

TIP SHEET #14

OPTIMIZE YOUR DIGITAL PRESENCE

You want travellers to easily find and book your experience online. Your website is often the first impression a traveller has of your business, make it a great one with compelling photos and video, mobile-first design, and current content. Stay focused on your marketing goals to generate awareness, consideration, and ultimately close the sale with visitors.

Optimizing your website is more than ensuring it's easy to find in search results – although that is key. Your website needs to quickly communicate what sets your business apart from the competition and inspire travellers to want to know more. Your website has the potential to be your most valuable team player in driving bookings for your experience and business.



WELL DESIGNED WEBSITES

Your window of opportunity to capture the interest of online visitors isn't open for long. Most people decide to stay or leave websites within a second or two. Your homepage and specific landing pages are your chance to quickly capture the interest of your visitor, inspiring them to book your experience. Here are some tips to consider:

Page content design: Use clear headers and sub-headers that introduce page topics and help visitors find what they're looking for quickly. Keep sentences short. Lead with the most important information.

Call to action: On pages that are showcasing something purchasable to visitors such as your experience or a room night, ensure there is a clear

call to action such as 'book now'. Online booking is a valuable asset for any business.

Use your best images: Use beautiful, engaging images and video that align with your target market to convey what visitors can expect. Use strong images that feature your most compelling differentiators.

Power of links: Establish links to your homepage from reliable and relevant sources such as: NovaScotia.com, TripAdvisor, Airbnb, Expedia, and partner websites. When working with Travel Media, ask for a link to your website from their post or website.

Search engine optimization (SEO): Most travellers look for travel inspiration online. Ensuring your website is among the top search results on search engines like Google, can help drive more business to you. SEO strategy requires you to focus on what key search terms and phrases you want to optimize for. For example: "Things to do in Nova Scotia", "Best Restaurants in Halifax", "Sea kayaking in Nova Scotia", "Popular hiking trails in Nova Scotia". Explore tools that Google provides to help select your key terms: [Google Key Word Planner](#) or [Google Trends](#). Starting out, think about what pages on your website would be the best fit for certain keywords and ensure that these keywords are in the page title, page URL, and infused in the page copy naturally.

Clear navigation: We encourage you to look at navigation as two-fold. One: providing a user-friendly website that allows visitors to easily find what they are seeking. And two: make it easy to book, with minimal clicks. Consider a menu that is easy to find, consistent, and accessible from all pages. And, ensure there is a clear path to purchase. Clear

navigation is important for search engines too, helping them quickly understand what content is the most important on your website based on how it's designed. Check out this '[Search Engine Optimization \(SEO\) Starter Guide](#)' for more great tips and considerations around webpage navigation.

Homepage vs. landing pages: Your homepage should be strong and impress online visitors with your best photography and clear navigation. But keep in mind, online visitors may land on your experience page or another related landing page, which need to be just as impressive and work just as hard as your homepage.

Website footer: Consider having a consistent footer across all pages. You could include a contact us link and social icons that are linked to your social media so potential visitors can learn more about your offering and your business.

Test & update: Make sure you test your website for functionality and clarity. Have others test it too from various search engines, browsers, and mobile devices. Schedule dates in your calendar to review content throughout the year and make necessary updates. Don't forget, when you make changes to your website, test it again.

Take advantage of Google Analytics: Google Analytics is one of the most popular digital analytics software available, and it's free. It gives you in-depth detail about the visitors to your website. You can track what pages visitors land on, how they got to your site, how they navigate your site, to where they are from. You'll be provided valuable insights that can help shape your SEO and website design strategy. Learn more at [Google's Analytics Academy](#).

OPTIMIZING NOVASCOTIA.COM

NovaScotia.com is Tourism Nova Scotia's main call to action in international marketing campaigns around the world, receiving nearly 4 million visitors per year. As a well-optimized and credible source of information, listing your business and what you offer on NovaScotia.com not only maximizes your exposure to targeted travellers, but over time, can help boost your business' organic (unpaid) search engine results. If you are new to Nova Scotia's tourism industry, reach out to our digital marketing team to learn more getting your business listed and [maximizing your presence on NovaScotia.com](#).

For existing and new businesses considering paid marketing and advertising, consider partnering with us through the [Digital Content Marketing Program](#) to create quality photos, video, and digital ads.