



## TOURISM TIPS

Tips And Techniques From the Tourism Nova Scotia  
Webinar Series

May 2021

# BUSINESS PLANNING DURING COVID-19

## RAMPING UP AS THE CURVE FLATTENS ADAPTING YOUR BUSINESS AND STAFF TO CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Based on a webinar presented by Eva Gutsche with [STEM Consulting](#) on Thursday, May 7, 2020

Staying connected to your customers and business associates is essential as you navigate the changes in the travel industry. Finding creative ways to engage, reviewing your cancellation policies, addressing difficult conversations and situations and adjusting your operations to meet evolving customer expectations will help you prepare to ease back into your business and open your doors when the time is right.

### Why Stay Connected

Staying connected with your customers helps to:

- Keep them informed of updates and changes
- Build a sense of community
- Inspire future travel
- Maintain customer relationships and encourage repeat visitation
- Sustain a positive impression of your business
- Set the stage for re-opening

### WAYS TO STAY IN TOUCH

- Event updates and community and regional news.
- Offer value adds such as classes, recipes and online activities.
- Develop a plan to reach out by phone, email or social media.
- Build community and share good news.
- Share news and updates for your business and for Nova Scotia.

### Cancellation Policies

Finding a balance between existing policies and the relationship with your customer is important when addressing cancellation policies. Be clear on your goals, consider your options, choose an approach and implement a communications plan.

When thinking about cancellation policies on future bookings (suggestion – consider what short-term and long-term changes you may wish to implement in relation to booking policies and cancellations), think about what needs to change for your business. You will need to:

- Address post COVID-19 travel uncertainty
- Look at industry trends – what is happening?
- Consider consumer expectations
- Update and change your cancellation policy

### TIPS

- Consider ability to travel (legislation and border issues).
- Think about what is fair to both parties.
- Consider short-term gain vs. long-term customer relationships.
- Consider your long-term business plan; is it contingent on repeat customers?
- Empathize and agree on a solution.

## Back to Business

### *In Canada and Globally*

Easing back into business will be a gradual process in Canada and vary by province. Timelines are fluid and there will be restrictions and safety measures in place including capacity, distancing, and others.

Globally, masks are mandatory in several countries, temperature checks for staff and guests are common, and technology is being used for health monitoring and contact tracing.

## Looking Ahead

### WHAT NEEDS TO BE ASSESSED AND IMPLEMENTED

- Training to ensure cleanliness for staff and guests.
- Training to assist staff in communicating new health and safety protocols
- Restrictions on group sizes.
- Operational changes to respect social distancing requirements, ie: breakfast options at a B&B.
- Hygiene standards, particularly for high touch areas.
- Sanitation products for guests (masks, hand sanitizer, wipes, etc.).
- Change in food service, ie: no more breakfast buffets.

Focus will be on local and regional travel in 2021 with the long-haul Canada market being months away and the international market likely not recovering until 2022. But the potential for recovery is good! Spending by Nova Scotians currently account for 38% of Nova Scotia tourism revenues and Atlantic Canada accounts for close to one-half of non-resident visitation to Nova Scotia. Air travel will take longer to rebound but the good news is that initial recovery does not depend on air capacity returning.

### CONSIDERATIONS - LEISURE

- Marketing - as restrictions ease, invite your customers back.
- Communicate your health and safety plan.
- Create local experiences with community partners – keeping social distancing in mind.
- Promote experiences that have rebounded such as golf and boating.

### CONSIDERATIONS - TRAVEL TRADE

- Don't forget the longer-term sales approach.
- Keep the lines of communication open with tour operators and travel agents.
- Respond to requests – travel agents and tour operators are working on plans for 2021.
- Help travel trade partners rebook for the future.



## SALES PLANNING FOR COVID-19 RECOVERY

Based on a webinar presented by Eva Gutsche with [STEM Consulting](#) on Thursday, May 21, 2020

The tourism industry's recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will be a gradual process, but it is important to begin planning now to ensure that you're ready to open your doors when the time is right.

Understand what your visitors will be looking for following the pandemic and create a short-term consumer marketing strategy for the recovery phase. Be flexible and agile as you plan for the immediate future and beyond. The time to plan is now. Identify the trigger events and be ready to jump into action.

### Skills and Attributes for Leading Through Crisis

It is important to see the big picture as you navigate through the current crisis. You will need to be empathetic; flexible; innovative; a visionary; and a teacher and a mentor to both your customers and your employees.

Being flexible and adaptable is essential. As you develop your sales and marketing plan, consider the facts you know now and what you can anticipate in the short-term, and be prepared to adapt your plan based on what is unknown at this time or could quickly change.

### Planning and Ambiguity

There are three things to consider as you move forward with planning:

Current Facts	Assumptions	The Unknown
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canada border will stay closed at least until June 21</li> <li>Group size restrictions still in place</li> <li>Inbound flights to NS still limited</li> <li>Opening dates for many local businesses tba. <b>Update on May 27: Many businesses will reopen on June 5.</b></li> <li>14-day self-isolation for people coming into NS</li> <li>Physical distancing required</li> <li>Enhanced focus on health, hygiene, cleaning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People will want to get out of the house</li> <li>International market unlikely until 2021</li> <li>Short haul, longer drive market will respond quickest</li> <li>Long-haul Canada (flights) months away</li> <li>Local and regional residents will likely stay closer to home</li> <li>Desire to support local businesses and community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the opening dates of tourist services and amenities in my community?</li> <li>What happens if COVID-19 cases started to rise again?</li> <li>Will locals travel provincially or wait for borders to re-open?</li> </ul>

## Next Steps

### Short Term

To prepare for opening, you will need to consider all the options and create a plan so that you can quickly move into action when things shift. Consider product and experience changes to meet local market demand and focus on existing bookings that will likely materialize. Reach out to those customers who have visited your business in the past and encourage them to visit you again and to stay longer. This helps with revenue and managing new cleaning protocols. This is the time to consider various situations and Plan B options.

Here are examples of a best- and worst-case scenario. What would apply for your business?

#### Best Case Scenario

- Increased flights into Nova Scotia
- Self-isolation when returning to the province is lifted in NS & other Atlantic Canada provinces
- US border opens
- More businesses can open
- Group size increase

#### Worst Case Scenario

- US travel not rebounding until late summer or early fall or later
- Staff afraid to come to work
- Supply chain or product issues
- Delay of business reopening
- Social distancing and group size numbers don't shift

Be prepared for either scenario and plan accordingly!

### Longer Term Opportunities with the Travel Trade

Don't lose sight of the long term. In order to secure contracts and business for the upcoming year, the groundwork must begin now with your travel trade partners. Keep the communication lines open and help your travel trade partners plan and rebook for the future. Some trade partners are finding it challenging to get information in a timely manner. Remember, even if you aren't currently open for visitors, you need to continue to respond to inquiries from partners within 24 hours.

### Short-term Recovery Potential

#### The Good News

- Research indicates that travellers will start post COVID-19 travel locally
- Spending by Nova Scotians currently accounts for 38% of tourism revenues
- Atlantic Canada accounts for close to one-half of overall non-resident visitation to Nova Scotia
- Based on current information, there is potential for local travel recovery in 2021
- Recovery does not depend on air capacity returning

#### Resources:

- [www.tourismns.ca/coronavirus](http://www.tourismns.ca/coronavirus)
- <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/working-during-covid-19/>

### KEY FACTORS

- Virus is contained in Nova Scotia, Canada, and globally
- Physical distancing measures are removed
- Travel restrictions lifted
- Tourism operators able to open for business
- Travellers are willing to travel
- Air capacity to Nova Scotia improves
- Willingness of Nova Scotians to welcome visitors

## TOURISM NOVA SCOTIA COVID-19 RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Based on the webinar presented by Anna Moran, Director of Policy & Research, with [Tourism Nova Scotia](#) on Tuesday, June 23, 2020

Tourism Nova Scotia offers valuable COVID-19 research insights to help Nova Scotia tourism businesses navigate the current tourism environment. Research reports, including Destination Canada's weekly Resident Sentiment Survey results, are available [here](#).

### What the Research Shows

Tourism recovery in Nova Scotia will begin with local travel first, followed by travel from closer drive markets like New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, and travel from farther away markets recovering last.

Atlantic Canadians tend to take shorter trips to and within Nova Scotia but are likely to make more frequent trips than visitors from other markets and travel in the province in the fall and winter. Most visits tend to be with couples or alone, although a significant number are with children.

### Putting the Research into Action

#### *Optimize Your Online Presence*

COVID-19 restrictions have driven consumers online more than ever and they now have an increased comfort level searching, booking, and purchasing online. Your online content is critical and it's more than just the product you offer. Customers are looking for information about the safety protocols in place to give them confidence in visiting your business.

For tips see [Five Free or Low-cost Ways to Get Your Online Presence in Order](#).

#### *Provide Information and Policies To Mitigate Travel Concerns*

People are increasingly planning their travel in advance, even within the Maritimes. There are concerns about cancellations and desire to avoid crowds. People will travel when they feel it is safe to do so.

Ensure you have policies in place and clearly communicate those policies to help mitigate some of the hesitations people may be feeling about travelling.

Travellers want to be reassured that they will be kept safe when they visit your business. Provide detailed information about how customers' safety is prioritized at every step of their visit. Be sure to clearly demonstrate all the healthy and safety protocols that you have put in place to make your guests feel both welcome and safe!

[Clean it Right](#) is a new training program provided through TIANS to provide awareness and education on cleaning your establishment with the goal of regaining consumer confidence.

#### *Promote Your Strengths*

Nova Scotia has a strong reputation. Our stunning coastal landscape is foundational. Our key strengths include:

- Halifax's large urban centre
- Scenic driving
- Lots to see and do
- Exciting festivals & events
- Ability to explore without having to drive too far

Use these qualities to your advantage to show your business's appeal to regional travellers.

### *Encourage Exploration Beyond the Familiar*

Regional travellers feel comfortable in Nova Scotia and tend to revisit their favourite places. Friends and family often dictate where they visit. Think of ways to encourage people to explore something new or do something they love in a new location – kayak in a different bay or hike a different trail.

### *Highlight Family-Friendly Activities and Attractions*

New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island are perceived as more family-friendly destinations than Nova Scotia.

This is an opportunity to promote family-friendly activities and attractions. Be sure to highlight safety as it's more important than ever to families.

### *Demonstrate Value*

Regional travel is generally seen as less expensive – travel costs are lower because people don't need to fly. Regional travellers may not be looking for overly expensive, luxury experiences so it is important to keep prices realistic. But this can be an opportunity to demonstrate the value of your product or service.

### *Leverage the Wide Range Of Highly Appealing Activities*

Nova Scotia offers a wide range of activities and attractions that are highly appealing to regional travellers. Consider how you can incorporate these activities into your business or service.

#### **Highest appeal / consideration:**

- Food & restaurants
- Beaches
- Cabot Trail
- Halifax Waterfront
- Historic sites
- Boating
- Fall touring
- Whale watching

#### **High appeal / consideration:**

- Hiking
- Festivals
- Glamping
- Resorts
- Lobster
- Local food producers
- Museums
- UNESCO Sites
- Kayaking
- Peggy's Cove
- Wineries
- Shopping
- Live music
- Tidal bore rafting
- Craft beer

# MARKETING STRATEGY

## RESETTING YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY

Based on a webinar presented by Heather Dalton with [m5 Marketing](#) on Thursday, May 28, 2020

Now is the perfect time to reflect on your business, get strategic about your marketing plan, and re-position your business for future growth. The instinct may be to jump in to try and make changes. But take time to step back, assess your needs, and find a way to deliver on them. Taking the time to do your research and define your strategy will be time well spent.

### One-hour Marketing Strategy

Creating a marketing plan is daunting to most people but following these four steps can help you create a simple marketing strategy.

#### *Your Audience*

Think about who your ultimate visitor will be this year as it may be very different from previous years.

Some questions you might want to consider: How old are they? Where do they live? What do they do for a living? What is their income bracket? What type of experience are they seeking? Do they want to be relaxed or invigorated?

#### *YOUR OFFERING*

Think about the existing product you have that might meet the needs and expectations of your audience and what needs could be met by developing new product offerings or partnerships with other businesses.

### Redefining Your Audience

As you re-evaluate your target audience and work to attract visitors from Nova Scotia or Atlantic Canada this year, it is important to not lose sight of your long-term plans. However, there is long-term value in attracting the local market, even if you've never done so before. Visitors to Nova Scotia comprise almost half of non-resident visitation.

#### *Challenge*

- People will spend \$2,000 or more per person to travel to sun or European destinations.
- They will think differently about spending that amount closer to home.
- How do we get them to think differently about spending that amount vacationing in Nova Scotia?

#### *Go to Market*

Think about how much you will charge and how you will sell, and what method and messages you will use to make potential customers aware of your product offering. How will your customers feel after they have experienced your product or service?

#### *Resources and Getting it Done*

Think about the resources required to make your plan happen – human, financial, marketing materials, expertise. When will you start creating, delivering, and selling your product offering?

### REGIONAL TRAVELLERS

- Less likely to be first time visitors
- More likely to take day trips
- More likely to take multiple, shorter stays.
- More likely to travel outside of peak season.



## The Four Ps

The four Ps of marketing are the key factors that are involved in the marketing of goods or services. When thinking about the four Ps of marketing in the current situation you must consider now, next year and the long-term.

PRODUCT	PRICE	PLACE	PROMOTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This is your experience / your takeaway</li> <li>- Practicality is important this year, ie. move inside experiences outside</li> <li>- Bundle and partner with others to make it worth the drive for the regional market</li> <li>- Opportunity to test new product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduced numbers and additional measures required to ensure customer safety make pricing a challenge</li> <li>- Increase your perceived value – value added</li> <li>- Offer pricing incentives. For example: stay 3 nights and get the 4<sup>th</sup> night 50% off</li> <li>- Discount as a last option</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public health requirements will necessitate a change in delivery of your product offering</li> <li>- Move experiences outside if possible</li> <li>- Add additional distribution channels such as online shopping, delivery or curb side pickup</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Start with a basic website and social media</li> <li>- Have the right assets to market to a different audience (photo, video)</li> <li>- Have a pricing strategy to help alleviate reduced profit margins</li> <li>- Add perceived value</li> <li>- Partner with others</li> <li>- Increase length of stay</li> </ul>

## Research

Research can be expensive and time consuming but there are cost effective practices to help you along the way:

1. *What have people already said?* Find out what people are saying about you on peer review sites such as TripAdvisor; look to your competitors and to similar businesses in your region and in other regions.
2. *What do your customers think?* Reach out by phone or email and ask them their favourite thing about your business; what you could do differently; run ideas by them; who they would like to see you partner with; and what they are most looking forward to. And train your staff to do this as well each time they engage with customers.
3. *Bootstrap market research.* Reach your target audience with a survey you develop yourself.

### BOOTSTRAP MARKET RESEARCH – HOW TO DO IT:

1. Define your audience (age / location)
2. Develop five questions
3. Pick an incentive (free product)
4. Set up a free [Survey Monkey account](#), set up your survey and test it with a friend.
5. Set up a [Facebook Ad](#) with a budget of \$50-100 for the audience you identified (be as narrow as possible)
6. Optional: [Link your Instagram](#) and Facebook accounts and run the ad on both
7. Review your results in Survey Monkey and take action!

## Lead Generation

- Lead generation is the initiation of consumer interest or enquiry into your products or services.
- Leads can be created for purposes such as list building, e-newsletter list acquisition or for sales leads.
- Lead generation is considered to be the bread and butter of tourism marketing.

When creating a message, be sure to cover the basics:

- Keep your message simple and ensure that it is up-to-date on all of your marketing channels. Onecore, strong message to attract is key.
- Be sure to include key information on your plan to reopen safely meeting all public health requirements.
- If your audience is primarily international, you will need to move quickly to build a regional following.
- Be sure to track your results – what's working / what's not working.

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**The more messages you try and communicate the lower the likelihood of communicating any single message.**

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## Brand

- Your brand is the essence of who you are and how you can deliver differently.
- Your brand is about what you say and do and how you make people feel.
- A brand doesn't usually change year over year, but this year is different.

### YOUR BRAND

- Is not your logo or your slogan
- Is mostly about what you do and a bit about what you say
- It can be a little aspirational, but still deliverable
- The magic trifecta is:
  1. Unique
  2. Salient
  3. Deliverable

## CHOOSE THE RIGHT MARKETING CHANNELS TO REACH YOUR TARGET CUSTOMERS

Based on a webinar presented by Heather Dalton with [m5 Marketing](#) on Thursday, July 9, 2020

Businesses can reach consumers now in more ways than ever before. Use these tips to select the most effective mediachannels and marketing tactics to promote your business to Atlantic Canadians.

### Getting Started

Before getting started, there are key considerations and questions you need to ask.

What are your objectives?	What stage of the purchasing process is your audience in?	Who is your target audience?	What is your budget?	What is your timeline?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Awareness</b> – are you trying to reach more people with your message? Do people know who you are?</li> <li>- <b>Performance</b> – what do you want people to do? For example: book your experience or product, watch a video, go to your social media channel, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is your audience aware of you?</li> <li>- If so, how do you get them to consider your business, and then get them to book or make a purchase?</li> <li>- Do you want people to leave a good review or help promote you by word of mouth?</li> </ul>	<p>Four key areas to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Demographic</b> – age, gender, education, income</li> <li>- <b>Geographic</b> – provincial, regional or more precise location</li> <li>- <b>Life stage</b> – families, mature, young with no children, middle aged with no children at home</li> <li>- <b>Psychographic</b> – interests, behaviour, motivations</li> </ul>	<p>Your budget will determine whether you go with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>A digital focus</b> for a smaller budget (online media)</li> </ul> <p>versus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>An integrated campaign</b> for a larger budget</li> </ul> <p>(online, offline and content marketing)</p>	<p>When do you need people to be aware or take action?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- right now?</li> <li>- next season?</li> <li>- next year?</li> </ul>

## Media Consumption

There has been a dramatic change in the last ten years in media consumption and there is increased fragmentation across channels with conventional radio and TV giving way to streaming services for both. This may make things more complex and more difficult to decide where to focus your efforts. Overall, there is more media consumption - people are consuming multiple media channels at one time.

### *Time spent per week (Source Vividata Atlantic Canada Spring 2020)*

#### AGE 25-64

Online: 24 hours  
 Mobile: 14 hours  
 Social Media: 13 hours  
 Magazines: 1 hour  
 TV: 21 hours  
 Radio: 9 hours  
 Newspaper: 0 hours

#### AGE 18-34

Online: 28 hours  
 Mobile: 20 hours  
 Social Media: 17 hours  
 Magazines: 1 hour  
 TV: 19 hours  
 Radio: 8 hours  
 Newspaper: 0 hours

### *Digital Media Consumption (Age 25-64)*

- 61% of time spent on digital media is spent on social media
- 57% of time spent on digital media is via mobile device
- 80% of time spent on mobile is in apps with use of social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and YouTube) being very high
- Video viewing, led by mobile, had the highest growth rate in time spent on digital media in the last year

## Online Tactics

### *Paid Social Media Advertising*

Paid social media advertising, such as Facebook ads, is a cost-effective and flexible way to reach highly targeted audiences. You can manage it yourself and easily see who the audience is, control and plan your spend based on the audience you select, and grow your audience or keep it targeted.

Social media is used in four different ways:

*Traffic* – place an ad that is designed to drive traffic. You want people to click through and do something or read something.

*Video* – the length of a Facebook or Instagram video should be kept to 15 seconds or less, with the first five seconds being the time to get the core message

across to the viewer. Do not rely on sound as most people have their sound off when viewing videos.

*Acquisition* – grow your followers so you can communicate with an audience who potentially uses your products or services frequently and provide them with updates on your specials, what's new, etc.

*Engagement* – use content that encourages people to comment, like, and share your ads.

### *Digital Video*

Digital Video is highly effective and there are two types to consider:



Pre-roll – a promotional video that plays before the content the user has selected, like TV with a short format.

YouTube – good targeting with both short and longformats.

### *Digital Buying*

Direct Buy – the process of purchasing placements for ads on websites, apps and other digital platforms offering good visibility, controlled placement and qualitytraffic that is more likely to convert.

Google Display – these visual ads that are displayed onwebsites, YouTube videos, mobile apps, etc. across theGoogle network are a cost

effective way to get a lot of views and raise brand awareness, but placement is not controlled and the audience may not be as targeted.

### *Search Engine Marketing (SEM)*

Search Engine Marketing is the process of gaining website traffic by purchasing ads on search engines. SEM is most effective in generating sign ups and bookings. It is generally an “Always On” tactic with consistent audience engagement. Budgets are smaller and fluctuate based on keyword demand, and SEM needs to be optimized for performance with adjustments to budgets and pacing regularly. Best practices and ad structure change often.

## Offline Tactics Considerations

### *Television*

**Pros:** influential; drives search traffic and increased interaction with your brand; cost efficient in the Maritimes; audience targeted through selective stationsand programming.

**Cons:** full-motion video is expensive and often cost prohibitive; television cannot be targeted by region; inventory availability can be a challenge if not purchasedin advance.

### *Radio*

**Pros:** can be geographically targeted to a city or region;can be audience targeted by choosing the right station format; can be produced by the radio station at no cost.

**Cons:** expensive to buy provincially; fragmented listenership in major markets making it costly to achievesufficient reach and frequency.

**Out-of-Home**  
Out-of-home advertising is any visual advertising mediafound outside of the home such as billboards and signs,bus shelters, etc.

**Pros:** digital boards are placed in locations with the highest traffic count; can be low cost per view or impression; displayed continuously; flexibility on the adformat.

**Cons:** only available in major centres and cities; has limited messaging space; can suffer weather damage.

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### *Print*

Print advertising is any advertisement that is printed inhard copy publications (newspapers, magazines, journals)

**Pros:** seen as a credible, trustworthy news source; effective way to reach the 55+ market; usually subscription based so more likely to be consumed; newspaper ads appear in the digital editions which havehigh subscription rates.

**Cons:** limited targeting abilities; publications may be limited outside of major urban centres; in the past five years subscription rates have dropped drastically; print isexpensive overall on a cost per thousand views basis.

## Typical Key Performance Indicators

### Online Campaigns

*Impressions* – the total number of times digital advertisements display on someone's screen

*Click through rate* - the ratio of users who click on a specific link to the number of total users who view a page, email, or advertisement

*Conversions* - a visitor to your website completes a desired goal, such as filling out a form or making a purchase

*Website analytics* - the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of web data such as time spent on site, actions taken, exits from the site, unique visitors and return rate

*Social media engagement* - measures the public shares, likes and comments for a business' social media efforts

*Cost per click; cost per view; cost per conversion* – the amount paid for each

### Offline Campaigns

*Total audience / % of reach* - the total number of different people or households exposed, at least once, to a medium during a given period

*Gross rating points* - a measure of the size of an advertising campaign by a specific medium or schedule

*Frequency* – the number of times that those customers will be exposed to the message

*Readership / circulation* – the number of readers / total number of copies

*Cost per thousand; cost per rating point* – the amount paid for each

*Market research / awareness surveys* - gathering of information about consumers' needs and preferences and awareness of your product or service

# DIGITAL MARKETING

## TOP 5 FREE OR LOW-COST WAYS TO GET YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE IN ORDER

Based on a webinar presented by [Alison K Consulting](#) in partnership with Digital Nova Scotia

A strong online presence is key to keeping your current customers engaged and attracting new customers to your business. There is plenty of low-hanging fruit to be had in getting your online presence in order. These are five ways you can improve your business's digital profile without a big budget.

### 1. Newsletters

Newsletters help you stay top of mind for your customers. It's easy to track what interests your customers based on the links they click on in your newsletter, and you can use audience segmentation to target specific readers.

#### *Get Started*

1. Set up your newsletter in the selected platform (ie: MailChimp)
2. Create a page on your website just for newsletter signups.
3. Send out personal, positive content
4. Promote newsletter on social media – encourage people to sign up!
5. Setup tags and audience segments so you can target your readers with relevant content.

#### CONTENT IDEAS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

- behind the scenes videos/photos
- staff profiles
- useful tips to help during this time, resources such as virtual tours or classes
- retrospective of past events

### 2. Google My Business

A free Google My Business listing provides visibility on the world's largest search engine and maps. It is simple to manage and makes it easy for customers to post reviews. It's also a great source of insights about how customers are searching for and finding your business, and whether they visited your site, looked at directions or viewed photos.

#### INCLUDE IN YOUR LISTING:

- Contact information
- Products
- Offers and events
- Photos

#### *Get Started*

1. Create or claim your business listing on Google My Business using a Gmail account.
2. Fill in the details about your business (Google will call, email or send a postcard to confirm).
3. Complete your Google My Business listing, including business profile and photos.
4. Ask your customers to post reviews.
5. Review insights to inform your marketing strategy
6. Update hours or mark yourself as temporarily closed during COVID-10.
7. Create posts about events, services or offers.

### 3. Website Auditing

A website audit will help ensure your site is meeting the needs of you and your customers. It can be done for free, and there are no skills required. It can help you refine your goals for your website and identify areas that are strong or need to improve, allowing you to focus your time.

#### Get Started

1. Once or twice a year, do a review of the content on your website. Make sure it is up to date, relevant, and engaging for your customers.
2. Create a guest persona based on your ideal customer and create a situation that might bring them to your site. Then go through your site looking through the lens of their situation, paying attention to tone, clarity and flow of information and calls to action.
3. Interview your customers and website users to see if your website is delivering the information they need.

#### QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CUSTOMERS:

- How likely are you to recommend our website to a friend?
- Did you have trouble finding something?
- Is our information clear (pricing, amenities, services)?
- Who else did you consider before visiting our site?

### Social Media Automation

Automating your social media posts helps to cut down on the amount of time you have to spend on social media posts. You can schedule content to maintain the frequency of your posts, without having to be on social media all the time. Just be mindful of prescheduled content that might need to be changed based on what's happening in the world and current sentiments.

#### Get Started

1. Select a social media automation platform such as Buffer or Hootsuite.
2. Develop evergreen content – content that isn't time sensitive such as testimonials, media coverage, and timeless blog posts.
3. Share your blog posts (day published, 2 days, 2 weeks, 2 months after published).
4. Acknowledge your community, tag them in posts.

### Google Analytics

Google Analytics gives you insights into what people do when they are on your website, including what pages they view and how they got to your site. It gives you a realistic picture of the activity taking place on your website at no cost. Although it can be a bit intimidating, you don't need to know everything about the interface to start pulling useful information, and Google Academy offers free online tutorials.

#### Get Started

1. Sign up for a Google Analytics account using a gmail account.
2. Install Google Analytics on your website using code provided.
3. Set a schedule for reviewing your analytics, looking at behaviour, site content, and your goals.
4. Make annotations in Analytics about events that could impact traffic on the site, such as a social media campaign.



# GOOGLE MY BUSINESS AND OTHER GOOGLE TOOLS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Based on a [webinar](#) presented by Donna Chang and Jenny Vincent with [Google Canada](#) on Thursday, November 5, 2020

Google My Business is a free and easy-to-use tool for businesses and organizations to manage their profile across Google. Use this tip sheet to learn more about Google tools for your business.

## Why Use Google My Business?

Using Google My Business lets you engage with your customers with a business profile that shows who you are, what you do and what you have to offer. Customers can also post reviews, which can help build your business reputation.

### *Stand Out*

- Be in control of how customers see your business
- Show what's unique about your business

### *Make it easy for customers to do business with you*

- People can reach out to you easily and in the moment
- Respond directly to messages, reviews, bookings, and reservations

### *Keep customers coming back*

- Share your latest offers, events, photos and more to keep customers coming back
- Showcase great reviews and conversations with customers

## How to get started

Follow these steps to create a business profile with Google My Business:

- Sign into the Google account that you use for your business. If you don't have one, create one at
- [Create Your Google Account](#)
- Go to your Google Play or App Store, search for Google My Business and install the application
- Create your business profile with information on your location, the areas you service, etc.
- Verify and claim your business to help ensure the accuracy of your business listing across Google. Most verification methods arrive or can be completed in about five days, however, there have been delays due to COVID-19

## Google My Business Features

Help customers find you, get in touch, and see what makes you different from competitors by using these features. You can now update your business profile on Google Search and Maps.

### *Photos*

Bring your business to life with photos of your business on Google Search and Maps

**Logo and Cover Photo** Create a consistent online presence by bringing your using your logo and branding on your Business Profile.

### *Website*

Customers are more likely to buy from a business that has a website highlighting what makes them unique. Link to your website or create a free website from your business profile.

### *Attributes*

Provide your customers with details of your business to make them feel connected. Include details like whether you offer WiFi or outdoor seating or ocean views.

**Category-specific features** Categories are used to describe what you offer to your customers. For example, you can add a menu directly to your profile.

### *Posts*

[Click here for best practices](#) on sharing the latest news on events, offers and more.

### *Product Catalogue*

Show people what you have to offer, by showcasing your products on Google Search and Maps.

### *Custom Sections*

Choose the order in which you wish to have your business profile customized to highlight your offers, products, photos, and events.

### *Short Name*

Create a unique [short or customized name](#) and share it so that customers can enter directly into the browser's address bar and go directly to your Business Profile. Include the location to make the name more distinct.

### *Phone Number*

Give customers the phone number where they can reach you to learn more about your business, ask questions, place an order, etc.

### *Q & A*

Instantly provide the info your customers want by highlighting frequently asked questions and answers on your profile.

### *Bookings*

Using this feature will allow your customers to make reservations, book an appointment, or buy tickets directly from Google Search and Maps.

### *Messaging*

This feature is available on the Google My Business App and allows customers to connect with you in the moment and for you to easily reply from your mobile device. It can be turned on and off and you can create an automated message for your customers. If you don't have a third-party provider, you can also receive booking requests through Messaging.

### *Reviews*

Positive feedback helps build trust with your customers.

They can tell you about their experience and you can reply.

**Follow and Welcome Offers** Customers look for promotions and discounts when they're searching for a business online. Create a welcome offer to attract more customers, which is only available if they "follow" you.

### *Insights*

See how many customers have viewed your profile and connected with you on Google. Use [Insights](#) to get a greater understanding of how your customers find you and the actions they take afterwards.

### *Google Ads*

Launch a Google Ads campaign directly from Google My Business to boost your reach and find more customers.

### GMB Guidance During COVID-19

- Make sure your profile includes up-to-date hours of operation.
- Communicate temporary closures – you can now mark your business as “temporarily closed” on Google.
- Advise your potential customers of the COVID-19 protocols you have in place and let them know what to expect. For example: appointment required; temperature checks required, etc.
- Provide accurate information on the services your business is offering - add or edit the dine-in, take-out, delivery, in-store pickup, and curbside pickup features.
- Create a COVID-19 Post – share updates about what’s going on with your business through posts and continue to communicate any business changes. [Click here to learn how to create a post.](#)
- Stay up-to-date on GMB – check the COVID-19 dashboard card on your account for the latest updates and features in your area.

### Google My Business App

Access all the features, connect with your customers, and keep your profile updated while on the go.

- Get instant insights on the **Home** tab and see how many people are finding you and taking action.
- Use the **Customers** tab to see your messages, reviews, and who’s following you.
- Manage your business information on the go from the **Profile** tab.
- Upload a photo, create an offer or share a photo by simply tapping **Post**.
- Reward new customers instantly with exclusive **Welcome Offers** – only available on the App.
- Use **Manage Users** to add Managers to help monitor your account.

### Mobile Site Speed

Use the [Test My Site](#) tool to improve your mobile site speed.

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*Decreasing mobile site load times by one tenth of a second results in conversion rates going up by 8.4% for retail and 10.1% for travel.*

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### Google Analytics

With Google Analytics, measurement and insights are easily accessible. Learn who is visiting your site, how they find you, and what action they take on your site. The [Analytics Academy](#) offers free online courses to help you learn about Google’s measurement tools that will help improve your website through intelligent data collection and analysis.

### Google Ads

- Search touches every aspect of our lives and there are more than 3.5 billion Google searches conducted every day.
- Use [Skillshop](#)’s e-learning courses to learn at your own pace about creating and customizing Google Search campaigns that get your ads in front of the customers looking for what your business has to offer.
- [Google Trends](#) lets you keep up with what people are searching for on Google. You can see what searches were trending on Google by year and more.
- The [Keyword Planner](#) will help you get keyword ideas that can help you reach customers interested in your products or services.

# INTRODUCTION TO SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION FOR CONTENT

Based on a webinar presented by Michael MacMillan of [MacMillan Search](#) on Thursday, December 3, 2020

Increase search traffic to your website with your content. Learn the tactics to discover the questions that potential customers are asking in search engines, and how best to create content to answer these questions and get your website at the top of their search results. These tips will help make it easier for customers to find your business online.

## Developing Compelling Content

To optimize and increase the user experience, start with what is essential for your business and move to what improves your competitiveness. Discover the questions that people are asking in search results and develop compelling content to answer those questions.

**There are four questions to ask when creating content.**

### 1. WHY SHOULD I ANSWER THE QUESTIONS MY POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS ARE ASKING?

- *To discover content ideas.* Start with a content plan and a few simple questions. Finding out how many people are searching these questions in an average month is a great way to develop content ideas that go deeper into a topic.
- *To build authority.* Authority is the qualitative measure that strengthens the overall visibility and ranking of your website. Backlinks, or incoming links, are links created when one website links to another. Having links to your website on one to two high-quality sites is better than several from below average pages. Create content that is more likely to be shared and can be shared outside of your normal networks.
- *Increase relevancy.* You are the expert on the subject matter. Be sure that the questions you are answering and the content you are creating is linking back to your main service offering.
- *Increase qualified traffic.* Qualified traffic refers to those people who spend more time when they visit your website and who are most likely to convert to a paying customer.

### 2. HOW DO I DISCOVER WHAT QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED?

There are many ways to identify relevant questions that customers are using to find your services or products.

- [Google Search Console](#) – use this to discover what keywords are driving traffic to your main service or product page.
  - Log into Google Search Console
  - Filter from your Home Page if you have one service or product offering or your Service Pages if you have multiple service offerings. This will help you see keywords you are ranking for.
  - Filter out any queries that include the name of your company, business or brand.
- [Keyword Surfer](#) – use this free Chrome extension that allows you to see search volumes directly in Google Search results and discover new keyword ideas.
  - Provides you with monthly search volume, competitiveness and other keyword ideas that search results have for a particular search query.
- To determine which keywords are driving more volume, create a spreadsheet to record keyword ideas and the volume of each so that you do not go after a keyword that no one is searching for.



- In most search results, there is a section called “*People also ask*” which is a good place to start when you are trying to determine the kinds of questions people are asking. Record these questions in your spreadsheet for further exploration
- [AnswerThePublic.com](https://www.answerthepublic.com/) – enter a keyword that’s driving traffic and it comes up with the who, what, when, where and why. You can easily extract this information to make a list of additional questions people are asking. This will allow you to see the volume behind the search results. *TIP: Always remove the question mark because people do not use it when searching.*
- [AlsoAsked.com](https://www.alsoasked.com/) – discover the hierarchy of the questions to create secondary subject matter.

### 3. HOW DO I ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?

- Determine how many people are searching for specific keywords. If no one is searching for the keywords you’re targeting, then no one will find your content. However, if you only target keywords with high search volume, it won’t be easy to compete with bigger sites and get your content ranking. So, there is relevancy in keywords that have lower volume.
- Be specific with the information related to your product and you will rank higher.
- Find out what the competitors are saying in their content and see what kind of questions they’re answering. In the search results, look at the ones above, and also the ones below.
- Create your content and determine if you already have any that’s ranking. You want to leverage the content that’s already ranking and not compete with yourself.
- Search your own site if you’re able to, or use [search operators](#), a series of special characters and commands that extend regular text searches’ capabilities.

### 4. SHOULD I REFINE EXISTING CONTENT OR CREATE NEW?

- If the content already exists, re-work what’s already there to better address the questions your customers are searching for online. If it doesn’t exist, it’s an opportunity to create new content.
- Link back to your main product or service. Build peripheral content to support this main product or service.
- Anchor text is the visible, clickable text of a link. Use anchor text that includes variants of keywords you used when you were discovering the questions people are asking.
- Nurture your potential customers through the process by having some way to convert them on your site. Conversion can be a call to action, such as a “click here to book” or “sign up” for your newsletter.
- It can take up to six months to see SEO results. Distribute the content through your email marketing, social marketing or reposting in other formats. You can also use paid media to supplement such as an [Adword Campaign](#), leading to external backlinks. And if necessary, re-work your content.

# SEO: WHY SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

Based on a webinar presented by Michael MacMillan of MacMillan Search on Wednesday, May 20, 2020

Search engine optimization (SEO) is about improving the search engine results for your business so you can attract more people to your website, and make sure the people coming to your site take the action you want them to take. Learn how to keep your clients informed and up-to-date using your homepage's metadata and Google My Business; determine the types of keywords that drive people to your site and what is currently driving traffic using Google Search Console; and how to schedule your content using Google Trends.

## Using your Search Engine Results Page (SERP)

SERP are the pages displayed by search engines in response to a query by a user. Most people will search your brand at some point before or during their working relationship with you. The top result for these types of queries is almost always a [Google My Business informed knowledge panel](#) and your homepage. What they see when they search your brand is crucial.

Home Page Title	Home Page Meta Description	Crafting the Home Page Result
<p><b>Things to consider:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directly influences your search ranking</li> <li>• Mostly driven by branded searches</li> <li>• Search engines look for keywords. The closer keywords are to the front of the title, the better</li> <li>• There is limited space, don't use "home" in title</li> <li>• Structure: "Your top-level service offering or product"   "Brand Name" how you got started</li> </ul>	<p><b>Things to consider:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not directly influence search ranking</li> <li>• Any keywords &amp; variants being searched will be bolded</li> <li>• Make it readable &amp; compelling to increase clicks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Things to ask:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it the content you defined?</li> <li>• Is it truncated?</li> <li>• Would you click on it?</li> </ul>

## Google My Business (GMB)

[Google My Business](#) is a free tool that can help you create and manage your Google listing, which appears when customers search for you on Google and Google Maps. It can help you attract new customers and share compelling information about your business.

### Opportunities:

- Keep it up to date (e.g. mark yourself temporarily closed if applicable during the COVID-19 pandemic)
- Edit your business description (e.g. any service changes due to public health directives)
- Review for hours & services disclaimer
- Add a COVID-19 update post to your profile

Additional details at [Google's Guidance for Businesses affected by COVID-19](#)

## Keywords

Keywords or key phrases on your website help match you with your potential customer when they search using those keywords or phrases. Selecting high-quality, relevant keywords is essential.

## Discover Keywords

Use [Google Search Console](#) to:

- Determine which pages are the most visited
- Determine which keywords drove that traffic
- Look for keywords in striking distance of your goal to be on the first page, so you can incorporate them on yoursite

*Striking distance keywords:*

- Keywords where your average position in a search results for those terms is in the 4<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> position. When you are in this position, a lot of the signals to search engines are there. A battle for attention (click through rates and time that a user spends viewing a document)

## How to Optimize Striking Distance

Ask these questions:

- What do the top of the SERPS look like?
- Is the data shown in searches the data you defined?
- Is your information truncated?
- How can you create better content than the top results?
- What other relevant questions can you answer?

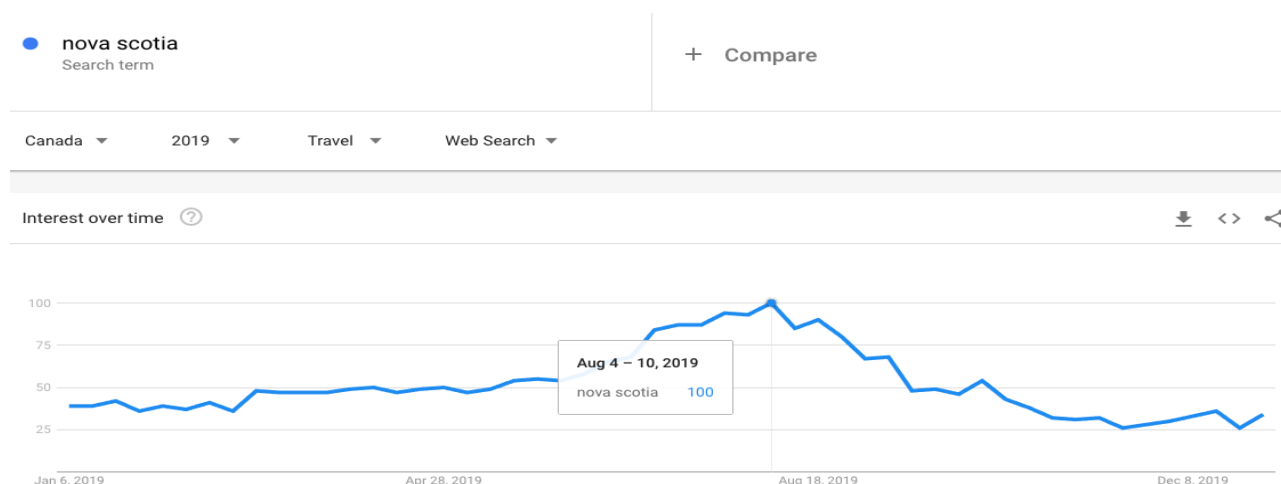
## New Content Ideas

- What questions being asked have monthly searches? Use [Keyword Surfer](#) to determine the volume.
- Tourism will be back, how can you engage people while they are in the discovery stage? What is your (new)success metric? (e.g. Newsletter, mailing list, etc.)

<https://www.macmillansearch.com/blog/google-search-console-for-newbies/>

## Historical Trends

Historical trends display the trends for a selected period of time – 24 hours, last week, three months, or a year. Determine the best time to post or boost posts using [Google Trends](#) to see historically, when searches for your content subject peaked.



# SOCIAL MEDIA

## BUILDING CONNECTION WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA –PART 1

Based On A Webinar Presented By Ingrid Deon From [Word-Craft](#) In Partnership With Digital NovaScotia

Social media use has increased by 60% since the COVID-19 pandemic began. It is one of the best ways to connect with people who are already interested in your business and is vital for reaching those who haven't heard about you yet. Whether you're just getting started or already have social media accounts for your tourism business, this information will help you get to the next level to connect with your customers.

### Start by setting goals

Set goals for your social media marketing that are specific, measurable and actionable.

- Don't plan too far ahead
- Stay nimble and continuously re-evaluate your goals
- Post evergreen content (things that aren't time sensitive like how you got started or local features)
- Stay relevant

### What to post and where

#### *Facebook*

Anything goes on Facebook with a broad audience of users in the 28-65 age group. Videos, live videos, your blog posts, events, and third-party content all work well. Live video engagement on Facebook is three times higher than recorded video.

#### *Instagram*

Beautiful photos, inspirational quotes and stories work well on Instagram. Use your bio to post links on Instagram as links aren't clickable on grid photos.

#### *Facebook & Instagram "Live"*

Engage with your followers by hosting an "Ask me anything" session with your followers where you

answer their questions live. Create an online demonstration with virtual tours or experiences; and entertain your followers with local music from your area or a chef cooking a signature dish.

Keep your "live" posts authentic.

#### *Twitter*

Connect with followers with news, current trends, links to blog posts, third-party articles, and GIFs. Use trending hashtags (#) relevant to your business.

#### *LinkedIn*

LinkedIn is designed for business professionals and is a great place to share job and career info, industry news, and any professional content.

### Keep your destination top of mind

It's important for your potential visitors to remember you!

- Your customers love to help. Use your social media posts to encourage them to:
  - Shop online
  - Buy gift cards
  - Write a positive review
  - Order delivery or curbside pickup
  - Post memories of your business
  - Participate in contests by posting photos of past visits



- Share the latest news about your business or organization.
- Feature other local businesses and encourage your audience to support them.

### Best time to post

The best time to post depends on your actual followers so it's important to watch their behaviour by checking your analytics. During COVID-19, the best times to post are:

*Facebook* / Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 1

p.m. AT *Instagram* / Monday, Tuesday and Friday at

1 p.m. AT *Twitter* / Friday between 9-11 a.m. AT

*LinkedIn* / Wednesday at 5 p.m. AT; Thursday between 12-1 p.m. AT; Friday at 1 p.m. AT

### Creating Content

Most businesses will have four to seven content pillars. Always be considerate with the tone of your posts. Be kind, be human, and be thoughtful. Here are some examples of content pillars you could use for your business:

#### OUR STORY

- Sharing the company story – how you got started.
- The people behind the scenes.
- Employee profiles
- Showing off swag
- Milestones and anniversaries

#### PRODUCT

- Showcase product
- Announce the release of new product
- Highlight ingredients (ie: local)
- Ask for user opinions
- Education

#### PROMOTIONS

- Giveaways and contests
- Partnering with local businesses
- Sales & specials

#### PRO TIPS

- Travelling responsibly
- Best practices
- Operator tips

### Hashtags #

A hashtag, or hash symbol (#), is a tag that social media users include in posts that helps other users easily find messages with a specific theme or content. Hashtags are commonly used on Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Hashtags are not useful on Facebook.

*Instagram* / 9-12 per post; in caption or first comment; reuse some; try new ones; relevant to your ideal customer

*Twitter* / Less than 5 per post; watch for trending hashtags relevant to your business/customers

*LinkedIn* / 2-3 per post; trending hashtags; make sure they're relevant

## BUILDING CONNECTION WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA – PART 2

Based On A Webinar Presented By Ingrid Deon From [Word-Craft](#) In Partnership With Digital Nova Scotia On Thursday, June 11, 2020

As a follow up to the information provided in [Building Connection with Your Customers Through Social Media – Part 1](#), Part 2 digs deeper into engaging with your customers, making sense of insights, and boosting and targeting posts.

### Engaging with your audience

Social media engagement is the interaction between the customer and your brand and is the foundation for a

*Engagements are likes, shares, comments, and clicks.*

long-term relationship with your target customer.

Many companies are seeing an increase in engagement since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic with 44 more engagements received per day on average across all networks and industries and 7.3 more engagements per post per day on average across all networks and industries. Now is a good time to engage with your customers!

### Reopening Strategy

There are four things to consider when planning your reopening strategy:

- *Anticipate questions* – prepare responses to possible questions and create FAQs.
- *Customer expectations* – let your customers know what their experience will be like including safety precautions and distancing options.
- *Post the most important info* – your reopening date, updated hours, service changes, alternative options for service delivery, contact info.
- *Photos and videos* – they paint a clear picture and help avoid confusion. For example, a video tour of your business highlighting the things you have done to address safety concerns.

### Answer questions

People have a lot of questions!

- Be honest and transparent.
- Draft sample responses.
- Post FAQs.
- Use auto-response (**wisely!**) For example: Thank you for your message. We will respond to your request within 24 hours.

### Engaging with Dissatisfied Customers

- Publicly fix things – if possible.
- Post an empathetic response.
- If necessary, move the conversation to a private message.
- Hide abusive or offensive comments from the general public, but don't delete them.

### P.E.T. ENGAGEMENT METHOD

- **P**lan – anticipate issues and have a solution
- **E**mpathy – understand and put yourself in the customer's shoes
- **T**ransparent – admit that you don't have all the answers

## Making sense of Insights

Social media insights are the useable learnings you acquire from analyzing your social media data. They allow you to figure out what makes your content successful (or not), and better understand what to do (or not do) in the future. The insights you track depend on your goals. Each social media platform offers data insights, which you can access from your page.

Brand Awareness	Community Building	Sales and Conversions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reach – the number of <b>people</b> who have seen your post.</li> <li>Impressions – the number of <b>times</b> your post has been seen.</li> <li>Audience growth (%) – follower growth by week, month or quarter.</li> <li>Impressions will always be higher than reach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement Rate – the number of likes / comments / shares relative to the number of impressions. The benchmark for most social media platforms is 1%.</li> <li>Demographics – who is following your page? Know your audience.</li> <li>Best time to post – when are your followers online?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link clicks – the number of times a link in a social media post has been clicked. Which posts are encouraging people to click through?</li> <li>Sales inquiries – how many people are sending private message about your product or service?</li> </ul>

### Start Small

- Don't overwhelm yourself by checking too many analytics.
- Choose one or two that match your goals for social media.
- Decide whether to check weekly, monthly or quarterly.
- Be consistent!

## Boosting and Targeting Posts on Facebook

Boosting your social media posts is a way to increase the number of people that see your content. But avoid using the "Boost Post" button which lets the platform take the driver's seat. Use Ads Manager instead.

### Choose Your Objective

Brand Awareness – for general awareness  
Engagement – for likes, comments and shares

Traffic – for when you want your audience to click a link

Video Views – when you want your audience to watch a video

### Create Your Audience

Geographic Location – target by country, province, area or street

Age range and gender – men and women anywhere from 18 to 65+

Demographics – education, relationship, work  
Interests – hobbies, industry, business

**Tip: Don't get too granular**

### Placements And Budget

Where will your boosted post appear?

- Facebook newsfeed
- Marketplace
- Instagram
- Audience Network

How much will you spend?

- Daily budget
- Lifetime budget

### Free Ways To Boost

- Events and promotions groups
- Small business groups
- Industry groups
- Any groups where you can find your ideal customer

## OTHER MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

### PROMOTING YOUR COMMUNITY OR BUSINESS WITH TOURISM NOVA SCOTIA

Based On A Webinar Presented By Michelle Sears With [Tourism Nova Scotia](#) On Thursday, June 3, 2020

Tourism Nova Scotia promotes Nova Scotia as a vacation destination by showing potential visitors the many things that they can see and do while on vacation in Nova Scotia. The focus of Tourism Nova Scotia's marketing is on experiences that research shows will motivate people to book a trip. Tourism Nova Scotia offers a range of opportunities for tourism operators to promote their business.

#### **NovaScotia.com**

The official trip planning website, [NovaScotia.com](#), is the main call to action on most of Tourism Nova Scotia's marketing. The goal is to provide trip planning inspiration and connect travellers directly with businesses so they can hopefully make a sale.

In February 2020, a new mobile friendly website was launched with new features including an interactive map tool with date and category filters and the addition of Itineraries and Stories sections.

In 2019, there were over 3.6 million entrances into NovaScotia.com with the average stay being 2 minutes per session.

### COVID-19 INFORMATION UPDATES

As you prepare to reopen your business to visitors, it's the perfect time to update your listing on NovaScotia.com and your business website. Be sure to let your visitors know:

- How you are abiding by Public Health Guidelines to ensure their safety
- Changes to your dates and hours of operation

COVID-19-related updates for NovaScotia.com business listings can be sent to [novascotia@novascotia.ca](mailto:novascotia@novascotia.ca)

#### **Business Listings**

Nova Scotia tourism businesses may be eligible for a free business listing. Business listings include:

- Places to Stay
- Attractions
- Eat and Drink
- Outdoor Activities and Tours

For more information on eligibility and listing criteria, visit <https://tourismns.ca/marketingeligibilitycriteria>.

Application forms are available at <https://tourismns.ca/promoteyourbusiness>

#### **YOUR BUSINESS LISTING**

- Large photo display and carousel of up to 10 photos
- Business description and information on your area
- Links to your experience, package and/or event listing(s)
- Contact info prominently displayed with links to your website, social media, "Book Now" and Trip Advisor or other peer review ratings

## Partner Portal

If you are organizing a festival or event, offer a unique experience or have a travel package or special deal that you would like to add and link to your tourism business listing, you can create your free listing by logging in to the Partner Portal.

Add all of the required information and submit for approval at

<https://partners.novascotia.com/>

## Festivals and Events

Categories include:

Don't Miss  
Community  
Food & Drink  
Arts & Culture  
Music  
Outdoor & Sports

If your event has been cancelled for 2021, be sure to add your 2021 dates as soon as possible so that potential visitors have a chance to learn about your event.

For more information on hosting events, visit <http://www.eventsnovascotia.com/>

## Packages

A travel package on NovaScotia.com makes trip planning easy for the visitor by pairing up transportation, accommodations, meals, tickets to events or attractions, guided tours and/or an activity or experience.

A package combines at least two purchasable items at one price point and is a great way to partner with others in your area.

A travel deal must include an obvious savings or deal, i.e. stay two nights and receive a percentage off the third night.

## Experiences

Unique, authentic experiences distinguish Nova Scotia from other travel destinations and provide our visitors with entertaining and/or educational

activities that give them a sense of personal connection to Nova Scotia and its people. It's about visitors being active participants, trying a new skill, learning about who we are or how we live, or challenging themselves. It's about meeting the people in our communities that have a special skill to share or an interesting story to tell.

If you're interested in developing an experience, contact the Tourism Development team at: [tourismdevelopment@novascotia.ca](mailto:tourismdevelopment@novascotia.ca).

## Boost your Community Profile with Community Pages

Nova Scotia's seven distinct travel regions are home to diverse, welcoming communities and towns.

Information contained on community pages needs to be relevant to visitors, such as festivals & events, and include visitor experiences and tourism business listings.

If you're interested in having your town or community on NovaScotia.com, contact Michelle Sears at [Michelle.Sears@novascotia.ca](mailto:Michelle.Sears@novascotia.ca)

## Itineraries

Itineraries are recommended road trips for visitors to make the most of their stay and offer up suggestions on what to see and do in an area or multiple regions. They are often themed, such as a Food & Wine Tour. The itineraries currently on NovaScotia.com were created with Tourism Nova Scotia's core markets and Explorer Quotient segments in mind but given the current situation, there is a need to create itineraries for the local / regional market.

## Stories

The Stories section is a growing collection of tips from locals to help visitors discover more off-the-beaten-path adventures. These blog article stories can often be a bit more tailored or niche than an itinerary – such as a "Perfect Beach Day".

## Opportunities

### Advertising

Featured listings that appear throughout NovaScotia.com are paid advertising opportunities with limited spots. If you're interested in a featured listing, contact Meaghan Giffin [Meaghan.Giffin@novascotia.ca](mailto:Meaghan.Giffin@novascotia.ca)

### Photo and Video Assets

Nova Scotia tourism operators can take advantage of Tourism Nova Scotia's extensive library of high-quality visual materials to help promote their business or region. For information on approved uses contact Sunny Bray [Sunny.Bray@novascotia.ca](mailto:Sunny.Bray@novascotia.ca).

Register to access visual materials at <https://novascotia.barberstock.com/>

## Social Media

### CONTENT THAT WORKS

High quality images, video and travel articles that:

- speak to a tourism audience by providing helpful information about what to see, eat, experience in Nova Scotia
- are exciting and interesting so that people will want to engage with them and share

### PHOTO TIPS

Images that work best with our audiences:

- bright colours
- clear and in focus
- unique angles and interesting composition
- authentic to Nova Scotia

For Social Media questions, contact Cynthia Bragg [Cynthia.Bragg@novascotia.ca](mailto:Cynthia.Bragg@novascotia.ca)

### Featured Posts

Use our hashtag **#visitnovascotia** in social posts and tag **@visitnovascotia** in your instastories and tweets for a chance to be featured.

### CrowdRiff

Using **#visitnovascotia** on shared photos and video can allow us to pull great imagery into NovaScotia.com through CrowdRiff user-generated photo galleries



## WORKING WITH INFLUENCERS

Based On The [Webinar](#) Presented By Dalene Heck With [HMI](#) On Thursday, October 22, 2020

### What is an Influencer?

Influencers use social media to communicate with their audience through content such as live-stream video, blog posts, photo and video, etc. They have the power to affect the purchasing decisions of others because of their knowledge, status or relationship with their audience. But how do you decide whether you should work with them? Or how you should work with them? Use these tips to make the most of working with influencers.

### Why work with Influencers?

The power that influencers yield over their audience is a form of modern-day “word of mouth” advertising and there are endless ways to work together.

#### *A “Seamless” Sell*

Modern consumers expect you to converse with them and 70% of consumers want to learn about products through online content as opposed to traditional advertising. Influencers who do their job well will organically incorporate your messages into their posts and make your business part of their overall story - making it seamless.

#### *Driving Traffic & Raising Awareness*

Influencers have the power to drive traffic to your website and social media channels which ultimately influences sales. They can also be freelance writers who contribute to other publications, which can help you get exposure in other places.

#### *Organic Links*

An organic link is a link from someone else’s website, blog, or social media page where they linked to your site without being asked to. Working with respected bloggers will garner organic links in their content which can help you rise in the rank of Google’s algorithm and drive traffic to your website.

#### *Trackable Results*

A blogger can tell you exactly how many people read their blog, how long they stayed on the page, how many times people clicked through to your website, and how many people were reached on social media posts. This can help you decide on future marketing decisions with a much stronger handle on what is working and what is not.

### Evaluating Influencers

Before deciding to work with an influencer, you need to outline your goals for an influencer campaign. These goals will help you narrow down your list of influencers.

#### WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

- Brand awareness
- Quality content generation
- Traffic boost
- Sales / lead generation
- Social Media boost
- Engagement

## Qualitative Evaluation

- *Niche* – Make sure their niche or voice is a good fit for your brand and how you want to be represented.
- *Voice and style* - Consider the tone of writing/speaking you are comfortable with, and also which language you would like their promotion to be published in (there are multilingual influencers out there). Make sure that you will be proud to have them talk about you.
- *Visual appeal* – Having good visuals is very important. Travel is often sold on a single photograph.
- *Engagement* – Do not base your decision solely on likes and comments because these can be bought. Thoughtful engagement is important to see if the influencer has a good rapport with their audience and has their trust.
- *Professionalism* – Work with those that are professional. Go through their channels and get a feel for their style and character and assess their interactions with their followers.

## Quantitative Evaluation

Vanity metrics are things you can measure, such as the number of followers, page views, subscribers, etc., that may be satisfying on paper only. They are easily changed or manipulated, and they may not have a direct impact on your business goals. There are plenty of ways to look deeper. Ask influencers directly for their numbers and for whatever information you need to be comfortable with your decision. Some things to ask:

- *Demographics* – where are their followers from? Are they from your target market?
- *Average reach data / engagement* – if you get these numbers from various influencers that you are evaluating, the numbers will mean more when they are stacked up against each other. Ask for screenshots, case studies and references and don't accept it if it doesn't seem right.
- Consider a [Check List](#) like this to get the information you need to determine if the influencer is a good fit.
- *Evaluation tools*, such as the one available at [Social Blade](#), can provide you with global analytics for any content creator, live streamer or brand.

### A SNAPSHOT OF RESULTS:

- Blog pageview and YouTube views
- Number of posts, reach and engagement on social channels
- Destination/business mentions
- Screenshot good comments

**Use these results to inform future campaigns!**

## Getting the most out of an influencer campaign

Beyond building an itinerary, there are many things to consider and discuss for an upcoming influencer campaign. Key points to consider in advance are:

### What is included?

Does the influencer expect that transportation, accommodation, meals, alcohol, etc. will be covered?  
What will they give you in return? Number of posts to their blog, number of YouTube videos, etc.

### Reporting

What will they share with you when the trip is over?  
What results do you expect to evaluate the trip?

### *Timeline for publishing*

Do they publish immediately or in a few days, weeks, etc.?

### *Negative Review Policies*

Will they give you a chance to fix something that goes wrong before posting it on social media?

### *Disclosure Guidelines*

There are rules for disclosing when content is sponsored or part of an ad campaign. Make sure any influencers you work

with are familiar with and follow those guidelines on any posts included in your campaign.

### *To Pay or Not To Pay?*

Expect to pay in the following circumstances:

- it's the Influencer's policy;
- you request specific marketing coverage or hashtags;
- you expect extra coverage;
- you want to licence any content they are producing.

## **You have hired an influencer - now what?**

### *Pre-Travel*

Once the decision is made, spend the pre-travel time making a connection with your influencer by doing the following:

- Get to know them, track their social channels, etc.
- Put together a "swag bag" featuring locally made products but be conscious of space and tailor to the specific influencer.
- Introduce them to your social channels - they may find tips of things to do while they are visiting.
- If possible, meet up with them before they begin to travel. This can ensure a good working relationship going forward.
- Share pertinent information by email before they arrive, such as hashtags or social media accounts you want them to tag, news releases, etc.
- Connectivity is extremely important to influencers so ensure that you book hotels with free Wi-Fi and let them know in advance if they will not have access to Wi-Fi.

### *During Travel*

- When they start posting, share with your audience directly from their page.
- Know the rules of content ownership and always give proper credit when sharing.
- Engage with them during their trip as there may be questions from their followers that are easier for you to answer.
- Be available if something goes wrong or if you can make something last minute happen that they want to do.
- Ensure they have a good experience and be available to fix anything that might go wrong.

### *Post-Travel*

- They will likely continue reliving a few of their best moments when they get home and will continue to share on social for days or even weeks.
- The blogs and videos can be weeks or months in the making and often will be published when it has the most impact on their audience.
- Keep in touch with their channels and see what else you can do to work together.
- [Upcycle the content](#) - cut and recut photos and video; share a new snippet of the same story. Follow the link for more ideas for repurposing content
- Take the time to properly assess how it went, ideally within two weeks. Look at the reactions, positive and negative feedback, etc.
- Ask the Influencer for feedback on how it went from their point of view.

## Long-term Benefits

- Develop a database to house results every time you work with an influencer.
- Collect the same information every time to help you see emerging trends, patterns and what is driving people through your doors.
- You can create a simple [Google Form](#) to query
- influencers after their campaign.