critical to making a community-based tourism plan a reality. Identifying how much funding your community can allocate to the plan should be done before you begin the planning process. The amount of funding your community has for implementation is a key determining factor in the types of tourism development and marketing initiatives you can realistically engage in, as well as the types of visitors you can target and attract.
- **Planning** usually takes much more time than anticipated: it's democracy in action, and the reality is that it can't be rushed. Disagreement, conflict, or division over certain aspects of planning and implementation should be expected, and will take time as participants work toward compromise and agreement. Planning can be a lengthy process. Indeed, individuals need to consider ways to put their own interests aside during the planning process and focus on the long-term benefits to the entire community. This is never as easy as it sounds and those leading the planning process will sometimes need to remind participants of this.

There are few shortcuts to community-based tourism planning, but in the end a good plan emerges when all key issues have been thoroughly discussed and addressed. An effective facilitator/consultant with experience in destination development and knowledge of the strategies required to build necessary partnerships can help. The neutral perspective of such a facilitator can help bring organizations with different points of view together for the common good.

How Ready is Your Community For Tourism?

Before launching into a tourism planning process, the question of whether or not support exists within your community needs to be considered. Support from local government, local businesses, residents, First Nations and community-based organizations is critical to tourism development and can serve as a 'make or break' factor in your success. Community support often determines:

- The attitudes and behaviors of residents and employees that affect the way tourists are treated and their impressions of the community.
- The extent of volunteerism from residents and community-based organizations in tourism activities and events, especially within rural communities.
- The willingness of local businesses to schedule hours around higher volumes of visitors (e.g., weekends, holidays, etc.), to enhance storefronts, and to participate in beautification or tourism development and marketing initiatives.
- The willingness of the community to jointly pool resources and solve problems that may prevent sustainable tourism development.

Some community members are also not aware of the value of tourism, or don't understand how the industry really works. Individuals may be interested in tourism but have not had the chance to learn about its benefits, or have not considered it important to their line of work or position in the community. This attitude can be common in communities that have traditionally relied upon resource-based industries (e.g., forestry, agriculture, mining, fishing, etc.). As a result, a lack of understanding about tourism can cause conflict when tourism development is proposed.

You need to determine how much support for tourism exists within your community! You can do this in a number of ways:

- Getting out and communicating with community members in-person (talking AND listening!).
- Through the media (e.g., newspapers and press releases).
- Holding a preliminary community meeting where local government, businesses, organizations and residents, are invited to share their views and ideas about tourism.
- Community surveys.

Some BC college and university programs have assisted communities (e.g., Merritt, Bowen Island, Clearwater, Hornby Island, and Salt Spring Island) in conducting resident attitude studies to identify and assess local residents' attitudes toward tourism, and the results have been very useful in getting off to a good start.

Keep in mind that educating community members about tourism is not a one-time event! It should be ongoing throughout the planning process and beyond!





Community Inspiration Profile: Williams Lake

Communicating Through 'Casual Country'

Sometimes communities experience a lack of awareness among local residents and businesses about the value of tourism and the types of tourism assets that exist within the area. For over 35 years, one community has taken steps to ensure awareness is enhanced about the local and regional industry.

In 1930, Williams Lake, located in the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast tourism region, began publishing the Williams Lake Tribune newspaper. Readership spans as far East as Likely and Horsefly, as far West as Bella Coola, as far North as Quesnel, and as far South as 100 Mile House.

Every April since 1972, the Tribune has published a special news supplement called 'Casual Country' that coincides with the start of the Williams Lake Stampede, Williams Lake's annual signature tourism event. The first few pages of the supplement are dedicated to profiling many of the events and people participating in the Stampede; however Casual Country then goes on to profile unique people, places, businesses and events, many connected to tourism, that are based throughout the entire Cariboo Chilcotin Coast tourism region.

Every year each community within the region receives - free of charge - copies of Casual Country, sometimes over 100 pages in length. This special edition is then made accessible throughout the entire summer. Casual Country provides an opportunity for regional residents to learn about tourism-related events, people, and businesses making a positive impact throughout their region, all the while supporting the Williams Lake Stampede. At the same

time, the paper gives visitors insight into the unique local culture of the region and provides them with destination and itinerary ideas for further travel. In 2005, the Casual Country edition received the Canadian Community Newspaper Association's 'Gold' Award 'Special Supplement'.



By Brad Goodwin,

Tourism Research Innovation Project (TRIP)



Self-Check:

How do you think the residents in your community feel about tourism?

Are there any 'hot issues' surrounding tourism in your community? If so, what are they?

How could awareness, perceptions and attitudes about tourism be improved?

How is your community using the media to develop public awareness about tourism?

Community Participation: Involving Key Players

Planning and development at the community level allows for a wider range of perspectives to be considered. A community-based tourism plan prepared with widespread local involvement and support will increase community buy-in and encourage community members to take ownership of the process and outcomes.

Involve as many people as possible! A collaborative approach to tourism planning and development will encourage a sense of ownership, while increasing the likelihood that the final tourism plan accurately reflects the priorities, values, and vision of the community. In contrast, a process that doesn't involve widespread local involvement risks dividing the community and sabotaging the final outcome and implementation.

Getting Organized: Put Your Team In Place

While it is essential that a broad range of community members be involved, an initial step is to establish a community tourism planning committee (CTPC) consisting of key tourism stakeholders and local leaders to guide the development and implementation of the community-based tourism plan. Other names for this group include 'tourism task force', 'tourism advisory board', and/or 'tourism steering committee'.

Sometimes...

...the most useful role of a tourism champion is just to convince key community members that a coordinated planning process is essential!



Self-Check:

Who are the key players involved in and/or supporting tourism in your community?

Are they well-organized and working together?

If not, what approaches do you feel might work in your community?

Key tourism stakeholders - or *players* - are those individuals who work in a variety of sectors within the community or region and represent a range of businesses and interests that depend upon tourism. These individuals usually have first-hand knowledge of tourism resources, issues and opportunities within your community.

Members of the CTPC should have some knowledge and expertise in tourism development within the community and should represent different aspects of your current and potential tourism economy such as:

- Local government (e.g., council, economic development, planning, parks and recreation, transportation and/or other tourism-related departments).
- First Nations government.
- Individual tourism operators and businesses.
- Chamber of Commerce and/or other local business associations.
- Destination Marketing Organization, if applicable.
- Visitor Centre, if applicable.
- Non-profit and community-based organizations (e.g., cultural and heritage associations, environmental organizations, etc.).
- Tourism education (instructors/experienced students).

Members of your CTPC will likely have their own network of contacts. Once the group's vision is developed, the CTPC members can be encouraged to draw on these networks for support by acting as the key advocates for sustainable tourism development within your community!

The following two case studies are light-hearted examples of collaborative and non-collaborative approaches to community-based tourism planning. Read the Doomsville and Boomsville stories and see if you notice parallels to your community!

A Tale Of Two Communities

Doomsville ↓

A small group of people, led by one particularly enthusiastic community member, met several times over coffee to discuss ways of diversifying their town's economy through community-based tourism. The group leader had little experience in tourism, but wanted to turn around the declining property values and create employment and investment opportunities in Doomsville. He saw that this could be achieved by developing new economic activities—like tourism—to benefit the whole community.

A reporter from the local paper was invited to an early meeting, and was given a couple of free coffees. Soon after, an article appeared featuring an interview with the group leader and examples showing tourism as a successful economic transition strategy in other communities.

Two members on the local council were approached for support. They decided to become part of the initial activity, and arranged to enlist a consultant friend to help write some draft strategies. Some additional business and association leaders were approached privately for support and asked to put forward their own tourism business development interests for inclusion in a community tourism strategy.

By this time, word was out that there was a tourism development initiative under way, and rumours started flying. The local Chamber of Commerce became concerned that their role in providing visitor services wasn't being considered. The president called the mayor of Doomsville to see what was up. She had heard that something was happening but didn't know the details.

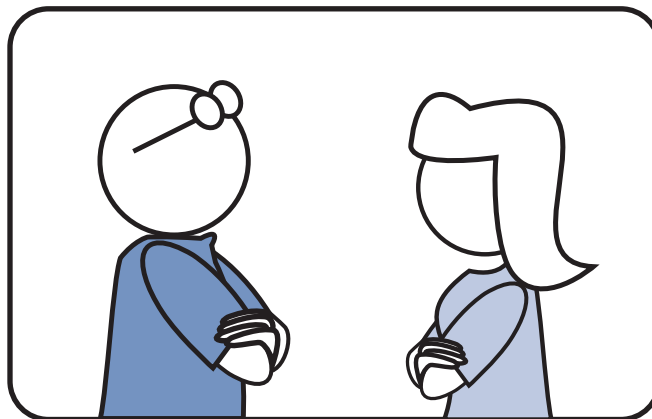
This planning process was initiated without general awareness and with minimal or no reference to existing community plans.

The mayor brought the tourism development initiative forward to council and suggested that municipal staff be tasked with the development of a report to council on the feasibility of proceeding with a tourism development strategy. The Mayor was accused of hijacking the idea for political gain.

After lengthy discussion, a task force was appointed, including members from the original tourism development group plus some

members chosen from other stakeholder organizations in the community. A debate started between the task force members about how to proceed. The original members pushed ahead with their own plans, trying to control the direction of the task force. Instead of optimism and good energy, the room was filled with suspicion and counterproductive feelings.

The tourism task force was appointed without community input.



The process became political...

The task force became deeply divided, and decided to ask council to hire a consultant to develop a plan. The mayor, supported by some councillors, suggested that a consultant would be a waste of money unless some basic goals, objectives, and terms of reference could be established by the task force itself. The task force looked at plans from other communities, and copied parts for the terms of reference. These were presented to the community at a town hall meeting, resulting in a generally negative public reaction. People criticized the lack of integration with existing community plans. The community member who started the whole process accused the critics of being against progress, and left the meeting.

The initial plan put forward by the task force copied ideas from other communities and had a weak local foundation.

After political infighting and much debate, a request for proposals was issued and a consulting company was hired. Because there was inadequate public and political support for the project, the budget was too small to allow for significant public consultation.

Much of the work completed was based on the consultant's earlier contracts in other communities and on statistics gathered from regional sources. In Doomsville itself, the consultant focused on downtown hotel investment because it required less public involvement and reflected the interests of the original tourism group. The task force was divided on the results, and some members complained that the work did not adequately address overall product development, human resource development, and improvement to visitor services.

The consultant suggested that more community input would be required to address these issues. More money would also be required to undertake the work. Because the tourism development issue had by now become political and was dividing the community, the mayor and council decided to leave it alone until after the next municipal election.

Maybe what Doomsville needed was a good tourism champion or two, who understood the community tourism planning process!

Now let's consider a different approach...



A small group of people, led by one particularly enthusiastic community member, met over coffee to discuss ways of diversifying their town's economy through community-based tourism. The group leader had little experience in tourism, but after a recent mill closure, wanted to turn around the declining property values and create new employment and investment opportunities in Boomsville.

He saw that this could be achieved by developing new economic activities—like tourism—to benefit the whole community. A reporter from the local paper was invited to an early meeting, and was informed of the process that was planned. Soon after, an article appeared featuring an interview with the group leader and examples showing tourism as a successful economic transition strategy in other communities.

After the article appeared in the paper, the group leader called the mayor to offer more details. Later, an information meeting was held with council members and a senior municipal manager, who was asked to review the existing official community plan and economic development strategy to see where tourism might fit.

Community champions, very early in the process, created opportunities for community dialogue to develop an understanding of tourism development.

More community members, including the Chamber of Commerce executive and a local First Nations band councillor, were invited to a discussion at a local restaurant, where they were asked to contribute their ideas. Some service club members, local real estate people, and motel and restaurant owners also came. Also invited was a representative from the local college tourism program. An ad hoc steering committee was created, and minutes were taken. The next steps toward developing a communications plan and community consultation process were established, including the formation of a tourism task force.

These community champions were supported by local government, and sought the support of as many community stakeholders as were possible.

A communications strategy was put in place early to inform the community of developments.

The community champion now had lots of interest—and also expectations!

He decided to hire a facilitator and hold a community workshop on developing tourism. This was set up in the Boomsville Elementary School gymnasium, and the presentation was followed by a feedback session where community members could express their views and ideas. A representative from the regional tourism authority also gave a presentation. The official community plan (OCP) and

economic development strategy were referenced, so that new tourism initiatives could be put into context with and then supported by existing strategies.

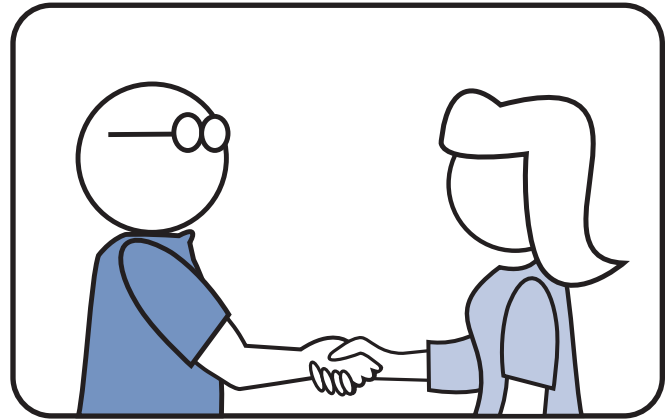
A community workshop was held to build ownership and to determine desirable outcomes for the community.

Social, economic, and environmental objectives were referenced in the planning processes.

Communities drew upon other resources to propel their efforts.

The next step involved analyzing the current tourism situation in Boomsville by identifying and assessing the community's tourism assets, global and regional trends, visitation and current tourism marketing initiatives. A planning session was then held to assess the community's tourism strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as develop a tourism vision statement and measurable objectives and strategies for tourism development in Boomsville. Representatives were invited from key stakeholder organizations, along with members at large from the community who were recommended by participants at the first workshop. Working from the tourism vision, objectives and strategies, a series of tasks were developed and agreed upon by the tourism task force, and responsibility for each task was assigned. Together, these elements formed Boomsville's tourism plan. The planning process established measurable objectives and a reasonable time frame for achieving them.

After the initial workshop sessions, the community established an effective tourism task force with defined roles and responsibilities.



The tourism plan was posted on the municipal website for discussion and community response. After incorporating feedback from the community, the mayor and council approved additional funding and requested that the Boomsville Tourism Task Force lead stakeholders in implementing the plan, in co-operation with the municipality, and other government agencies.

This community got it right!

To Wrap Up...

This section has emphasized the importance of an effective planning process, and provided tips on how tourism champions can help ensure this happens. Section 5 introduces readers to the steps involved in analyzing your community, from a tourism development point of view.

Section 5: Analyzing Your Tourism Situation

A Tourism Asset Is
*...a feature that can
attract tourists and
make their stay more
enjoyable.*

Once a community is organized and has established a committee to guide tourism planning and development, it needs to focus on gathering information and objectively analyzing the current situation to ensure the community-based tourism plan has a solid foundation.

Specific information will have varying degrees of importance depending on the destination, but communities should be aware that the following components are usually important building blocks in analyzing a community's tourism situation:

- *Identify and assess your tourism assets.*
- *Review tourism trends – global, provincial and regional – with the potential to influence visitation to your community, including trends relating to different types of visitor experiences.*
- *Identify and assessing visitors that currently come to your community – visitor numbers, geographic origins, demographics, attitudes, behaviours, spending patterns and, if appropriate, visitor characteristics for tourism products.*
- *Understand what tourism promotion and hospitality services exist within in your community.*
- *Understand what is happening with regards to tourism in your surrounding communities.*
- *Conduct a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis.*

Each of these components are described in more detail in the following sections.

What Tourism Assets Exist Within Our Community?

An essential step in the planning process is to identify community and regional assets that either attract tourists or serve as necessary infrastructure and services for visitors. This inventory should include both existing and potential tourism assets, and should lead to an understanding of your community's strengths and potential for new visitor experiences.

A thorough look at a community's tourism assets can also serve to determine your readiness for tourism. The following are three broad categories:



Tourism Assets

natural and human-made features of interest to tourists

Tourism products often overlap and link to each other. Types of tourism products include:

- Themed attractions (e.g., urban parks, museums, interpretive centres, mini-golf, amusement parks).
- Nature-based activities (e.g., boating, swimming, hiking, kayaking, biking, rock climbing, mountaineering, nature walks, birding, wildlife viewing, horseback riding).
- Parks and natural areas (e.g., botanical gardens, viewpoints, local and regional parks, beaches, trail networks).
- Festivals and events (e.g., culinary, wine or music festivals, aboriginal tourism, heritage, cultural, outdoor recreation, sport, golf and ski events).
- Specialty resorts (e.g., fishing resorts, guest ranches, spa resorts).
- Conference and meeting facilities (e.g., conference centres, accommodation meeting facilities, community halls and facilities).
- Sporting events and facilities (e.g., tournaments, league events, sporting competitions, arenas, gymnasiums, swimming pools, local recreation clubs).
- Golf activities and courses (e.g., tournaments, packages, tours).
- Winter activities (e.g., snowshoeing, dog sledding, snowmobiling).
- Ski activities/facilities/resorts (e.g., alpine and cross country skiing, snowboarding, heli-cat skiing).
- Heritage, arts and cultural attractions (museums, art galleries, heritage sites and tours, aboriginal tourism activities, art tours and displays).
- Food and wine attractions (e.g., wineries, herb and fruit farms, farm-based bed and breakfast properties, circle farm tours, culinary tours, wine and food tastings, culinary events and festivals).
- Learning and volunteer activities (e.g., educational programmed activities related to environmental conservation, community development, spirituality).
- Industrial-related activities (e.g., organized tours to the pulp mill, shipbuilding yard, port facility).





Support Services

all businesses that satisfy tourist needs
These include:

- Guest accommodation (e.g., hotels, B&Bs, hostels, campgrounds).
- Restaurants and pubs.
- Transportation services (e.g., public transit, taxis, ferries, rental cars).
- Parks and picnic areas.
- Tourist-oriented retail operations (e.g. food stores, beer and wine outlets, banks).



Infrastructure

what tourists expect as part of their experience, but do not normally pay for directly. These include:

- Reliable water and power.
- Good roads and easy parking.
- Public amenities (e.g., public restroom facilities, garbage receptacles, bike racks).
- Clean, attractive communities; attractive entrances and landscaping.
- Public art.
- Effective way-finding signage.

What Trends May Affect Tourism Within Our Community?

Trends that influence BC's tourism industry have the potential to affect visitation to your community. It is important you understand these because they reflect how people travel, the types of activities that people want to participate in and their willingness to pay for them.

Trends include: the number and growth of visitors coming to BC, visitor revenue, visitor origin, forecasts of visitor growth, size and growth of different type of visitor experiences (e.g., golf, ski, heritage and culture, aboriginal, wine and food, etc.).

Tourism BC, your regional Destination Marketing Organization, BC Statistics, and/or a local college/university tourism program should be able to help you build a current profile of global, provincial and regional visitor travel patterns and preferences.

What Types of, and How Many, Visitors Currently and Potentially Could Come to Our Community?

Now that you've identified your tourism assets, you will need to match them to current and potential visitors. To start off, you need to determine the types and number of tourists

currently and potentially visiting your community.

Different types—or groups—of tourists are typically known as target markets. Target markets are those you would like to attract in order to successfully develop tourism within your community.

Target markets vary. Each type of market has its own characteristics, including different needs, preferences, and expectations. Markets can also differ tremendously from community to community, within the same region and/or within the same product sector.

Categorizing Target Markets

Geographic

Where your visitors come from. Often different geographic markets will have different interests, expectations, and characteristics. For example:

- BC residents make more trips in BC than other markets; they are more likely to travel throughout all seasons and across more regions than other markets. They accept different levels of market readiness and often like to be the first to “discover” a new destination in their home province. BC travellers are a good target market for many product sectors.
- Other Canadians are also adventurous in visiting new and different places in BC, but less so than BC residents.
- Americans and overseas visitors tend to frequent the more popular places and often seek higher levels of customer service, accommodation, and amenities.
- Many travelers from Germany like to visit more remote places in BC where they can experience unspoiled nature.
- Many Japanese tourists, on the other hand, tend to prefer higher-end accommodation located in central areas close to a variety of attractions.

Distance Of Travel

Often visitors are defined based on the distance they must travel to get to your community. Two terms you may come across are *long haul* and *short haul* travelers.

- *Long haul* travelers originate from far enough away that they generally arrive in Western Canada by air.
- *Short haul* travelers often drive to their destination and originate from the surrounding region.

Demographic

The age, income, and family structure of the visitor (e.g., seniors, families, baby boomers, the youth sports market), which helps define the different interests and preferences of the market, as well as the services required. For example:

- Will someone attracted to quality fly-fishing be a good target for a casino in the region?
- Will that same person be interested in the local heritage attractions?

Guided vs Non-Guided Travel

Whether or not the trip includes an official guide or leader outside of an organized group tour. Definitions for these categories include:

- Fully independent traveller (FIT): a visitor travelling independently and is not part of an organized group tour. FIT visitors can include individuals, couples, families, and/or friends. The level of organization that has gone into the trip can vary, ranging from spontaneous, ad hoc booking of accommodations, transportation and experiences to arranging these prior to arriving in the community.
- Group traveller: a visitor travelling on an organized group tour with an official leader or guide. As a group traveller, a visitor's transportation, accommodation, admissions and meals are typically pre-arranged and included as part of the tour.

Purpose Of Travel

The reasons that certain travellers are away from home and what they are looking for while away often defines the motivations that may generate trips to your area as well as the kinds of services likely to be required. Common trip purposes include:

- Pleasure (vacations).
- Visiting friends and relatives (VFR).
- Business (e.g. work-related field visits, meetings or conferences, or incentive trips that businesses provide to their best clients or employees as a 'thank-you').
- Personal (e.g. weddings or other celebrations, sports events, health reasons).
- Learning & education (e.g., school & educational groups).

Niche Or Special Interest Travel

Special interests and preferences can help suggest ways to differentiate your community, make it unique, and separate it from the competition. Niche or special interest activities include:

- Birding, kayaking, horseback riding, mountain biking, hiking, skiing or other adventure activities.
- Culture and heritage experiences, including Aboriginal cultural performances and art, non-aboriginal galleries and cultural performances, regional cuisine, historic museums, and local festivals and events.
- Learning, health and wellness-focused spa experiences.

Mode Of Travel

How the visitor travels to/in the region. Will they likely reach your destination by car, bus, ferry, air, train, bicycle or foot, or a combination?

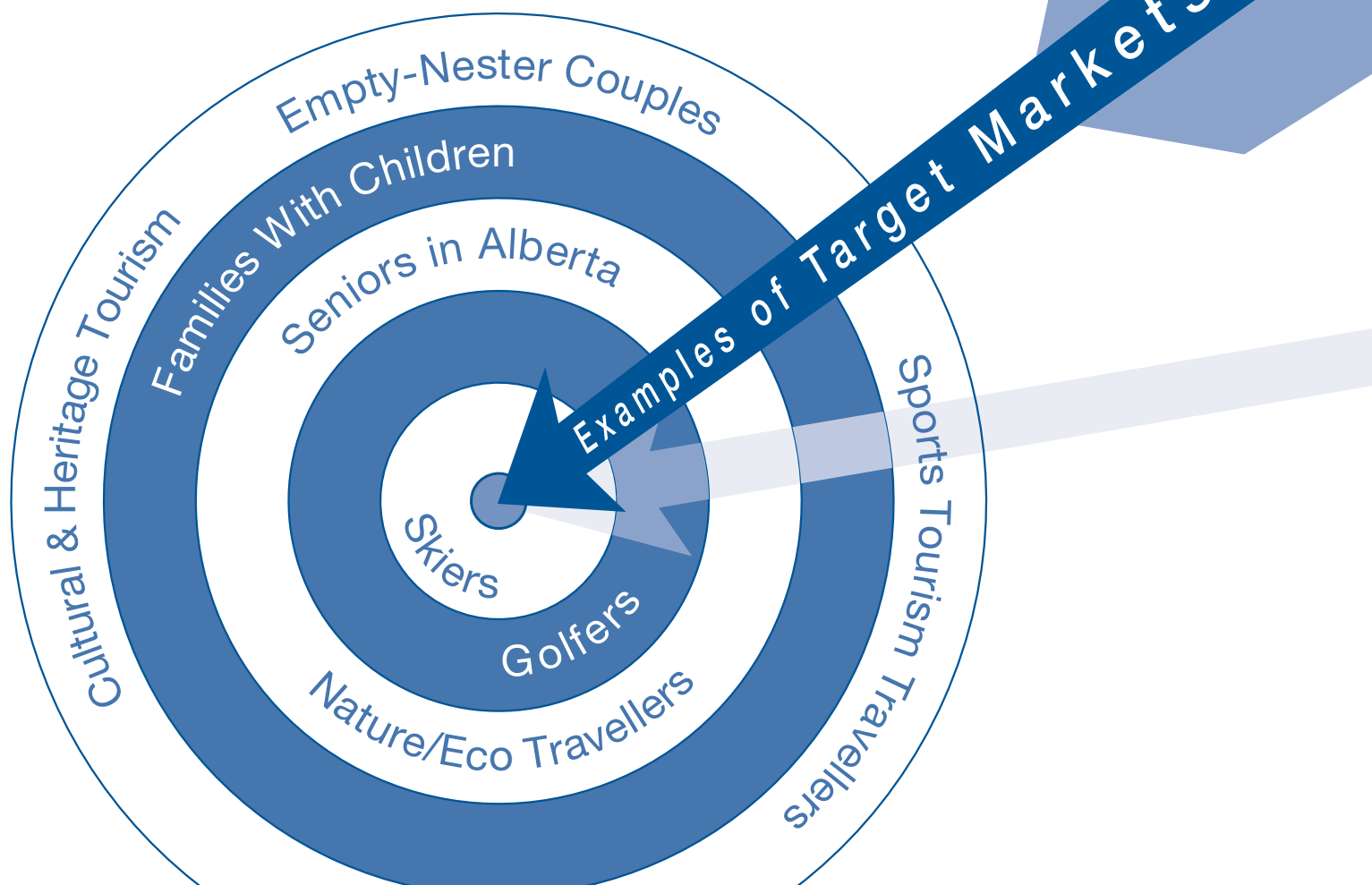
Frequency And Seasonality

Seasons and/or times of travel.

Channel Of Distribution

How potential visitors plan and book their trips. For example, they may be:

- Looking for information and booking through the Internet.
- Using printed marketing materials.
- Using a travel agent.
- Participating in a motor coach tour.



Identifying and understanding your community's current visitor markets is an important element of the overall community-based tourism planning process. Determining who is currently visiting your community can be tricky, especially if there is no single organization in your community collecting information on all visitors. However, you can get an indication of what types and how many tourists your community has welcomed at your local **Visitors Centre (VC)**. The VC is a common place for many tourists to stop to find out more about the community and region.

All VCs in Tourism British Columbia's Visitor Centre Network collect visitor data, including:

- Number of phone calls, mail/fax/email enquiries, visitors, parties, and buses that come to the VC each month and year.
- Where visitors come from.
- How long visitors stay in the community.
- The type of information visitors request.

Other places to look for information about your current visitors include existing organizations, businesses or events that may be more commonly frequented by tourists (e.g., accommodation properties, local museums, and/or special events or festivals). These types of organizations and businesses are likely to track and have an understanding of the types and number of people coming through their doors.

Gathering information on your potential target markets may sound difficult and expensive, but it can actually be uncomplicated and cost-effective. Information collection methods can range from research into travel and product trends, taking the time to chat with existing visitors, and conducting surveys of current and potential visitors. Organizations with information on potential target markets for your community include:

- Tourism British Columbia, Canadian Tourism Commission, Tourism Industry Association Canada and Destination Marketing Organization visitor survey results.
- Tourism programs at universities/colleges (instructor/student research projects for your area).
- Chambers of Commerce.
- Management consultants specializing in this area.
- Visitor Centres.
- Trade magazines and industry periodicals.
- Sector-specific associations (e.g., BC Hotel Association).
- Service clubs.
- Sport and cultural event organizers.
- Economic development corporations (e.g., Community Futures).

There is no one way—or magic bullet—to identify and understand your current and potential target markets, but it is vital you conduct this market research. This will help you to develop suitable tourism products and sound marketing strategies. The more information you collect the better!

Tourism Promotion and Customer Service: How Do Visitors Perceive Us?

First impressions have an impact on visitors. It is important to be aware of visitors' perceptions of your region. What quantity and quality of information about your community can visitors access, and what messages does this information convey? How are visitors to the community greeted and treated?

Have a look at:

- The availability of tourist information (e.g., maps and promotional information, recreation guides, website). How diverse are your information sources and where can visitors access the information?
- The information facilities/centres providing information about your community or region (e.g., information kiosks, a local visitor-focused radio station; promotional TV channel in hotels): are they strategically located where visitors can access them?
- The main promotional piece (such as a visitors' guide) designed to attract visitors to your region. Does this include all of your key attractions and can visitors easily access this?
- Brochures/pamphlets from the regional destination marketing organization and/or product-specific brochures for your community and region (e.g., freshwater fishing, snowmobiling, galleries, campgrounds etc.)
- Web Presence (e.g. community tourism website). How well does this describe your community? Is the information up-to-date?
- Signage within and surrounding your community. Are these strategically located on key transportation routes? Do they clearly direct visitors to attractions?
- Friendliness of community members: are they welcoming and approachable to visitors?
- Supply of skilled, knowledgeable labour force: do tourism businesses and initiatives have sufficient staff to effectively achieve objectives?

By regularly reviewing the above information, you can keep up-to-date on current local tourism developments and on how your region is presenting itself to the world.

Remember ...

reviewing this information will give you a good feel for how your visitors are introduced to your region, but won't make you an expert in promotion or providing hospitable services. Promoting a destination effectively usually requires the specialized skills and detailed knowledge of marketing professionals, and providing hospitable services often requires experience and targeted training.



Self-Check:

Put yourself in the shoes of a visitor...

1. What are the main attractions, messages & images used to promote your destination today?
2. Are they effective? How could the image(s) of your community be strengthened?

Surrounding Communities: What Are Our Neighbours Doing with Regards to Tourism?

From a tourism perspective, communities need to view themselves as being part of a regional setting. Not every community will have sufficient appeal on its own, but may be able to build on the appeal and attractions of surrounding communities and rural areas. For example, a group of communities can develop and market themselves as a corridor, which links one community to the next. In other cases, communities that are not destinations in their own right can still benefit from tourism if they are strategically located to provide services to travellers in the broader region. You will want to complement, not compete with, the tourism products and services within your neighbouring communities.

To do this, you must first find out more about tourism in surrounding communities, including:

- Tourism visions and strategies.
- Key tourism products.
- Key visitor markets.
- Destination marketing investment levels, strategies and tactics.
- Tourism development best practices and lessons learned.

Situational Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

A Situational Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) is an important step in community-based tourism planning. To obtain a realistic outcome, however, it is important that the analysis be undertaken with a truly representative sample of the community.

The “SWOT” analyzes existing tourism trends, assets, products, support services, tourism organizations, visitors, promotional strategies, hospitality services, and surrounding communities. Some communities use variations on the “SWOT” terminology, such as Strengths, Opportunities, Assets and Resources (SOAR) or Strengths, Opportunities and Constraints (SOC), depending on the scope.

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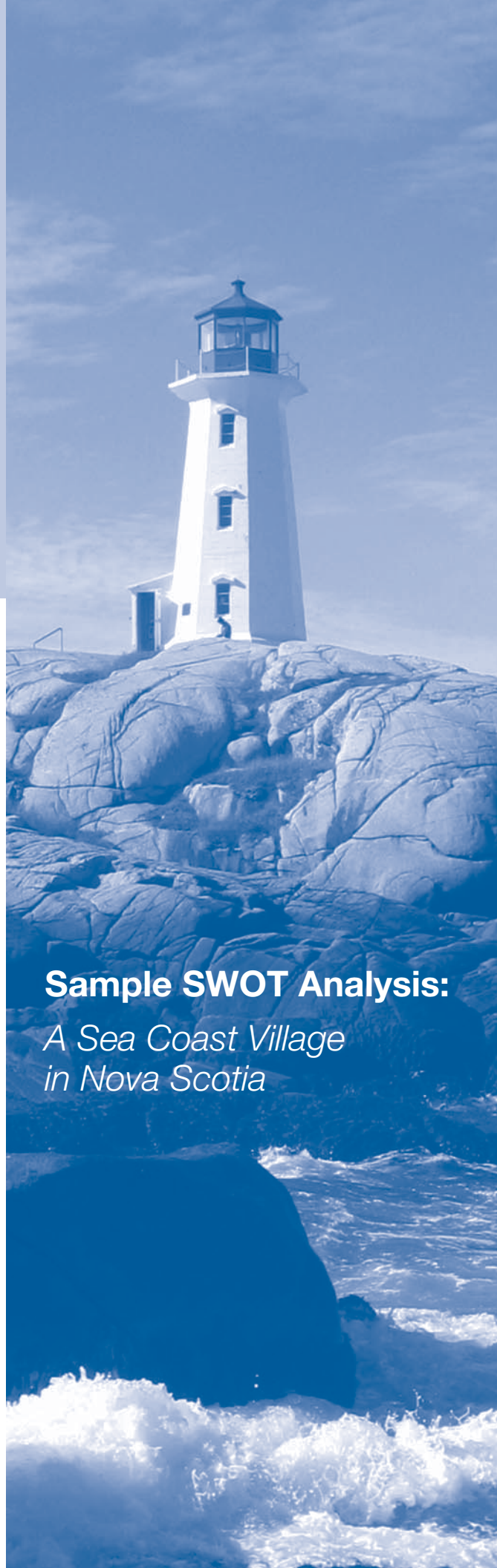
One of the most important outcomes of the “SWOT” is to identify the key destination development opportunities for a community. It will also identify key threats to overcome in product and infrastructure development. For example, a well implemented “SWOT” may suggest the development of appealing new tourism products that will attract visitors. These future products could be:

- A new interpretive centre.
- A packaged tour tying together a number of attractions in the area.
- The creation of a unique special event or festival.
- Development of improved marine/lake or riverfront facilities.

To realize these opportunities, specific threats – or constraints - may need to be addressed and overcome. Types of constraints identified in the “SWOT” could be:

- Lack of volunteers to host special events or festivals.
- Lack of clear and consistent signage to direct visitors.
- Poor/ inadequate infrastructure related to public amenities (e.g. restrooms, parking, docking, garbage receptacles, etc.)
- Lack of skilled human resources to work at tourism businesses.
- Minimal coordination and communication between tourism organizations, resulting in the pursuit of individual mandates.

In order to understand the knowledge that can come from a SWOT, review the following summary results of a community SWOT analysis prepared for a fictitious sea coast village in Nova Scotia.



Sample SWOT Analysis:

A Sea Coast Village in Nova Scotia

A Sample SWOT Analysis For “Sea Coast Village”

| Attractions | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Strengths | Weaknesses | Opportunities | Threats |
| <p>A major nearby historic attraction, with high visitation rates</p> <p>Two small museums in the community with lots of artifacts</p> <p>A brand new, state-of-the-art bowling alley</p> <p>A top quality curling rink that is often used for tournaments</p> <p>Olympic-sizeed indoor pool</p> <p>Excellent tennis courts</p> | <p>Attraction closes after Labour Day as there is nothing to bring people to area in the fall</p> <p>Museum displays are static and haven't been changed in a long time.</p> | <p>Create a family winter weekend package around bowling, curling, and the swimming pool</p> <p>Extend the operating season of the attraction</p> <p>Upgrade one of the museums with new displays and programs and use it as a centre for learning vacations</p> | <p>Continued budget cutbacks mean that the attraction may cut back operating hours and staff; may have to eventually close</p> |
| Parks and Natural Areas | | | |
| <p>Scenic coastline adjoining the community</p> <p>Several white sand beaches, small but high quality</p> <p>Large local community park</p> <p>Wilderness-protected area nearby with unique flora and fauna</p> <p>Coastal waters are excellent for whale watching</p> | <p>No trails or lookouts along the coast; only local residents know the best spots to go for views</p> <p>No access into protected areas at present</p> | <p>Develop a scenic lookout and picnic park</p> <p>Develop a walking trail along the most scenic stretch of coastline</p> <p>Offer a guided hike to see the unique flora</p> <p>Develop a whale watching tour</p> | <p>Local residents very protective of community's beaches – don't want them to get overcrowded</p> <p>Increasing residential development is using up the scenic coastline</p> |
| Festivals and Events | | | |
| <p>A major seafood festival in July brings visitors from all over</p> <p>Labour Day music festival</p> <p>Christmas Crafts Fair (2 week-ends in Nov./Dec.) brings in craftspeople from all over</p> | <p>Music festival is very much a local event and organizers don't think tourists offer any potential</p> <p>Crafts festival is not promoted outside the local area</p> | <p>Develop a new fall festival to attract visitors in October</p> <p>Expand the music festival and market it to tourists</p> <p>Link the Christmas Crafts Fair to family winter weekend packages</p> | <p>Small volunteer base for the seafood festival is “burned out”</p> <p>Opposition from music festival organizers to attempted expansion</p> |

Activities and Tours

| Strengths | Weaknesses | Opportunities | Threats |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>One company has bicycles for rent and gives out a map of the area</p> <p>Coastline and wilderness areas have some great areas for trails, but need local knowledge to find them</p> | <p>No activities that take advantage of the scenic coastline or the wilderness-protected area</p> <p>No hiking/walking trails in the community</p> <p>No tours offered, even though there are some unique and appealing natural resources available</p> <p>Very few activities available for visitors</p> | <p>Whale watching tours</p> <p>Sea kayaking</p> <p>Guided hiking trips into the wilderness area</p> <p>Develop coastal hiking/walking trails</p> <p>Develop packages with accommodations and activities</p> | <p>Community five miles away has a new whale watching tour, with an aggressive marketing program; they are attracting visitors that would normally come to this community</p> |

Support Services: Accommodations

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Two small seasonal companies offer cottages, which are full all the time; company is thinking of expanding</p> <p>A new 10-room inn is opening, and planning to stay open all year</p> | <p>Several small motels with bad reputations</p> | <p>Additional cottages – potentially for year-round use?</p> <p>Prepare packages including the inn and other local activities</p> <p>Training for the management and staff of motels</p> | <p>Bad “word-of-mouth” advertising because of motels</p> |
|---|--|--|--|

Support Services: Restaurants

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Several good, seasonal restaurants</p> | <p>Only one restaurant is open after mid-September</p> <p>No take-out service is available</p> | <p>Encourage the inn to open a full-service restaurant to serve off-season visitors</p> | <p>Neighbouring community has new, acclaimed full-service restaurant</p> |
|---|--|---|--|

Support Services: Visitor Information Services

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Local visitor information centre is open July and August, and does a great job of providing information to visitors; staff is very knowledgeable</p> | <p>No information available outside of July and August, except through accommodations</p> | <p>Provide visitor information at the local gas station and convenience stores</p> <p>Acquire several computerized kiosks to provide information on the community and area</p> | <p>Local municipality is cutting budgets and this may result in a 50% cut in funding to the information centre</p> |
|---|---|--|--|

A Sample SWOT Analysis For “Sea Coast Village”

| Retail Stores | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Strengths | Weaknesses | Opportunities | Threats |
| Several stores featuring Nova Scotia crafts | All stores close at 5:00 pm during the summer season and few are open after Labour Day | Get stores to open on winter weekends when the family packages are promoted Encourage longer hours of business during peak hours | Lack of available staff to keep stores open later |

| Banking, Groceries, etc. | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--|---|
| New grocery store with local seafood department | Liquor store only open part time | Encourage grocery store to offer take-out food, picnic lunches, etc. | Community's only bank may close because of bank restructuring |

| Infrastructure: Roads, Parking, Etc. | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Road into community is very scenic and would be a great bicycle touring route | Downtown is very congested in July and August Main road into the community has only two lanes and is in need of repair and upgrading High accident rate on main road in part because people look at scenery | Develop several pull-offs along the road for viewing scenery Add a bicycle path beside highway | Community is concerned about traffic along main road, and about parking at the beach |

| Human Resources | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| A community member is a highly acclaimed photographer with several published books Two local crafts people won awards at the last provincial craft show Local high school has started a tourism course aimed at teaching students about the industry People are moving to the community because of its scenic appeal; many are retired | Attractions and other tourism facilities find it difficult to stay open after Labour Day because they depend on students for their staffing | Learning vacations based on photography and crafts, drawing on the skills of community members Encourage the older members of the community to work in the tourism sector | Many community members commute to the city and are not available to work locally or volunteer |



Community Awareness and Attitudes

| Strengths | Weaknesses | Opportunities | Threats |
|--|--|--|--|
| A traditional strong sense of community | Local council has been very ambivalent about tourism | Awareness campaign targeting local council and new members of the community to explain the benefits of tourism, using the support of the local newspaper to do a special monthly insert on tourism | New people moving into the community don't want more visitors as they create the very crowds people moved out of the city to avoid |
| Community known for being very friendly and hospitable to visitors | Not sure they are getting any value out of the money they invest in marketing and the information centre | | |
| Tourism has been seen as a positive influence on the community | | | |
| Local newspaper is a strong supporter of the tourism sector | | | |

Industry Organization

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| Regional tourism association is very active in marketing efforts and does a good job | It is not clear what the role of the Chamber's new tourism committee will be – some concern that it will try to duplicate the efforts of the regional tourism association | Make sure there is a minimal amount of duplication of effort between the two tourism committee groups | Council is unwilling to provide money to both the regional tourism association and the local Chamber committee |
| Local tourism businesses are well represented on the board of the regional tourism association | Local tourism businesses would like to see more money available to promote the community | Need to figure out a way for the Chamber's tourism committee to relate to the regional tourism association | |
| The local Chamber of Commerce has just established a tourism committee | | | |

Marketing

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Community is featured in a two-page spread in the regional travel guide which seems to bring in lots of visitors | The community has not done any advertising in the Nova Scotia Travel Guide | Do a co-op, two-page spread in <i>Doers and Dreamers</i> publication | Only limited funding is available for marketing |
| Work has started on a new brochure; the local photographer has offered to donate his efforts to get some good photos | Some of the local tourism businesses are new and very small with few resources for marketing | Finish the brochure and get it distributed for next season | Most of the businesses are small and don't have much money for marketing |

To Wrap Up...

This section highlighted the importance of analyzing your situation to determine what assets, services, and infrastructure you have available. It also covered the need to think about potential target visitors while taking an honest look at your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as a tourism destination. With this background information in mind, let's turn our attention to the process of creating a tourism plan for your community.

Section 6: Creating a Community-Based Tourism Plan

Your community-based tourism plan is shaped by applying the understanding you have about your assets, tourism trends that may impact your community, your visitors, and the story you have to tell. This is the information you have analyzed related to tourism in your community to this point.

Below are additional important factors to keep in mind when moving forward with your community-based plan.

The Bigger Picture: Tourism Development in Context

As a community thinking about tourism development, you won't be starting in a vacuum. You'll want to consider how your local efforts can benefit from, and complement, the significant tourism planning and development that has already happened at the provincial and regional level and quite likely at your local level as well. You'll find this information in:

- Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts: BC's Tourism Action Plan.
- Tourism British Columbia: Strategic Plan and Annual Service Plans.
- Council of Tourism Association: Foresight Strategy - Shaping a Sustainable Vision for Tourism in BC.
- Provincial and regional tourism product development strategies (e.g., adventure, fishing, cultural attractions, heritage, skiing, shopping).
- Tourism plans for regional DMOs and other communities.

As your community learns about tourism, it is important to seek out and be aware of existing plans and strategies. These will help put your work in context, and provide a solid base for development. They can provide templates, lessons learned and other invaluable information so that *you don't have to reinvent the wheel!* Some of these plans are available for you to review on the Tourism Online Resource Centre, at www.bctorc.ca.

What's Already Been Done: Make the Connection

To minimize conflicts with other economic sectors and competition over community resources, tourism planning and development should be linked to and/or take into consideration existing planning and development initiatives that have been completed, or are currently underway, within your community and region. These may include:

- The Official Community Plan (OCP).
- Economic development strategies.
- Parks, recreation and cultural strategies.
- Land use and development plans.
- Community sustainability plans.





Special Issues for Rural Communities

There are some tourism planning and development issues that uniquely impact BC rural communities. The TRIP project, mentioned on page 23, has identified these:

- Tourism assets in rural communities are typically resource-based, so additional government agencies (e.g., forestry, mining, etc.) need to be involved in planning and development processes. This can increase red tape for operators and community leaders, and creates a high need for relationships with various levels of government involvement (e.g., parks, forestry, fisheries, tourism, highways, and heritage).
 - There may be limited investment dollars available in small communities, creating challenges for matching tourism funding programs.
 - A small population base may impact the number of leaders, volunteers, staff, and funding available (when based per capita) to implement tourism initiatives.
 - The isolation and remote nature of rural living increases costs to operate and to travel for tourism planning and development networking purposes.
 - Many rural areas have a decreasing population and shifting demographic structure (seniors moving in and youth moving out). This sometimes creates a shortage of community leaders and available labour pool for tourism initiatives. Rural communities are often further away from potential visitor markets so unique strategies to build awareness and draw visitors are required.
 - There is often a lack of understanding and experience with tourism at the community level, which inhibits development potential.
 - Overall, many rural tourism products are less developed and are not 'market ready'. This impacts the visitor experience. There may be also a lack of communications infrastructure (e.g., high speed internet, cell phone service) that severely limits operators to become 'market ready', or for visitors to feel connected to home while traveling.
 - In many areas, there is a lack of understanding of the value of tourism and the role local government could take in diversifying through this industry. This impedes the efforts of local tourism champions and can create political tension.
- Rural communities that build these considerations into their planning process will have a much better chance for success!

Rural Tourism Resources:

- Tourism Research Innovation Project, Rural Tourism Resources: www.trip-project.ca
- Canada's Rural Partnership www.rural.gc.ca
- Rural Secretariat www.agr.gc.ca/policy/rural



Elements in a Community-Based Tourism Plan

Building on your tourism-based community analysis, your plan should include a number of elements, such as:

- ✓ **1. Community Tourism Vision**
Presents the desired future state of your community as a tourism destination.
- ✓ **2. Tourism Objectives**
Quantifiable results your plan will deliver.
- ✓ **3. Tourism Strategies**
The broad direction the community will take in order to achieve your objectives. For each of the following broad areas, specific tactics (short-term actions) and implementation plans should be outlined in advance:

3a. Organizational Structure

The structure you will use to bring your community together under the banner of tourism planning.

3b. Funding Sources

The ways you will finance your community tourism plan.

3c. Target Markets

The types of visitors your community wants to attract. This includes primary and secondary markets based on geography, demography, and activity of the visitor.

3d. Target Length of Stay

The ideal length of visit your community would like to elicit from visitors. Depending on your community's mix of attractions and amenities, this could range from overnight getaways to longer vacations.

3e. Brand Positioning

A statement clearly declaring how your community will be positioned as a tourism destination, followed by a rationale for the statement. This statement will inform subsequent product and marketing strategies.

- ✓ **4. Product Development**
The types of product your community will offer and market to the visiting public.

4a. Shaping Your Story: Providing Unique Experiences

A process by which your community creates high-interest, authentic products.

4b. Prioritizing Product Development Opportunities

Looking at proposed business or tourism products and determining whether or not these fit within your community's tourism vision.

4c. Partnerships and Packaging

Creating winning combinations of clean, comfortable accommodations, good food, and a range of enjoyable activities suitable for your target markets and target length of stay.

- ✓ **5. Destination Development**
The strategies your community will use to address infrastructure and policy issues around human resources, visitor services, and more.

5a. Welcoming Visitors: Tourism Support Services

Ensuring your community is ready to welcome the new-found guests you'll be attracting.

5b. Effective Signage

Ensuring visitors can comfortably navigate your community and its surroundings.

5c. Human Resource Development

Putting the focus on people so that your guests' experiences are second to none.

- ✓ **6. Promotional Strategies**
Now that your community has established products and a destination experience, these strategies will attract your target visitors.

6a. Marketing Distribution Channels

The range of means by which you might reach your audience.

6b. Online Presence

An essential component of any destination promotional strategy.

6c. Travel Trade Shows and the Media

Opportunities to exhibit and promote your destination to (primarily) international markets.

6d. Cooperative Marketing

A way to access the power of larger organizations such as Tourism British Columbia.

6e. Strategic Marketing Partnerships

Cooperation with the 'competition' whereby the sum of the whole becomes greater than the parts.

- ✓ **7. Research and Evaluation**
Measuring against the overall quantifiable objectives as well as evaluating individual tactics.

The following pages outline these community-based tourism planning components in more detail.

1. Community Tourism Vision

A community tourism vision is the future state your community wants to achieve by becoming a tourism destination. The vision reflects your community's values, principles, attitudes and lifestyles as they relate to tourism development, and guides the development of your community-based tourism plan.

Here are two examples of community tourism vision statements – one for Tourism Dawson Creek, located in the Northern BC region, and one for the Corporation of Delta, located in the Vancouver, Coast and Mountains region.

2006-2016 Tourism Dawson Creek Tourism Development Plan Tourism Vision

That Tourism Dawson Creek can be recognized as a provincial leader and innovator in destination development and marketing while leading the City of Dawson Creek towards sustainable economic growth and development utilizing the tourism industry.

Delta Tourism Strategy 10 Year Vision

Delta is recognized for its vibrant tourism industry, with its three communities collectively offering unique and diverse rural, natural, and cultural tourism experiences in outstanding settings.

2. Tourism Objectives

Objectives should be broad, realistic and achievable, yet challenging, within a specific timeframe and measurable. Typically, objectives are stated as number of visitors, or visitor revenue by a certain date. If absolute numbers of visitors are difficult to obtain, indicators can be used, including increased numbers of visitors based on a selected sample of tourist sites in your community, number of enquiries, etc.

3. Tourism Strategies

Strategies describe the direction the community will take to achieve the stated objectives. Strategies often look longer term and may not change from year to year. Tactics, which form part of the implementation plan, are short-term actions to achieve the implementation of a strategy.

The following sections describe the key types of strategies that will be important to include in your community-based tourism plan. While each of the types of strategies is discussed separately, they can be inter-linked.

3a. Organizational Structures

Your community needs to decide which structure for leading and managing tourism development will best meet your needs. All key tourism stakeholders should be involved in deciding the most effective approach.

The type of organization structure that is most appropriate for a community is dependent on: existing tourism organizations, the tourism knowledge and staff within these organizations, existing and potential funding sources for tourism development, and the needs of the community. The structure that you choose should be able to:

- Boost communication and coordination levels between all key tourism stakeholders.
- Effectively set and implement tourism priorities.
- Create and allocate tourism resources.
- Minimize duplication of efforts.
- Conduct outreach with community members.

Too often tourism development and marketing is done from the "side of someone's desk". Regardless of the structure set up, you want to make sure that there are adequate resources (e.g., time, staff and funding) for tourism development. If funding and resources are not in place, there is a very high likelihood that your community will not reach its full tourism potential!

Some current community-based tourism organization structures in BC include:

Destination Marketing Organization (DMO)

A common and typically effective organization structure is a single, independent destination marketing organization (DMO), responsible for developing and implementing tourism marketing and development priorities. Typically, a DMO is set up as a not-for-profit society. Cooperation, coordination and communication between tourism stakeholders is enhanced through representation on a Board of Directors.

Department Within The Local Government

Some local governments are directly responsible for developing and implementing tourism initiatives and marketing priorities within a community or region. Such responsibilities can fall under the planning or economic development departments, or be recognized as a separate department. It is important with this model that sufficient time and resources are dedicated to effectively undertake tourism development initiatives. Sometimes a tourism advisory committee is set up to provide guidance to staff.

Department Within The Local Chamber Of Commerce

Some communities have established committees within their local Chamber of Commerce to take responsibility for tourism development, marketing and/or visitor services. A range of key tourism stakeholders should be represented on the Chamber tourism committee, including local government, tourism businesses, tourism associations and other community-based

organizations. Depending on the size of the tourism industry or the size of the Chamber, there could be dedicated tourism staff or tourism could be one of many responsibilities of a staff member.



Community Inspiration Profile: Prince George

Tourism Structure Linked To An Economic Development Body

Tourism Prince George is a division of Initiatives Prince George. Initiatives Prince George (IPG) is a municipally-owned corporation mandated to undertake programs and projects designed to grow and diversify the local economy. To achieve this mission, the corporation is engaged in a dynamic, integrated marketing program encompassing investment attraction, trade development, tourism promotion and film recruitment. IPG also takes a proactive role in assisting with the completion of major business deals with strategic value for Prince George. The city approves an annual

budget for IPG, which in turn funds the efforts of Tourism Prince George (including the operation of the Visitor Centres). This local government supported, but “arms length” arrangement to support tourism is also found in a few other BC communities such as Chilliwack.



3b. Funding Sources

Finding funding to implement a tourism plan is often one of the biggest challenges a community faces. Because dollars for community tourism development can be sourced from a variety of provincial and local sources, both the types of funds and suitable approaches will vary widely. Therefore, it is important to carefully identify the appropriate potential funding sources for your community. Here are some important questions to consider when addressing funding issues:

Local Funding Sources

- What options are available from local and/or regional levels of government? Can a multi-year commitment (based on deliverables) be obtained?
- Can local business organizations provide advice and/or assistance?
- What opportunities are there for hotel room tax revenue to support tourism development?
- Is your community eligible for funding through the 2% Additional Hotel Room Tax (AHRT) program?
- Will a stakeholder or membership revenue generation model be suitable? (Important reminder: some tourism DMOs are moving away from the membership model to avoid the administrative costs of managing the membership. One way this revenue can be generated is by providing partnership advertising opportunities).
- What options are available for the municipality to contribute revenue on an ongoing basis? Some resort communities collect a percentage of business license fees to reinvest in promoting the community as a tourism destination.
- Are there innovative fundraising activities you can implement to generate funds?

Most of these local sources of sustainable funding require a considerable amount of discussion, education and negotiation before the benefits to the overall community are fully understood and accepted.

Important Reminder! Some communities have struggled because their well thought-out tourism plans were developed in isolation from other community development efforts. There is a much better chance of securing the necessary funding for destination development if the tourism plan is recognized by, and incorporated into, an official community plan or the community's wider economic development strategy. Through other community development efforts (e.g., downtown beautification and business improvement efforts), there might also be strategic partnerships and funding opportunities with the municipality, neighbouring DMOs or a business improvement organization that will support your overall goals. Examples could include: improved way-finding signs, information kiosk improvements, a seasonal street banner campaign, a new community plaza or square, or a regional cooperative marketing campaign.

Provincial Funding Sources And Networking

What provincial funding sources are currently available? These programs often change, so check websites regularly.

Make sure you find out what has worked for other communities! Phone around. Look at the UBCM website at www.civicnet.bc.ca to determine what other types of projects local governments in BC have undertaken with their Community Tourism Funds.

Key Contacts

- Often a mayor, MLA, or other senior politician can make a difference in moving a community tourism plan forward. Arrange a meeting to discuss ways in which these individuals can potentially support tourism development in the community.
- Be well prepared with your vision and a convincing case for the value of tourism in your region. Make sure the senior politician understands the potential return on investment. Take some senior community leaders with you to support and discuss your plan and request support from different perspectives!

3c. Target Markets

The target markets your community identifies as priorities will directly determine what products and experiences you develop. You need to think about the types of markets that have potential to grow (e.g., geographic, demographic, activity-based target groups, etc.) and what these markets will want and need as part of their travel experiences.

Today's successful destinations—whether urban or rural, large or small—ensure they are noticed by the right visitors by paying attention to their key target markets and providing what these visitors are looking for. On the next page are two examples of this: Golden and the Parksville/Qualicum Beach region on Vancouver Island.

Golden

Located in the Kootenay Rockies region, Golden has been successful in targeting a number of niche outdoor markets. Golden promotes itself as a pristine pocket of western wilderness and capitalizes on its spectacular natural landscapes and resources. As a result, the community attracts:

- Cyclists who travel the celebrated “Golden Triangle” – a 330+ km cycle loop through the Canadian Rockies - or mountain bike their way over hundreds of miles of alpine trails that the area has to offer.
- Skilled whitewater kayakers and rafters who surf the rapids of the Kicking Horse River that tumbles through the BC’s Kicking Horse Canyon and joins the Columbia River in Golden.
- Avid birdwatchers who hope to view some of the over 230 bird species that live in or migrate through the Columbia River Valley and Wetlands.
- World-class rock climbers who explore the surrounding mountains.
- Hang and para gliders who challenge themselves on Golden’s acclaimed Mount 7.



Parksville/Qualicum Beach

This tourism region includes Parksville, Qualicum and surrounding beachfront and rural communities (including Nanoose Bay, French Creek, Lighthouse Country, and Arrowsmith Coombs Country). The area mainly attracts leisure travelers, including retirees, couples, families and the VFR (Visiting Friends & Relatives) market. Visitor origins include other parts of Vancouver Island, BC, and Alberta. Tourism leaders identified that the needs and expectations of individuals in each of these markets can be quite different. For example, one spouse may prefer golfing, while the other indulges spa activities. Parents may prefer to relax and read on the beach, while their children make sandcastles and go beachcombing.

Based on this information, Parksville/Qualicum Beach has focused on being a “get-away” region that provides “all the perks, conveniences and services of urban living in crowd-free, rural beachfront settings.” As many of the region’s markets originate nearby and stay for one or two nights, Parksville/Qualicum Beach also promotes the area as being able to “fill a day’s itinerary with more activities and less travel time.” Visitor experiences they have developed include:

- Get-away golf packages targeted at specific markets, such as Albertans travelling during the shoulder seasons.
- Destination beach villages where visitors can wander, shop, sightsee and dine out.
- Luxury spa activities at the internationally recognized Grotto Spa, Tigh-Na-Mara Resort, ranked the number one spa in Western Canada.
- Outdoor recreation activities, such as marine wildlife viewing, hiking and cycling.
- Cultural attractions, such as artist studios, museums, heritage sites, gardens, and farms.
- Community festivals, such as the renowned Parksville Beach Festival and Brant Wildlife Festival.



3d. Target Length of Stay

The longer visitors stay (overnight) within a destination, the higher the visitor spending, impacting the economic benefits derived from tourism. Some questions to consider when developing strategies related to length of stay include:

- How long does each of your current visitor markets typically stay within the community (e.g., day visits, 1-2 nights, 7-8 nights, etc.)?
- What are the likely reasons behind each visitor market's length of stay? Examples could include:
 - *Your Visiting Friends and Relatives market typically tends to stay longer within a community due to the nature of the stay.*
 - *Some of your regional market currently makes day trips because they originate from communities or an urban centre only one hour's drive away.*
 - *Your visitors from another province might travel to your community via a short flight and stay between two to four nights.*
- Is there potential to increase the length of stay of some current markets through product development or promotional activities?
- Is there potential to increase length of stay by attracting new target markets? Is there the right mix and variety of visitor experiences offered in the community to increase length of stay?
- What products and visitor experiences can be packaged to increase the length of stay?

3e. Brand Positioning

Brand positioning – or destination branding – is a process where a destination works collectively to differentiate itself from other competitive destinations within the tourism industry and communicate a promise of an experience to visitors.

Brand positioning should:

- Provide direction for product development.
- Capture the attention of target markets.
- Provide an emotional attachment to a destination or tourism products.
- Connect tourism products within the destination.

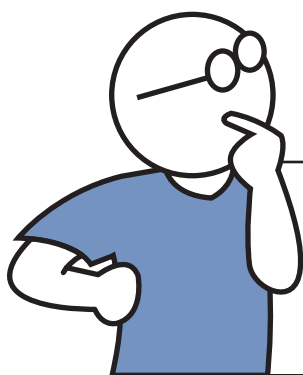
The tourism experiences and products the community chooses to develop, the quality of accommodation, the type of customer service provided; all these factors contribute to its brand. The brand is communicated outside the community through marketing materials depicting a specific image of the destination, and just as importantly, should accurately reflect the visitor experience in the community.

The brand image reflected in marketing materials should not over-promise what the visitor will experience. If one or more stakeholders “break the promise” and do not meet the expectations set by the brand, a visitor can have a poor experience, may not return, and may speak negatively about the destination.

The branding process typically starts with the development of a positioning statement – a statement that succinctly states how a destination differentiates itself from other destinations. The positioning statement is often prepared based on consumer research to determine what is really compelling and meaningful about the destination. The positioning statement is not a tagline or a slogan – rather, it is used as an internal resource to drive decisions around product development and marketing.

The positioning statement is then used as the basis for creating a logo, tag line or slogan, and establishing the look and feel of marketing materials.

Continue to page 59 for examples of local tourism-related brands.



Self-Check:

What are the best ways to identify and reach our target markets to promote our community-based tourism industry?



Community Inspiration Profile: Osoyoos

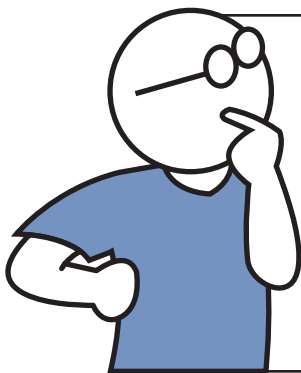
A Branding Promise: Canada's Warmest Welcome

An example of a rebranding and marketing strategy to attract more visitors and business investment can be found in Osoyoos and the partnership between the Town of Osoyoos and Destination Osoyoos (the community's Tourism and Economic Development agency).

The town recently unveiled a large billboard launching the community's new logo and tagline: Osoyoos—Canada's Warmest Welcome. "Our new brand better reflects Osoyoos today and will carry us forward as we continue to plan our careful growth to become one of this province's premiere resort destination communities," said Osoyoos Mayor John Slater.

The rebranding project involved nearly a year of extensive consultation with visitors, travel trade and industry professionals, local tourism and business groups, municipal and regional district officials, and the Osoyoos Indian Band. "This new brand builds on our strengths as we transform ourselves into a true four-season destination - our unique desert environment, our privileged lakefront location and the small-town friendliness of our people," said Destination Osoyoos CEO Glenn Mandziuk.

Osoyoos is undergoing major tourism growth, and to capitalize on this growth, additional funds are being invested in new tourism marketing and product development initiatives. These new funds are generated from a portion of the provincial hotel room tax that will now flow back to the community for tourism marketing. Other communities can be inspired by this BC desert town. The community has demonstrated leadership by collaborating with First Nations partners, attracting new funding sources to promote their destination, and carefully developing a brand that challenges the industry to live up to its promise.



Self-Check:

What are the main visitor experiences that currently attract people to your community?



Local tourism-related brands:



Examples of provincial and national tourism brands:



Although extremely important, branding can be a long, complicated and expensive process. Your community will want to find a person with marketing and branding expertise who can guide you through the process and get to know your community's values. The process, if well-facilitated with buy-in from different stakeholders, can build collaboration, local pride and vision.

4. Product Development

Your community's success in developing a tourism industry will strongly depend on your ability to offer high-quality visitor experiences—tourism products and experiences that meet the needs and expectations of visitors. A thriving tourism destination creates year-round travel generators that capitalize on a community or region's unique strengths and resources, and are supported by good strategic packaging and marketing programs.

The following sections highlight important elements to consider while developing and marketing tourism products to the right type of visitors to your community.

4a. Shaping Your Story: Providing Unique Experiences

The travelling public is constantly changing. In order to attract tourists, a destination has to offer experiences of interest to sufficient numbers of visitors. Beautiful landscapes no longer offer enough appeal to more than a very limited number of visitors, especially as most communities in BC have beautiful surroundings. Many want to visit places where they can participate in activities or become involved with local residents. They want to return home with unique memories of experiences that are different than what they can find elsewhere.

In order to offer high-interest authentic products, you need to draw on your unique cultural, historical or geographic assets to shape the story that your community tells its visitors, stakeholders and residents. You need to assess the growth potential for specific tourism products and prioritize product development opportunities.

We can provide tips on how to prioritize product development opportunities, but, before we do this, remember to develop high-quality tourism products that build on the unique strengths of your community or region! This will create an authentic experience for the visitor and differentiate you from other tourism destinations.

**“The industry cannot
do what it
wants to do,**

but needs to do what the visitor

wants it to do. A competitive

edge is maintained by those

who best understand the wants

and needs of the visitor, and

then deliver on these.”



Community Inspiration Profile: Sicamous

Ready For All Seasons

Building year-round tourism products is a very difficult task for most communities. Sicamous, a town of less than 3,000 people at the confluence of Shuswap and Mara Lakes, has recently had success tapping into the winter snowmobile market. The community is located approximately halfway between Vancouver and Calgary and brands itself as the “Houseboat Capital of Canada” because of its well-established success as a summer houseboating base.

The main challenge for Sicamous was to expand its tourism season (which was only six weeks long in the summer). Members of the Sicamous Chamber of Commerce realized that this limited season was providing tourism revenue for an unacceptably short period. They began to look at ways of extending the season and enhancing their tourism products by building on existing recreation strengths. Snowmobiling was identified as an activity that locals enjoyed within the community, and therefore an option for product development. Initially, as is often the case with these situations, it was met with opposition from some community members. These local “sledders” (snowmobilers) did not want a large influx of tourists to interfere with their own enjoyment of the surrounding hills.

To overcome this opposition, the Chamber of Commerce held public meetings to find out how people felt about developing winter recreation and snowmobiling. They were able to show that having a snowmobile market would be a win-win situation resulting in better trail access and grooming, protection of riding areas and new revenue for the community. In this way they were able to gain the support required to develop the winter snowmobile product.

Once snowmobiling was identified as a development opportunity and community support was obtained, the next stage was to search for funding for specific initiatives, including purchasing grooming equipment, training people on use and maintenance, and mapping the trail system. A staff member was dedicated to sourcing funds (from many sources) allowing the project to proceed much faster and easier.

Sicamous businesses have recently seen a solid increase in winter traffic. Local hotels and restaurants have benefited as sledders will often come in on a Friday night, spend the weekend, and head home on a Sunday or Monday. The area has gone from virtually zero winter tourism to a growing snowmobiling sector, and is starting to include other winter activities such as

cat skiing and cross country skiing. In addition, since the inception of a winter tourist season Sicamous has been able to transition their branding beyond “Houseboat Capital of Canada” to also include “Recreation Destination for all Seasons.” This inclusive slogan can also be used to build spring and fall traffic.

Sicamous has shown that for communities to expand their tourist seasons they need to identify local assets that can draw visitors, concentrate on developing a limited number of those assets, have a dedicated organization and person to source development funds, and ensure good communication and buy-in from all stakeholders.

*By Cameron Rauschenberger
Tourism Research Innovation Project (TRIP)*



4b. Prioritizing Product Development Opportunities

Product development involves looking at proposed business or tourism products and deciding whether these are realistic opportunities for development within your community. Identifying opportunities for product development might also focus on determining the impacts and sustainability of having large numbers of tourists visiting the destination.

Key questions to consider when determining priorities for product development include:

- What is the extent or amount of resources (e.g., natural, cultural, social etc.) available to support the product?
- What is the quality of the resources (e.g., natural, cultural, social etc.) from an activity or tourism perspective?
- What pressures could be put on the resources as a result of developing the product (e.g., increased traffic, visitor use of local recreational facilities) that need to be taken into account? How can these be mitigated?
- What is the ease with which the product can be accessed relative to the distance, safety, terrain and parking?
- How many months or seasons during the year can the product be offered?
- What is the importance of the product relative to your community's existing visitor markets?
- Does the product fit with regional, provincial and global trends related to activity participation?
- How many types of visitor markets does the product appeal to?
- What is the potential of the product to attract new visitors or increase length of stay given existing market profile and market trends?
- What are the current and anticipated competitive businesses and products?
- What are the estimated costs of developing the product (e.g., a new inn, marina, camp site, museum)? Are these costs within reach of available development funds and credit?



Self-Check:

What are some new “visitor experiences” that might be ready to be developed in your community or region?

What are some potential impacts of developing these experiences?

Is the proposed idea possible and sustainable with regards to land-use regulations and constraints related to the physical development, technology, and workforce?

4c. Partnerships and Packaging

A great holiday results from a combination of clean and comfortable accommodations, good food, and a range of enjoyable activities that meet the needs, motivations, and expectations of the visitor—in other words, an appealing package of diverse experiences.

Packaging involves effectively combining two or more goods or services into a single experience sold for a single price. Creating effective packages is a challenging and time-consuming task, but the rewards can make it worthwhile.

Visitor experiences such as festivals, heritage sites, a delicious meal, museums, parks, a lake known for fishing or swimming, or even great shopping can be “packaged” with accommodation to add further appeal and extend a visitor's stay in your community. The right combination leads to additional money being spent on services and amenities in the community. Therefore, for your tourism plan to be most effective, it is important to:

1. Create visitor experiences, based on market demand.
2. Assess ways to create revenue from visitor experiences.

A good community-based tourism plan considers and then identifies potential partners for developing products to help strengthen the overall attractiveness of the destination. Each package item could have different suppliers (partners) but should be built around the interests of a particular type of visitor.

Beyond the physical elements of a package, businesses in a community may be able to offer additional services to augment an *experience* for the visitor. For example, a fishing tackle shop can go beyond simply selling bait and lures and invite local fishing enthusiasts to offer guided trips.

In tourism, a visitor's experience is the sum of all the parts: the attractions, accommodations, services, people, food, tours, transportation, weather and activities. In developing tourism products, it is important to deliver on visitors' expectations of the whole experience.

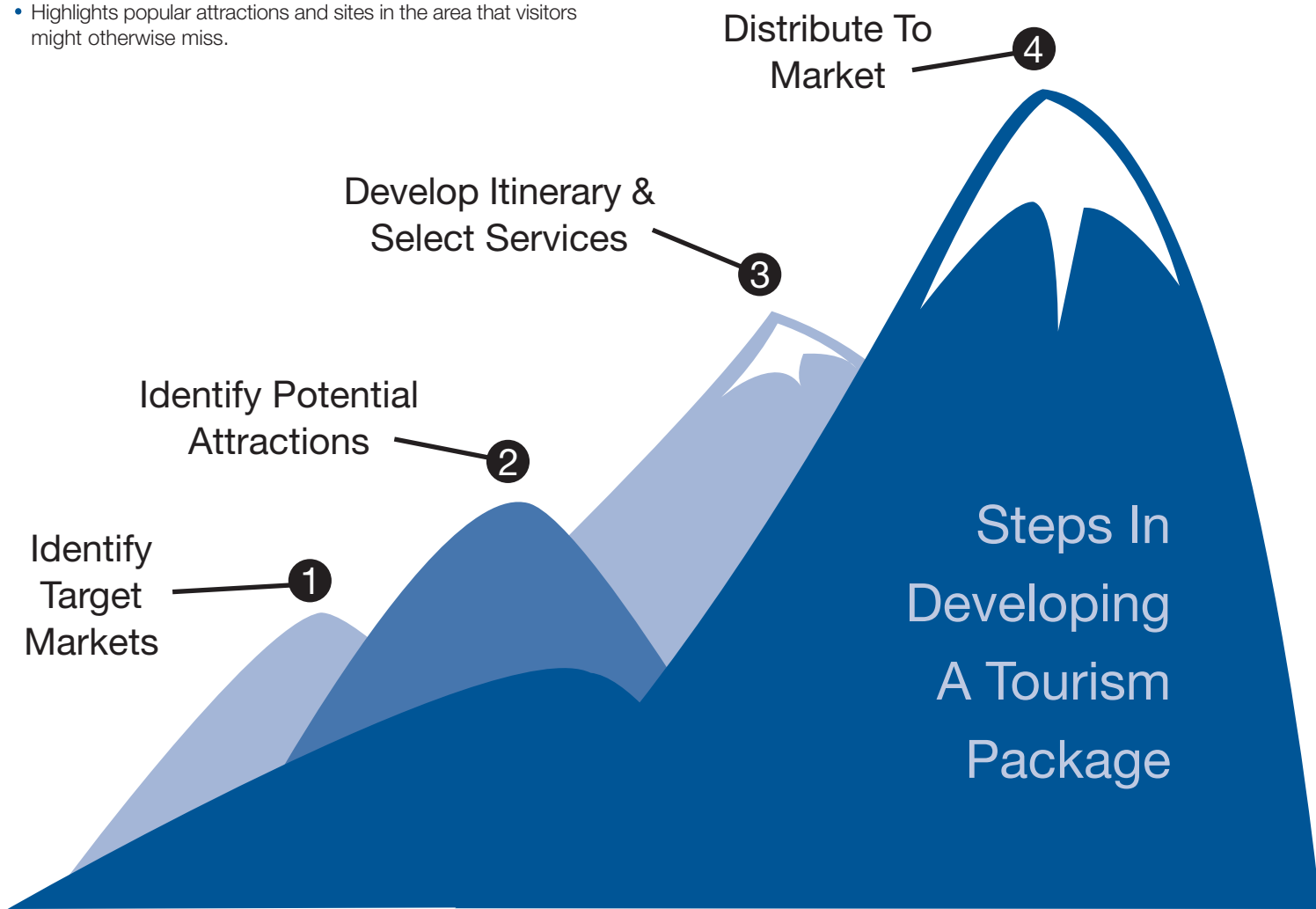
Be sure that you do your homework first to ensure there is a market for the package that you put together.

Benefits Of Tourism Packages

- Increased profitability, by capturing a greater share of the tourist dollar.
- Strengthened business links, by offering opportunities to work with other businesses for mutual benefit.
- Expanded marketing opportunities, by helping to bring visitors to smaller businesses/attractions unable to advertise on their own.
- Improved target marketing, by focusing a well-designed package of goods/experiences to a specific market.
- Savings, realized through shared advertising costs.
- Increased accessibility, by helping to sell products during slow times of the year.
- Increased convenience, as user pays for the package at one outlet.
- All-inclusive price provides ability to budget at a known cost, is usually better value, and often offers a discount.
- Highlights popular attractions and sites in the area that visitors might otherwise miss.

Packaging Tips for Success

- A package needs to be well planned, coordinated, and reliable—in other words, market-ready.
- Include key attractions (e.g., key motivations to visit such as special events or weekend getaways).
- Price your package competitively; emphasize its value.
- Ensure that your package is profitable.
- Provide consistent value/quality for money. Deliver more than expected: under-promise and over-deliver.
- Design the package to be compatible with the target market.
- Provide a distinctive customer benefit.
- Cover all the details (e.g., refund/credit policy, dietary needs, wet-weather contingency).
- Always have a back-up plan in case of unforeseen circumstances.
- Download and read *Packaging Unwrapped* by Reiko Allen, Tourism Research Innovation Project (TRIP)
www.linkbc.ca/torc/downloads1/PackagingUnwrapped.pdf





Community Inspiration Profile: Cowichan Valley

Grape Escape: a packaged experience

What makes an effective package? How does a rural region attract new tourists? How do local communities in a region best promote their businesses? Questions such as these are not easy to answer, but one Vancouver Island model of success is found in the Cowichan Valley Grape Escape.

The Cowichan Valley Grape Escape is an example of an effective partnership between communities, local businesses, residents, national organizations and private business sponsors who have come together to provide a unique packaged experience capitalizing on the region's local strengths and assets. The event not only promotes the region but also supports a great cause.

The event began in 2002 as part of the nationwide Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Bike Tour, and has become an incredible success. This "packaged" opportunity now attracts over 200 cyclists for a one or two day biking tour of the region to raise funds for the MS Society of Canada. For a single price, cyclists are provided with meals, accommodations, snacks and refreshments, as well as an opportunity to leisurely experience the Cowichan Valley region on bike via quiet back roads and the diverse, rural communities of Brentwood

Bay, Shawnigan Lake, Mill Bay and Cobble Hill. Riders have numerous opportunities to stop along the way and visit a wide assortment of interesting local artisans, wineries, specialty food merchants, and local parks.

There are numerous national and local level sponsors, dozens of volunteers and event organizers, and over twenty points of local interest along the way for this well-run weekend



event. The Grape Escape has been so successful that recent events have been sold out months in advance. Organizer Anne Muir stated "our biggest challenge for the future is that we are getting too big!"

At the local level, sponsors contribute to the tourism growth of their community, volunteers are taking pride in the community, and local businesses have the opportunity to sell and promote their rural products to a wider market.

The Cowichan Valley Grape Escape serves as an inspiration for other communities wishing to develop new packages to support their community tourism action plan.

By Richard Giele

Tourism Research Innovation Project (TRIP)



5. Destination Development

Your community must develop strategies to address infrastructure and policy issues around human resources, visitor services, and more. The following sections highlight important considerations when developing destination infrastructure.

5a. Welcoming Your Visitors: Tourism Support Services

Once visitors arrive in your community, they will likely have a number of questions that need to be answered:

- Where to stay?
- Where to eat?
- What to do?

They could also be seeking directions and other information about your area. Making sure quality visitor services are readily available and ensuring that guests receive a warm welcome is an essential part of the tourism infrastructure. This can have a significant influence on how long visitors stay, how much they might spend while in the area, and how they'll describe their experience to others (i.e., potential future visitors).

The Key Role Of Visitor Services

It's important to provide easy-to-find information on specific services and local attractions. Many towns that focus on tourism have centrally located Visitor Centres (VCs) with staff trained to answer questions about the community and local area.

The VC may be either a stand-alone facility (e.g., a building such as a heritage structure or vintage red caboose) or part of an existing operation (e.g., the main hotel, a gas station, or chamber of commerce office). Visitor Centres can be costly to develop; therefore, it is important for you to determine the most suitable and cost-effective type of visitor services to provide in your community. Instead of a Visitor Centre, some smaller communities may choose to have unstaffed information kiosks and clear, highly visible maps and signs to encourage visitors to stay.

For many tourists, the VC is the first point of contact with the community, and will strongly influence first impressions. Planning for visitor information services is therefore extremely important.

Key Elements Of Visitor Centres

- Well-located and central.
- Excellent signs directing visitors to key attractions and the community's centre (downtown).
- Professionally designed tourist-oriented map of the community and region, including reasons and incentives to stay.
- Inventory and good distribution of tourism-related brochures for community and region.
- Effective regional interpretation program (e.g., exhibits, interpretive signs, plaques, brochures, murals, historic photos).
- Training and regular upgrading to provide skills and knowledge to visitor information counselors.
- Booking services so visitors can make their purchases on the spot.

Planning For Visitor Services

- Assess the best locations for visitor services. The ideal location is at a high-traffic community gateway where it is easily visible and has prominent signs, easy access, and free parking. **Sometimes, the existing location is not the best!**
- Collect key information of specific value to visitors. Provincial/territorial tourism agencies and other regional destination marketing organizations will be able to help with this. Consider partnering with other VCs in surrounding communities in order to provide regional information.
- Consider development of a community-wide cultural/heritage interpretive strategy and implement elements of this local flavour at the VC to provide visitors with a real "sense of place".
- Develop effective methods for collecting data from tourists who use the information centre. Tourism British Columbia can provide you with guidance. This data will help in creating visitor profiles and in determining what kinds of information and services tourists are looking for. Recording this information over time will allow you to observe any changes and respond accordingly, perhaps by updating the community tourism plan. This kind of data becomes invaluable market research.
- Ensure visitors' expectations regarding technology needs are met (e.g., good cell phone coverage and free access to e-mail and high-speed Internet is now expected).



Self-Check:

How well do we welcome visitors to our community today?

How can we welcome and inform our visitors in the most effective way?



Community Inspiration Profile: Merritt

Volunteers Provide a Deep-Rooted Welcome For Visitors

Historic Baillie House is in downtown Merritt, 2.5 hrs north of Vancouver. Merritt is a town of approximately 8,000 residents and promotes itself as the "Country Music Capital of Canada". Each year the Merritt Mountain Music Festival brings in over 70,000 people to the area, mostly from the Lower Mainland.

Visitor information services for Merritt are provided out of the Baillie House property which is managed by The Nicola Valley Heritage Society. The Heritage Society has operated Baillie House since 1998 as a public green space and heritage site and it now features a visitor's information booth. The booth is staffed by paid and volunteer local residents. Visitors enjoy a unique local experience, because staff have lived in Merritt their entire lives and have an incredible, deep-rooted bank of regional knowledge to draw upon and share. Free tea or coffee is also offered at Baillie House which entices visitors to spend more time learning about Merritt and the Baillie House itself.

For the Heritage Society, recruiting committed volunteers to work at the visitor's booth has been cost effective. Visitors enjoy listening to these local characters and, as a result, many have been convinced to stay an extra day in Merritt. The local knowledge offered by Baillie House volunteers is an excellent complement to the regional and provincial information provided at the Tourism BC Visitor Information Centre just on the edge of town.

Merritt has effectively demonstrated how valuable residents can be in creating an authentic experience for visitors.

*By Cameron Rauschenberger
Tourism Research Innovation Project (TRIP)*



Community Inspiration Profile: Kootenay Rockies

Everything you want to know while on the go!

Kootenay Rockies is one of six tourism regions in BC, with a number of communities and attractions nestled in beautiful mountainous settings. Visitors are now able to learn more about the region through a unique online tool.

In the ever-changing tourism industry, destinations are faced with increasing pressure to offer quality services to ensure their region is represented and promoted to its fullest potential. Technology is advancing rapidly and more travelers are connected with personal computers, smart phones, and personal digital assistants. They use the Internet to get information about a destination, to plan, book, and reserve their holidays. Today, we are living in a "need-to-know" and "want-access-now" society where people receive information and plan as they go.

The personal computer is still the most popular way to access information in Canada; however, Internet access via mobile phone is starting to outpace the personal computer in countries such as the United Kingdom, Japan, and Korea. These three countries are key visitor markets for the Kootenay region. To meet the needs of these visitors, Kootenay Rockies Tourism has developed a full online travel

information service targeted at mobile users (www.kootenayrockies.mobi). "This is the ultimate tool for flexible travel. Mobile web sites will revolutionize the way travelers experience a destination", stated Chris Dadson, President of Kootenay Rockies Tourism. This visitor information tool was the first of its kind in Canada.

The online travel information service allows tourists to receive detailed visitor information on products and services within the Kootenay Rockies region and to "hot link" to websites and phone numbers of those tourism operators, resorts, and activities in which they are interested.

A number of future applications include accommodation and dining reservations, event ticket purchasing, tee time booking at golf courses, and last minute discounted tee time broadcasts.

Communities throughout BC need to be thinking about the net-savvy traveller. The ability to easily access information about the Kootenay Rockies Region while on the go is bringing the region to life and influencing more travelers to explore the area.

*By Richard Crowley
Tourism Research Innovation Project (TRIP)*



Note: The Kootenay Rockies Inspiration Profile on the previous page showcases a new approach to allowing tourists to access visitor information. Although providing information to target markets in this manner is not necessarily a current priority for most communities, the profile is so tech savvy, we could not pass up sharing it with you. Before communities think about implementing similar creative new programs, make sure you have all your other main visitor services in order! This means a well-functioning destination website, effective marketing strategies and strategically located visitor services that provide adequate information to tourists (e.g., Visitor Centres, booths, maps, visual displays, etc.).

5b. Effective Signage

Signage for visitors is one of the most common issues identified by communities involved in tourism development. Visitors can have excellent maps, more than one set of good eyes and be attentive drivers but still get easily lost and confused in communities with outdated or inadequate signage.

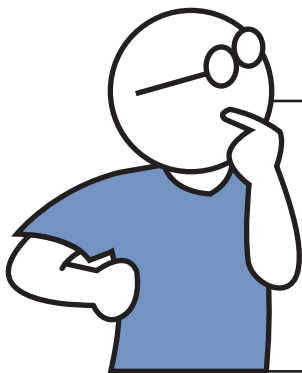
An effective signage program not only attracts visitors and provides direction and information, but it also plays a critical role in linking visitors to the “product” or experiences within the province. Signage is the final link in the marketing process and must be considered an essential part of the product development process.

A popular term that is related to signage is “wayfinding”. Wayfinding signage helps to prevent you from getting lost. Appealing visitor-focused signs compatible with local character that conform to national or international standards will be better understood and accepted by visitors from different countries and cultures.

Types of tourism and services signs include:

- Welcome and entrance signs: keep your message strong and uncluttered.
- Guide, directional and information signs: ensure these are large enough.

- Services and attractions signs: position these separately from your welcome signs.
- Tourism-oriented direction signs: ensure these are on all main routes.
- Logo signs (signs with company logos or business names that show motorist services can be found along the highway, such as gas, food and lodging): ensure these are placed in areas that give visitors enough prior notice to find and stop at the service they need.
- Interpretive signs: make sure there is adequate parking to entice visitors to stop.



Self-Check:

What visitor information services currently exist in your community or region?

Who provides these services? What is working well? What improvements could be made?



Community Inspiration Profile: Likely & Xatsull

Effective Signage Shows The Way

The small central interior villages of Likely and Xatsull in the Cariboo provide an excellent example of a coordinated signage program. Together, the communities have developed a series of signs to introduce visitors to the tourism assets within their community forest region. They use consistent colors to complement another set of regional Gold Rush Circle Tour signs.



The signs direct, inform and educate at different locations, are impressive in stature, and provide a sense of permanence. From the roadside, they beckon visitors to get out of the car and learn more about the attraction.



Once stopped, there is a covered area to protect visitors from the elements. The surface area provides a “no glare” view of the information and photos are used to interpret the area and its significance.

Additional signage is used on back roads in the area to remind visitors that they are on the right track and provide details such as GPS location information. Features include a mock Post-It board to catch the visitor’s attention and provide important “notes” for a safe journey.

These communities have realized that effective signage is a key element of any community-based plan.

By Rachel Huber

Tourism Research Innovation Project (TRIP)

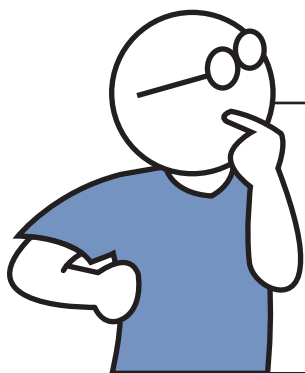
Useful Resources:

Welcome! A How to Manual To Enhance Community Signage and Visitor Experience.

www.trip-project.ca

Service & Attraction Sign Manual: A Directional Signing Program for Tourist Services, Facilities and Attractions.

www.linkbc.ca/torc/downs1/service_attract_manual.pdf



Self-Check:

What signage improvements could be made in my community and region?

5c. Human Resource Development

Effective community-based planning is grounded in a realization this industry is all about people serving people! That's why building a professional workforce to sustain tourism is a major part of community-based planning and development.

No tourism industry can be successful without a strategy for human resource (HR) development and training, and today, this is more important than ever! BC is facing a serious shortage of skilled tourism workers, impacting our ability to compete as a top tourism destination. Some of the main causes behind this shortage are an aging workforce and declining birthrates. Based on industry growth patterns, it is estimated that BC's tourism industry will need approximately 85,000 additional skilled workers in the next decade; that's an average of one new job every hour for the next 10 years!

Many communities forget to include human resource development and training strategies in their tourism plan, or don't give it sufficient attention. Don't let yours be one of them!

In our industry, consistent, quality service for guests is a critical ingredient, and this often becomes a company or community's competitive advantage. Front-line service staff are the central feature of the visitor's experience. Ensuring happy visitors depends on a friendly, professional and consistent approach to meeting and exceeding their needs. Owners, managers, and supervisors also need to be provided with effective educational opportunities to build their own people-management talent. Owners, in particular, need to demonstrate good leadership and business management skills. They need to be innovative thinkers to stay on top of the continually changing tourism marketplace.

We all have our customer service horror stories! The main question is, what level of skills, knowledge, and attitude (also referred to as core competencies) do staff members (at all levels) need to do their tourism or hospitality jobs in a competent fashion?

go2 – The Resource For People In Tourism

Fortunately, you don't have far to go for to get assistance related to your HR needs. Canada is considered a world leader in tourism human resource development and you can easily access excellent



information from go2 – the resource for people in tourism, www.go2hr.ca, one of the country's provincial/territorial tourism human resource councils. These councils are affiliated with the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC), www.cthrc.ca, which has built a global reputation for responding effectively to industry's HR needs with a variety of products and services.

go2 is a non-profit industry association that works to address issues related to BC's tourism labour shortage and assists the industry to recruit, retain and train employees. It is involved with:

- **Tourism Career Awareness.** With the support of industry, go2 coordinates an advertising and PR campaign called MOVE ON UP™ with a career in tourism. The multi-year campaign informs youth, their influencers, and under-represented labour groups about the value of tourism and employment opportunities within the industry.
- **Research and HR Planning.** go2 coordinates regional labour market research around BC and assists regions to develop strategic human resource plans to address labour shortages.
- **Educating Employers about HR Best Practices.** go2 educates employers on HR issues such as recruitment, retention, training and legal issues through the go2hr.ca website, e-newsletter, articles in trade publications, and regular presentations at industry events.
- **Industry Training Initiatives.** go2 was selected by the Industry Training Authority to take on a training mandate for the cooking, baking, and meat cutting trades. PROPEL, go2's industry training division, defines needs, sets industry training and occupational standards, measures training results and directly interfaces with training providers.
- **Advocating for Policy Changes.** go2 works with other industry associations and all levels of government to address foreign worker and immigration policies as part of the strategy to deal with labour shortages.



As your regional CTHRC representative, go2 also provides job standards and skills training for nationally recognized occupational certification. National certification (known as emerit: www.emerit.ca) is available through the CTHRC for the following occupations:



Banquet Manager

Banquet Server

Bartender

Campground Operator

Casino Dealer

Casino Slot Attendant

Catering Manager

Director of Sales and Marketing

Door Staff

Event Coordinator

Event Manager
 Food and Beverage Manager
 Food and Beverage Server
 Food Service Counter Attendant
 Freshwater Angling Guide
 Front Desk Agent
 Golf Club General Manager
 Guest Services Attendant
 Heritage Interpreter
 Housekeeping Room Attendant
 Hunting Guide
 In-room Dining Server
 Kitchen Helper
 Line Cook
 Night Auditor
 Outdoor Adventure Guide
 Professional Cooking
 Reservation Sales Agent
 Retail First Level Manager
 Retail Sales Associate
 Sales Manager
 Ski Area/Resort Operations
 Small Business Owner/Operator
 Snowmobile Industry
 Supervisory Skills
 Taxicab and Limousine Driver
 Ticket Agent
 Tour Director
 Tour Guide
 Tour Operator
 Tourism Essentials
 Tourism Supervisor
 Tourism Trainer
 Tourism Visitor Information Counsellor
 Tourism Visitor Information Supervisor
 Transferable Skills
 Travel Counsellor
 Wine Server

Many BC colleges and universities also offer tourism/hospitality education and training. When hiring, you should consider committed graduates of these programs first, as these students have made a commitment to tourism as a career and have been acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes to help them achieve this goal. Visit www.studytourisminbc.ca for these schools.

Human Resource Issues

Major tourism HR challenges that often need to be addressed, whether or not you are facing a labour shortage in your community, include:

- **Tourism Benefits**

A strong awareness of the benefits of tourism is often lacking in communities. One approach to increasing awareness is through short presentations followed by discussions on tourism and its importance. Regular community awareness initiatives are an important part of any community-based tourism plan.

- **Overcoming Seasonal Part-time Challenges**

Many tourism jobs are seasonal because there is no product or package in the off-season to generate employment. Sometimes, summer and winter businesses (e.g., a golf club and a ski hill) may be able to partner to ensure staff are employed year-round.

- **Recruitment**

Now more than ever, it is difficult to attract the right staff. Businesses have to present an attractive work environment and appealing conditions to attract good staff with the desired qualifications.

- **Retention**

A common challenge in tourism positions is higher than acceptable staff turnover. Successful businesses figure out the type of environment staff want to work in, and which incentives build loyalty and encourage staff to stay with their company. Management needs to ensure they are knowledgeable about current best practices for retaining staff.

- **Training**

Once a business has attracted the right staff, they must provide training in properly representing the business and providing excellent customer service. This takes planning, time, money, and commitment. Regular training has proven to be a profit-increasing investment for a company to make. go2 and BC colleges and universities can help employers and managers learn what it takes to train effectively.

Customer Service Training: WorldHost® Training Services

A key building block for community-based tourism HR planning and development is the regular offering of effective customer service training. BC is fortunate to have an internationally-renowned program, available to your community: Tourism British Columbia's WorldHost® Training Services (formerly SuperHost).



This program offers a range of workshops and customized training programs, which have proven to be effective in BC, and are purchased for use in many provinces, states and other countries! Workshops are interactive and led by certified trainers who cover valuable skills that are easily adaptable to all types of customer service roles. To arrange for WorldHost® Training Services in your community, or to find out more, please visit:

www.tourismbc.com

Don't Ask,

"What happens if I train my staff and they leave?"

Instead, ask,

"What happens if I don't train my staff and they stay?!"

6. Promotional Strategies

Tourism is an increasingly competitive business and, while markets are growing, visitors are also becoming more demanding. The increased ease of international travel, competitive airfares, and the growth in exotic destinations mean that tourists can travel to a wide variety of interesting and different destinations with relative ease. Your community needs to put itself on the map! You need to create awareness about your community's tourism products and services by developing creative promotional strategies that attract visitors.



Self-Check:

What are the tourism/hospitality training programs in your region?

Do you know what they currently offer?

What do you think are the priority skills that need to be developed in your destination area (e.g., visitor counsellors, customer service)?

So how does a community do this? What promotional tactics can be used to make your products and services stand out in the minds of your target markets?

The following sections can help you answer these questions. When you reach this stage of tourism development, it may be in your community's best interest to seek the assistance of a marketing and tourism promotions expert.

6a. Marketing Channels

A key piece of the marketing puzzle for communities is "the where and how" of selling tourism products. These selling methods are often referred to as channels.

Effectively selling an individual tourism product usually involves a number of key influencers, as shown in this example:

Marketing Influencers That Might Convince a Tourist from Alberta to Visit the Barkerville Historic Site

(Situated approximately an hour's drive from Quesnel, BC.)

- Airlines or Other Transport
- Canadian Tourism Commission
- Individual Business
- Local Partners
- Media
- Regional Tourism Organizations
- Tour Operators
- Tourism British Columbia
- Travel Agents
- Travel Guides
- Website/Internet
- Word of Mouth

One channel of distribution often overlooked is that of your own residents. Your residents are a critical source for passing word-of-mouth information and reaching the “Visiting Friends and Relatives” market. Some ways you can increase awareness of your community’s tourism assets and products amongst local residents include:

- Working with local media (e.g., newspapers, radio stations, television, etc.) to enhance coverage and distribute information about tourism products, businesses and events.
- Promoting a “be a tourist in your own town” day with free or reduced admission to area attractions.
- Encouraging residents that travel outside of your community to be Community Tourism Ambassadors who spread good words about the services and experiences people can enjoy in your community. Perhaps consider providing these ambassadors with communication kits to give out throughout their travels across Canada and the world.
- Developing a Tourism Passport, an events and attractions booklet that children and adults can get stamped at tourism businesses, events and festivals throughout the city. Perhaps recognize those residents with full passports by offering a prize.
- Using online social networks to their full advantage.

A side benefit of informing residents about your tourism products and services is increased community pride and greater awareness of the value of tourism to the community.

6b. Online Presence

One of the most effective ways to promote your destination and tourism brand is through the Internet. The Internet allows you to affordably position your destination right in front of the potential visitor, in multiple languages and customized offerings to suit each of your target markets.

Your visitors do not have time to wait for you to mail them a brochure; they want to visit your website, obtain all the information they need to know about your destination, and if they like what they see, quickly find out how to book the experience. Key elements to include on your destination website include:

- Description of your destination’s unique natural, cultural, heritage, social and other community-based assets and strengths.
- Description of the specific tourism products, experiences and support services (e.g., accommodation and food and beverage services) offered in your destination.
- Enticing photographs and images of your destination.
- How to access and locate your destination (e.g., transportation services, location map, etc.)
- Contact information, including telephone and email address.

Tourism BC’s www.hellobc.com receives about 7 million web visits annually and visitation is expected to continue to grow. It hosts community pages and has the potential to generate more visits to BC communities than many can achieve on their own. Communities can provide their own content on these pages so using www.hellobc.com as a complement to a community website to or even as the sole online presence could be a viable option.

Communities and their tourism operators should also consider using search engines; online databases of Internet resources that allow users to query other sites. Examples include Google, Yahoo and MSN Search. If your website ranks high with search engines this means it is easier for people to find you. When the potential traveler is searching for products using the key words with which you have defined your destination, they will find you. Your sites should be clean, uncluttered, and updated and evaluated constantly.

Other ways to promote your destination via the Internet include providing links to your website via other travel sites, e-advertising, email marketing, online newsletters, discussion groups/chat rooms/blog sites, and social networking sites (e.g. facebook).

An Online Presence Is Imperative-

*destinations and businesses
without an online presence
will not even be considered
by travellers who now rely
almost exclusively on
the web.*

6c. Travel Trade Shows and the Media

Travel trade shows provide opportunities to exhibit and promote tourism destinations, products and experiences as well as to meet with travel agents and tourism wholesalers, primarily to reach international markets. These shows occur in various destinations – both domestic (Canada and North America) and international (Europe, Asia, and the South Pacific) and generally consist of providing information and compelling images via a booth and/or stand-up display. Trade shows are costly to attend and as Tourism BC already attends these on behalf of the province, it may make sense for them to represent your community.

Two examples of major travel trade shows include Canada's West Marketplace www.canadaswestmarketplace.com and Rendez-vous Canada www.rendezvouscanada.travel. For a full list of travel trade events, go to:

www.tourismbc.com/IndustryPrograms/ConnectingWithTravelTrade/TradeShows.aspx

Working with travel media is also important. It provides a community the opportunity to get local, regional, provincial and potentially both national and international coverage. Types of travel writers include newspaper journalists, magazine writers, website content writers, guidebook authors, radio broadcasters, television crews, and video crews.

Tourism BC has a very active media relations department. For most communities, travel media contacts will come to them through Tourism BC, so it is important for communities to ensure that they have up-to-date information on their tourism products and activities.

If you decide to introduce the travel media to your destination, here are some helpful tips provided by Tourism British Columbia:

- Develop a Communications Plan that identifies your priority communication goals, key messages, how to relate these messages to the media, and to which media.
- Have experienced media relations staff or consider recruiting a public relations firm to assist with writing and distributing press releases & organizing press trips.
- Figure out the bottom line by costing out press trips, working with other communities and tourism businesses, balancing expenses with potential benefits.
- Do your research! Become familiar with the travel media and the travel community by reading travel magazines and newspaper articles, watching travel television shows, listening to travel radio shows, visiting travel websites and blogs, and attending trade and consumer shows.
- Give travel writers what they want with regards to how to contact them, which of their expenses you will cover, information on extra costs, and pre-trip information.

More specific details on all of these are provided in Tourism British Columbia's *Tourism Essentials Manual: Travel Media Relations*.

So far we have introduced you to some potential ways to promote your destination; however, before you launch into any of these you need to know that...

**You Do Not Need To Engage In
These All On Your Own!**

6d. Cooperative Marketing

Many opportunities exist for you to participate in cooperative marketing programs and strategic partnerships with Tourism British Columbia, sector/trade industry associations, DMOs in surrounding communities, and partner tourism businesses.

Working with these organizations can help you minimize costs, reach a broader market, and promote your destination in multiple ways.

At the regional level, Tourism British Columbia provides cooperative marketing opportunities through a number of programs aimed at motivating potential North American and international visitors to come and stay in your region. This is accomplished through media relations, trade relations, the distribution of publications and website development.

Remember

*As a service industry,
consistent, quality service is
a critical ingredient in making
tourism successful.
Providing more than what
was promised is a
competitive advantage, and
a way of exceeding
visitors' expectations.*

A Fam Trip Is ...

travel offered to event and/or travel industry professionals to acquaint them with a specific destination, its attractions, accommodation and other tourism services. Fam trips are often offered at reduced rates and scheduled during the off and shoulder tourism seasons.

Specific opportunities exist to promote your destination through:

- A selection of travel, lifestyle and outdoor experience related regional guides and publications.
- Radio, newspaper, television, magazine advertising.
- Website advertising.
- Attendance at travel agent, trade & consumer shows.
- The organization of familiarization ("fam") trips to your destination.

Tourism British Columbia offers additional programs to assist communities and individual tourism businesses with cooperative marketing opportunities. Some of these include:

- **The HelloBC® Listings Program.** HelloBC® allows tourism product suppliers to present their product or service information to over five million potential consumers through Tourism British Columbia's distribution channels, including HelloBC.com (Tourism BC's consumer website), the 1-800 HELLO BC call centre, and the Visitor Centre Network. Accommodation properties that have been inspected and approved by Tourism British Columbia can also be published in the Approved Accommodation Guide.
- **The Reservations Program** allows consumers to make bookings using the call centre (1-800 HELLO BC), www.HelloBC.com, or local Visitor Centres.

- **Consumer publications** published by Tourism British Columbia assist potential visitors in planning their BC vacation experience.
- **Trade show opportunities** provide suppliers of export-ready tourism products to meet with overseas buyers.
- **Travel media relations** play an integral role in maximizing consumer and trade awareness of BC as a top travel destination through unpaid media coverage in key markets. Travel media include freelance journalists, travel editors, broadcasters, producers and travel trade media.

For more information on these and additional programs, go to Tourism British Columbia's corporate website (www.tourismbc.com) and download the organization's most recent Program Guide. This guide provides a directory of Tourism British Columbia's programs related to marketing, visitor services, and business development and is updated annually.

Other Programs

Many sector/trade industry associations also provide opportunities for cooperative marketing. Marketing programs through sector/trade associations often involve promotion of a product under a sector/trade marketing brand. These brands are typically promoted via a sector/trade product guide, website, consumer shows and/or accreditation programs. Two examples follow on the next page.

An Accreditation Program

typically consists of a set of standards/criteria dealing with the structure, governance, management and performance of organizations.

- **Canada Select.** A “voluntary fixed-roof accommodation rating program that provides the travelling public with a consistent and reliable rating standard that is nationally compatible and comparable coast to coast.” Within BC, Canada Select is endorsed by Tourism British Columbia, the BC Hotel Association, and the BC Lodging and Campgrounds Association, with evaluations conducted by trained Certified Rating Advisors employed by Tourism British Columbia.
- The international **Destination Marketing Accreditation Program** (www.destinationmarketing.org) offered through Destination Marketing Association International. This program was created to provide “a global standard and consistency in DMOs, and to enhance the professionalism of DMOs and their staff to become the most respected organizations in their communities.” As part of this program, DMOs are evaluated on a variety of performance related areas, ranging from governance to financial management.

6e. Strategic Marketing Partnerships

Tourism businesses have traditionally been self-sufficient, managing operational services, employees, infrastructure, and marketing as a single company, while competing with other local businesses.

An emerging trend, beneficial to both urban and rural tourism operators, is a shift to strategic marketing partnerships with other complementary businesses. The result: the sum of the whole becomes greater than the individual parts. For example, two accommodation properties may share housekeeping staff.

You can also collaborate with other communities and Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) in your region to promote complementary tourism products and experiences. Working collaboratively on marketing programs, market research, website development and the sharing of experiences will help to pool regional resources and ensure communities and businesses complement, rather than compete unnecessarily with each other.

Useful Resources:

- Community Tourism Programs:
www.tourismbc.com/business_development.asp?id=4566
- Tourism Business Essentials Programs:
www.tourismbc.com/IndustryPrograms/BuildingAndGrowingYourBusiness/TourismBusinessEssentials.aspx
At time of printing, these include Tourism Packaging and Product Distribution (Introductory and Advanced), Travel Media Relations, Ads and Brochures That Sell, Sport Tourism.
- Understanding Your Visitors by Carolyn Mead,
Tourism Research Innovation Project:
www.linkbc.ca/torc/downloads1/UnderstandVisitors.pdf

7. Research and Evaluation

As part of the planning process, communities should think about ways to research and measure both the growth and the effectiveness of their tourism development efforts. This includes measuring against the overall quantifiable objectives as well as evaluating individual tactics. This will help determine whether the effort should be continued, expanded, changed or abandoned.

Researching and monitoring your effectiveness may sound difficult, but it can actually be uncomplicated and cost effective. In some cases, you can conduct secondary research and use indicators that already exist, such as: occupancy data, hotel room revenues, number of visitors to attractions and the Visitor Centres, type of conference centre bookings, etc.

You may also decide it is worthwhile to conduct primary research: surveys of current and potential visitors, economic impact assessments of main sporting events, research on the number of tourism press releases and articles, etc.

Our next community profile highlights a creative, cost-effective and adaptable way to research and track the effectiveness of specific marketing efforts.



Community Inspiration Profile: Cache Creek

A Visitor Tracking Technique For Small Businesses

While it is critical that tourism development efforts are tracked at the community level, it is also important that individual tourism businesses evaluate their own development and marketing efforts. The success of these operators in your community will often reflect, and serve as an important indicator of, the overall health of your tourism destination.

Almost all tourism operators measure their progress in terms of profits and revenues generated, but many don't do an effective job of measuring their marketing efforts. One tourism business that has implemented an easy and creative approach to monitoring its marketing activity is BC Jade and Gifts.

BC Jade and Gifts is located in the central interior community of Cache Creek, BC, a crossroads town of 1,100 people. Tourism is a large part of the local economy, with many visitors stopping on their way through from Whistler to Kamloops, while driving the scenic Fraser Canyon, and/or are travelling on the historic Gold Rush Trail. The owner, Ben Roy, took over the shop in 1985 and has made it successful as a lifestyle business over the past many years.

Ben has an entrepreneurial spirit and an eye towards growing tourism in the region. He is involved in the Cache Creek Chamber of Commerce and the Gold Country Communities Society. Ben knows the importance of building good relationships with the tour companies operating in the area, and as a result, these companies often bring in patrons to BC Jade and Gifts.

To determine the effectiveness of the shop's marketing brochures, Ben has created an innovative program to track the brochures he provides to Visitor Centres (VCs) around BC. One way people are attracted to the store is by a coupon stapled on each brochure for a free piece of jade to be cut on the premises. When these coupons are distributed

the location of the VC is written on the back of each one. As the coupons come back to the store and people claim the free jade, Ben can determine from which community the guest picked up the brochure.

Over time, Ben can monitor which VCs are bringing in customers that are interested in his product. He is then able to prioritize and rack his brochures at VCs that bring in the majority of customers. He also keeps track of how much each visitor spent in his store by writing it on the coupon. This is a very simple and cost effective way for Ben to determine his return on investment for racking brochures in the VCs, as well as to further target his marketing efforts.

This technique is easily adaptable to many types of small tourism businesses. For example, a restaurant could distribute coupons for a free desert, a mini-golf operator could give a free second round, and a motel/hotel could give one free in-room movie.

Any business, and thus a community, will benefit from an effective approach to tracking marketing efforts. Ben Roy at BC Jade and Gifts has shown that you don't need big dollars or a complicated measurement system to do it. You just need a little creativity!

By Randy Love

Tourism Research Innovation Project (TRIP)

To Wrap Up...

In the last three sections, you have been introduced to the community planning process. A good awareness of the overall ingredients for successful tourism planning and development will be of real help to you as you serve as a champion for tourism in your community. Let's turn our attention to how you can go from community-based tourism planning to action!



Section 7: Building Momentum for Your Community: Implementation

From Planning to Action: a Road Map

The process of developing a vision, objectives and strategies has already been introduced as key to community-based tourism planning and development. Implementation is the process of making all this earlier work come alive!

This section will provide ideas and strategies for tourism community champions (like yourself!) to build momentum in your community and make a real difference as your planning efforts move into implementation.

Transforming community-based tourism plans into daily reality is the most critical role in developing a tourism destination.

Im.ple.ment v: to carry out; fulfill; to put into practise.

Ac.tion n: Energetic movement; liveliness. A specified pursuit in which a person partakes.

Getting started with the first concrete steps requires community support, clear direction, identified resources, and a certain amount of personal bravery on the part of tourism champions! Too often, plans are created but end up on a shelf or filed in a cabinet, never to see the light of day. Don't let this be said about your

community. Taking action and building momentum can be one of the most challenging steps in mobilizing a community, but it is certainly the most important.

One way to think about creating an implementation plan is to work backwards from each of your main strategies then list all the short term tactics – or actions - required to reach that strategy. Each strategy can include multiple tactics. This list of tactics serves as both a blueprint and reporting template for the community tourism planning committee and organizations involved in the implementation process.

Each required tactic should be coupled with a realistic and achievable target. Completing each task usually requires a combination of time, human resources and money. Make sure you estimate the requirements needed to carry out each tactic before beginning implementation.

An effective implementation plan should also indicate the names of organizations and individuals who will lead and participate in carrying out each strategy. When assigning tactics to specific organizations and individuals it is important to break down major tasks into pieces that can be realistically dealt with. This will help spread the work throughout the community and avoid burnout of dedicated people.

Each tactic should include a short description, quantifiable objectives (if applicable), rationale, action steps, potential partnerships/resources/sources of funding, responsibilities, timeframe, budget, and evaluation mechanisms. For example, a tactic might be:

Tactic: Develop activities to ensure visitors to our main attractions (local ski hill and annual music festival) experience other parts of the community.

Short Description

Ensure current visitors to the community are given information about, and encouraged to engage in, the wide variety of tourism experiences available throughout the area. This could involve maps or guides for businesses or organizations to distribute to their visitors, the development of a passport that encourages visitors to experience other attractions, the development of a circle tour, etc.

Quantifiable Objectives (If Applicable)

Number of cross-promotions or joint activities in the community.

Rationale/Relation To Strategies

Encourages people already visiting the area to spend more time and money in the area (e.g., such as extending a day-trip by an hour or two).

Action Steps

- Work with visitor attractions, local businesses, major festival organizers, etc. to encourage them to cross-promote other activities in the community.
- Encourage potential businesses to locate themselves in areas close to other major visitor attractions.
- Investigate the possibility of developing mini bus tours of the community.

Potential Partnerships

- Community tourism-related businesses and organizations.
- Local and regional government.

Responsibilities

Hire and manage a tourism marketing professional to oversee projects.

Vision without action is merely a dream.

Action without vision just passes the time.

Vision with action can change the world.

Timeframe

Develop initiative and obtain agreement by end of fiscal year, depending on when tourism marketing professional starts. Full implementation in next fiscal year.

Budget

\$5K seed money, with pay-to-play participation fees.

Evaluation Mechanism

Number of cross-promotions or joint activities in the community. Increased length of stay by 10% of visitors (tracked through VC).

Staying on Track

It's very important to keep track of your tactics, timeframes, people, and finances. Developing a project management spreadsheet with input from your community tourism planning committee is a great way to build ownership and to share the responsibilities of putting the plan into motion.

The following is a simplified project management template. You can add columns and rows as needed to track the progress of different tasks. You may wish to create phases for each tactic to prioritize steps in order of importance. Be sure that each tactic is assigned a time frame for completion, the individuals responsible for completing the task, costs associated with the task, and milestones that will indicate when both the overall action item and strategy has been achieved.

Community-Based Tourism Plan Project Management

| | Milestones | Start/End Dates | Person/Organization Responsible | Budget |
|---------------|------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|--------|
| Tactic 1: | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Date Reviewed | | | | |
| Tactic 2: | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Date Reviewed | | | | |
| Tactic 3: | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Date Reviewed | | | | |
| Tactic 4: | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Date Reviewed | | | | |
| | | | TOTAL COST: | |

Regular Reviews

Another important aspect of implementation is scheduled reviews of the strategies and tactics to ensure you are still heading where you want to be going. It is recommended that you evaluate the results of your community-based tourism plan on an on-going basis and make adjustments as necessary.

Quick Wins

Developing and marketing a destination is a time-consuming process. As you begin to implement your community-based tourism plan, identify one or two “quick wins” that can be developed and launched immediately (e.g., within the first six months of implementation). Quick wins will keep your team engaged and motivated as well as demonstrate to the community that while the larger objectives are being worked on, things are happening. Quick wins will also serve as catalysts for subsequent, longer-term activities. Quick wins might include:

- A revamped and more user-friendly community-based destination website.
- A new visitor-oriented tourism map.
- A community campaign on the value of tourism, or a campaign (with local tourism programs and go2) aimed at students highlighting career opportunities in the industry.
- A new community event designed to attract increased numbers of visitors.

Maintain Communication

To help maintain momentum for tourism development and the required support and buy-in from the community, you need to communicate and report on your tourism development progress. This should be done on a regular basis with the following audiences:

- The municipal council, and potentially other political representatives (e.g., MLA, MP and Chief).
- All people who provided input as part of the community-based tourism planning process, including local First Nation communities.
- Tourism industry stakeholders.
- Local businesses.
- Community residents.
- Regional, provincial and national Destination Marketing Organizations (your regional DMO, Tourism British Columbia and the Canadian Tourism Commission).

Potential ways to communicate with community groups and members include:

- Presentations to specific audiences (e.g., Mayor and Councillors, MLA and MP, business associations, Band councils, tourism organizations, etc.).

- Public forums and information bulletins (e.g., open community meetings, a display at the public library, etc.).
- Media releases and interviews (e.g., newspaper articles, radio and television interviews).
- Tourism organization websites (e.g., municipal government, Chamber of Commerce, and DMO websites).
- Tourism newsletters (paper and/or electronic) and email distributions.
- Word-of-mouth via tourism stakeholders involved in the implementation process.

Keep Your Funders & Politicians in the Loop

In addition to reporting on your tourism development progress with the community, make sure you keep comprehensive, accurate financial records and report these results to your funding organizations and relevant stakeholders. Funding organizations and stakeholders want to see that resources are being used wisely and generating results for their intended purposes! At the same time, make it a priority to apprise your local and regional politicians of progress, and involve them as much as possible.



Celebrate Successes

It is very important to celebrate successes along the way! This is especially important when working with volunteers involved in implementation. Acknowledging people's hard work and dedication is critical for maintaining momentum, and for bringing the entire process to a successful conclusion.

Don't Rush

You need the quick wins to demonstrate progress and communication to maintain community buy-in, but don't underestimate the importance of getting things right before implementing the most ambitious strategies in your plan. For example, before launching into a stepped-up marketing campaign, make sure that:

- **There are enough products and experiences** to attract visitors (e.g., an adequate cluster of attractions, things to do, shopping, and eating experiences within an easy-to-get-to area) and that they'll enjoy the experience that has been promised.
- **You have facilitated the creation** of interesting packages, and given visitors a reason to stay longer.
- **Your community passes the attractiveness test**; that you have done all you can to see your community through the eyes of a prospective visitor, and worked to influence change and improvement.
- **You have developed a cultural and heritage interpretation strategy** as part of the community-based tourism plan and this is evident to visitors, making them appreciate a real "sense of place" – visitors will appreciate the stories you wish to share as a community.
- **There has been a focused effort** on customer service improvement.



Self-Check:

How are community tourism initiatives funded in your community today?

What are some new approaches you might use to generate additional revenue to support your tourism goals?

One Last Tip

Remember there are a number of tourism programs and experienced facilitators/consultants (both public and private) that support one or more aspects of tourism development and implementation (e.g., funding, strategic planning, stakeholder consultation, market research and marketing, financial analysis, communications, training and development, human resources, etc.). Find out about these programs and facilitators/consultants and use them when you need assistance!

To Wrap Up...

In this section, you have learned tips on how to build and maintain momentum for tourism development in your community by turning planning into action! Now, let's turn our attention to how you can maximize your impact as a tourism champion in your community.



Section 8: You Can Make a Difference: Community Tourism Champions

What is a Community Tourism Champion?

Looking at most community tourism success stories, it is possible to identify people who have been catalysts for increasing the profile of tourism in their community. These people are often known as community tourism “champions”.

These champions may be from a variety of backgrounds. They may be paid or unpaid. They may run small businesses, be the Executive Director at the local Destination Marketing Organization or Chamber of Commerce, participate in municipal or Aboriginal

“Part of the experience is rising to the challenge.”

government, or be dedicated community volunteers. What all community tourism champions have in common is a vision of how the community can benefit from tourism and the passion to act on this vision. They also have the motivation and knowledge (such as you have acquired through this handbook!) to make tourism a

dynamic, integral sector in their communities, and have invested time and energy to make things happen.

A person assuming the role of tourism champion needs to know a little bit about many important topics and issues. This person also needs to know where he/she can find additional resources, and who is available to provide guidance or assistance in his/her community's efforts. Every community tourism champion needs to be guided by, become involved in, or work in close collaboration with the leading tourism organizations or groups that already exist within the community (e.g., community tourism planning committee, Destination Marketing Organization, Chamber of Commerce, local economic development department, etc.) to carry out tourism planning and development efforts!

Community tourism champions can help to ensure that:

- Tourism resources are coordinated effectively.
- The right community-based tourism blueprint for success is developed.
- Community-based tourism initiatives are successfully implemented.

In addition to yourself, there may be other tourism champions within your own community. The following list offers some suggestions of people who may be interested in contributing to your community tourism development efforts. They can be invaluable allies in the journey ahead.

- Business executives, retired or not.
- People seeking a change (e.g., new to town, out of work).
- “Spark plugs” – forward thinking initiators who make things happen.
- People behind community accomplishments, festivals and events.
- High-profile individuals associated with volunteer sectors.
- Non-conformists (i.e., those who aren't held back by society's rules).
- Artists/craftspeople.
- Members of the environmental movement who can see the benefits of a sustainable tourism economy.
- Recent tourism/hospitality program graduates.
- Leaders of service and sports clubs (e.g., What is the most active sport in your community and who are the one or two people that make this happen?)
- New community members (e.g., immigrants, retirees, etc.)

What other categories can you think of?

A Champion Is ...

Someone who assumes or shares responsibility for helping to create a vision, and then works with others to develop a strategy and ways to bring this strategy to life. A champion identifies what is needed, ensures that he or she is sufficiently informed (e.g., about opportunities and challenges), looks for areas of leverage, and enlists others to help implement specific strategies and actions. In other words, champions are fully committed to doing everything they can to ensure success. They are known in the community for their enthusiasm, commitment, and ability to influence others. They are listeners who recognize the value of other opinions and understand the wisdom of bringing in expertise when it is needed.

Adapted from: Working to Build a Prosperous Community: Economic Development Group of Nanaimo

The best champions are action oriented – they get things done.

One of a Team

As an enthusiast who supports tourism development in your community, a large part of your role may be to provide leadership, inspiration, and initiative around the tourism development process. Your role may include encouraging your community to start thinking strategically about tourism opportunities. You may assist other community members to identify resources for financing or write a business plan. You may organize meetings for community input on a tourism initiative, help connect local political leaders and entrepreneurs or promote the value of tourism within your community. More than likely, your role will include a wide variety of responsibilities, and you will find yourself wearing many different hats!

Remember ...

...champions may be the primarily influencers, but are not expected to be proficient at everything!



Because of the variety of skills and the length of time involved for community-based tourism development, it is important for tourism champions to know that they should not try to do all the work alone. Successful development takes the commitment and dedication of a whole team of people. As a community tourism champion, you will benefit from the support of others with a similar passion and commitment toward tourism.

Champions are influencers and serve as effective catalysts – they are not expected to be proficient at everything. In areas where you feel less competent, you may choose to ask for outside help, hire a consultant and/or delegate a task to another community member. The important thing is to ensure that all roles and responsibilities are covered, so that the tourism development process moves forward.

Part of a champion's role is to keep the community's momentum going. Make sure your own momentum is supported, and that other people are aware of the role you play. Be aware of personal limits, and take comfort in knowing progress is often measured in small steps forward over a number of years. Burnout can be common and can be prevented by using the skills, knowledge, and assistance of other residents. There are many experienced tourism development consultant/facilitators who can step in at any stage of the process to offer guidance and expertise. Recognize when additional help is needed.

It is also important to have a succession plan in place, allowing you to transfer your role to someone else, should the need arise. This is essential for maintaining continuity, and building on progress.

Remember...

you don't have to be an expert in all the areas covered in this handbook to be a successful champion - you just need to know where the resources are and who can assist with the process.

Acting as an Effective Liaison

A key responsibility of a tourism champion may be to serve in a liaison role between stakeholders. This will involve regular communication with different organizations, groups and individuals within your community, as well as with contacts around the region or beyond.

Effective communication is an essential part of a champion's role. Adjusting your communication style to different audiences is an important consideration. Remember that your audience won't always know as much about tourism as you do, and you'll need to find the right approach in order to make a good connection.

Here are a few examples of distinct communication approaches, all appropriate depending on the audience:

- **For funders:** a PowerPoint presentation, with high-level, detailed market research.
- **For residents:** an easy-to-read handout discussing the value of tourism, and perhaps formatted as frequently asked questions.
- **For stakeholder groups:** an informal, interactive lunch session with ideas and suggestions solicited from the group/audience.
- **For politicians:** a persuasive presentation as a keynote speech to convince people about the value of tourism or promote a specific idea.
- **For tourism development partners:** listening (an important part of communication!) during an informally arranged coffee-shop discussion, and responding to concerns.
- **For all:** a regular tourism development email newsletter to update interested stakeholders.

Effective communication can also alleviate conflicts that arise during community-based tourism planning and development. Perhaps one group feels left out of the decision-making process while another needs more detailed high-level market data to

understand the feasibility of a new tourism initiative. An effective response will require you to understand the issue at hand and the group's knowledge level. You will need to continually check to see that all the key individuals are participating in the process.

On the next page you will find descriptions of many different groups of people that you might address as a champion. When reviewing these descriptions, think about how you would answer the following questions:

- Why might you want to meet with this audience?
- What would be the goal of your presentation, (e.g., asking for financial backing, finding ways to include them, explaining the merits of tourism)?
- How would you deliver your message most effectively?



Audience

Your Communication Approach (goal/purpose of presentation, style of delivery)

| | |
|---|--|
| The mayor and council who know a little about tourism but are sceptical | |
| | |
| | |
| A mix of entrepreneurs and business managers, some of whom are for and some against tourism, some of whom are knowledgeable, some not | |
| | |
| | |
| An assembly of high school students who might want tourism jobs, and who need reasons to stay in the community after graduating | |
| | |
| | |
| A group that has asked to meet you, but is not supportive of tourism | |
| | |
| | |
| A group of busy people totally committed to tourism and who know its importance | |
| | |
| | |
| Local First Nations members who are taking steps toward tourism development | |
| | |
| | |
| A group of venture capitalists, bankers, and members of the local chamber of commerce interested in developing a new resort | |
| | |
| | |
| A service club/group (e.g. cultural, arts, sports) that could become a tourism product or attraction in the community | |
| | |
| | |
| People who feel they have been left out of the decision-making process | |
| | |
| | |
| Those participants involved in community planning on an ongoing basis | |
| | |
| | |
| The local media | |
| | |
| | |

Can I be a Champion in Any Job?

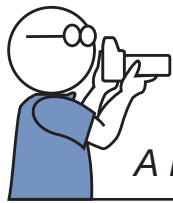
Yes! No two tourism champions are the same. What they share is a commitment to helping their communities benefit from the opportunities presented by the industry. A champion can be a key link between the various stakeholder selected officials, businesses, residents and others who have an interest in the development of tourism opportunities.

The following table lists a variety of tourism champions' responsibilities, with examples of actions that might be taken to fulfill these roles.

| An Effective Tourism Champion: | Example |
|--|---|
| Communicates well with residents of the community and region | Facilitate group/one-on-one discussions, make telephone contacts, write press releases and newspaper articles to keep the community informed about tourism developments |
| Identifies key concerns and opportunities | Conduct community surveys or organize meetings for community input |
| Participates in community activities | Join and/or give presentations to service clubs, business associations, etc. |
| Influences decision-makers within the community | Write memos, emails, and letters; make presentations to persuade decision-makers |
| Facilitates discussions with community leaders | Hold meetings and facilitate discussions; write and distribute meeting minutes |
| Gets others involved and motivated | Identify and encourage participation from appropriate community members |
| Encourages long-term thinking/approach | Understand and integrate the tourism initiative with existing strategic plans for the community |
| Helps to ensure that initiatives stay focused | Monitor and report on progress toward goals |
| Helps to encourage a non-competitive (i.e., inclusive) approach to development | Instil awareness of the big picture; reward and congratulate milestones along the way; be open-minded to new viable ideas |

We're pleased to include five inspiring Tourism Champion Snapshots to wrap up this section – profiles of individuals who have made a real difference in BC and across Canada. They

demonstrate how the creativity – and tenacity – of just one individual can change the shape of tourism in a community.



Snapshot

A Remarkable Group of Community Tourism Champions



Chemainus's Visionary, Karl Schutz

Arts, Culture, and Tourism Transform a Community

Karl Schutz is a true community champion. This long-time resident and business owner turned the little town of Chemainus, BC into the world's largest outdoor art gallery! In the early '70s, ten years before

the local mill closed, Karl had an ingenious idea to kick-start his hometown's economy. He believed that by showcasing the town's history through giant murals, Chemainus could use art to market the town's budding new industry—tourism.

Karl's idea was shelved for 10 years. At the time, the resource-

based community had little appreciation for tourism, let alone arts and culture. In 1981, the town was losing one business a month. The mayor convinced the Chamber of Commerce that they had nothing to lose, and Karl was given the go-ahead to have one outdoor mural painted. This was no challenge for Karl. He knew his idea would work, and he never looked back.

As a tourism champion, Karl succeeded because he believed in his vision. This custom furniture maker is now asked to speak all over the world about the potential role of arts and culture in tourism development. Karl's dream has dramatically changed his life and that of the "Little Town that Did!"

A Personal Reflection:

"Never let those who say it can't be done, stand in the way of those who are doing it."

My Suggestion for Other Communities

"Our pioneers provided us with the foundation. It's our obligation to invest in building an even better community for our children—just go and do it!"



Linnea Battel Accepting ATBC Award

Demonstrating Leadership to Showcase Cultural Heritage

Dr. Linnea Battel (Ai:yametkwa) is well known for leading Aboriginal and heritage preservation campaigns in BC. Believing it is our duty to preserve our past for

future generations, Linnea headed the campaign to save the ancient village site of Hatzic Rock near Mission, BC. Linnea envisioned a world class, First Nations interpretive centre at the sacred rock site that was being threatened by development.

A Personal Reflection:

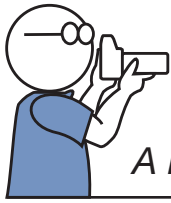
"My biggest satisfaction is the appreciation expressed by visitors who are thankful that there is place that offers them the opportunity to learn, interact, and share in Aboriginal history, culture, and spirituality."

By pooling the resources of numerous people connected to the 9,000-year-old First Nations village, Linnea was able to secure the political will required to declare the land a national historic site. She convinced organizations and governments that preservation could be used as an economic vehicle for First Nations and community economic growth. Her tireless determination, expressive communication, persuasive writing, and leadership skills have made her preservation campaign successful.

Now, as Director of Xa:ytem Longhouse Interpretive Centre at the Hatzic Rock site, Linnea is proud to share this cultural jewel through a facility that improves the social, cultural, and economic life in her community. Linnea continues her campaign by raising money and awareness.

My Suggestion for Other Communities

"Things might have gone smoother when I began development at the site if I prepared a thorough business plan."



Snapshot

A Remarkable Group of Community Tourism Champions



Bruce Lewis Helps Create Eastend's Dinocountry

Passion to Save a Community's Rural Livelihood

Eastend Saskatchewan's tourism champion **Bruce Lewis** became involved with a group of concerned individuals wanting to preserve their small

Saskatchewan farming community for future generations. Drawing upon an idea initially raised by a now defunct government tourism program, Bruce enthusiastically promoted the development of a dinosaur museum to draw visitors (and jobs) to their community.

Some of the area's outstanding fossil remains had been excavated, but none had remained in the community in

a way that would help diversify the town's economy as a high-interest tourism attraction. Bruce and other community leaders wanted to make sure the world-class facility they envisioned would attract visitors, encourage new businesses, and help the local and surrounding areas.

By holding numerous public meetings, actively involving municipal and rural councils and key stakeholders, the Eastend Community Tourism Authority ensured that, when government was approached, the idea had the support of the whole southwest corner of the province. Bruce's passion was a driving force behind the team effort that created the top-quality T. Rex Discovery Centre.

My Suggestion for Other Communities

"Planning, research, feasibility studies, and community input may seem costly at the time, and time consuming, but they are all necessary to reach your final goal."

A Personal Reflection:

"After 15 years of work and planning, the grand opening of the T. Rex Discovery Centre gave me the most satisfaction."



Rosebud's Champion, LaVerne Erickson

Versatile Skill Set Renewed the Hamlet of Rosebud

One person can make a great difference! Take for example, **LaVerne Erickson**. This music and art teacher was determined to revitalize the farming town of Rosebud, Alberta (population 30) by building a fine arts school.

In 1970, LaVerne offered summer outreach programs for Calgary youth, and has since overseen the birth and growth of Rosebud's Fine Arts High School and post-secondary arts apprenticeship programs. As the school programs grew, so did the town.

Today, Rosebud is a tourist, theatre, and fine arts

destination, whose 100 residents welcome over 75,000 visitors a year! Once on the verge of disappearing, this town now mentors students from far and wide in a community of artists.

LaVerne had the passion to make his idea a reality, but he quickly found out that revitalizing the town required all his skills—everything from fundraising and media campaigns to infrastructure development. Now retired from teaching, LaVerne is involved in marketing Rosebud's talent in partnership with sister organizations such as Chemainus Theatre on BC's Vancouver Island and Canadian Badlands Performing Arts Summer School in Drumheller, Alberta.

My Suggestion for Other Communities

"A community endeavour will only be successful if one or two people take ownership of the idea and are committed to the project over the long term."

A Personal Reflection:
"It's important to develop the continuity within an organizational structure that allows for what has been established to be carried on into the next generation."



Northern expedition guide, Neil Hartling (left), and happy guest

A Community Focus Makes Good Business Sense

Neil Hartling of Nahanni River Adventures in the Yukon makes sure his river trips have positive financial spinoffs in the

communities where he operates. Local businesses in Whitehorse and Fort Simpson benefit from Neil's business, as he employs full-time and seasonal staff, purchases large volumes of food, and hires all charter aircraft and ground transportation locally. In addition, all Neil's adventures have guests stay in northern hotels before and after their guided trip.

This community champion also devotes over 40 hours a month to northern and national tourism organizations. Given his own experience, Neil helps local

tourism businesses from falling prey to common marketing pitfalls, saving them important dollars. He has also positively influenced how northern adventure businesses price their products—encouraging companies to charge higher rates and sell services for what the market will bear. This has helped a number of businesses that previously operated at a loss because they undervalued their product—a common problem in the adventure tourism sector.

Neil has also raised awareness about the importance of service by keeping his product at the front of the pack through innovation. By learning from others, and gaining a few mentors along the way, Neil has benefited personally.

My Suggestion for Other Communities

“Building a core of experienced industry leaders is key to an effective industry development team, but these people will only volunteer if they have political and administrative support and are able to see that their work will have a meaningful result.”

A Personal Reflection:

“My business volunteer time is not charity work; it's an investment in my business and my industry sector—I get as much out of it as I put in.”

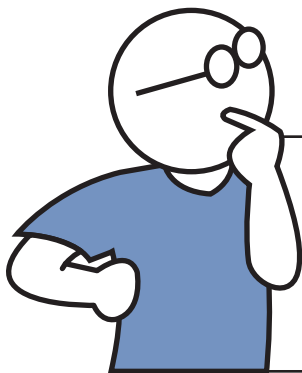
Last Words

Tourism is an exciting industry and one that may represent significant opportunities to you and your community. This handbook has given you an overview of the tourism industry in BC, an awareness of destination development issues, the importance of planning and the importance of champions in making tourism happen!

We hope that you are encouraged to take the initiative toward building a sustainable tourism industry for your community. Remember that all of this takes time, but you can be inspired

by the many communities in BC now successfully implementing their vision to develop, promote, and market their destination.

Make sure your vision is clear, chart your progress, and use the tools in this handbook. Go back and review this handbook occasionally. If you follow these steps, you stand a good chance of making a significant difference in your community!



Self-Check:

What is your next step?

Handbook Sources

The following documents and websites were drawn upon to create this handbook. If you have questions about source materials, please email info@linkbc.ca or visit www.bctorc.ca for a range of community tourism resources:

Alberta Economic Development Tourism Development Branch

Regional Tourism Strategic Planning Participants Manual
Strategic Tourism Planning for Alberta Communities (2002)
Tourism Development Handbook for Alberta (2002)
Tourism Marketing Plan Guide

Canadian Tourism Commission

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Economic Planning Group of Canada - A Guide to Tourism Planning in Nova Scotia (1999)
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Tourism Saskatchewan

Community Tourism Planning Guide - Guide for Saskatchewan Communities (2001)
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Notes

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Section 3

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Section 5

Section 6

Section 7

Section 8

Sources



"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things
that you *didn't* do than by the ones you *did* do.

So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor.

Catch the trade winds in your sails.

Explore. Dream. Discover."

-Mark Twain



Panorama Mountain Village
Invermere, BC