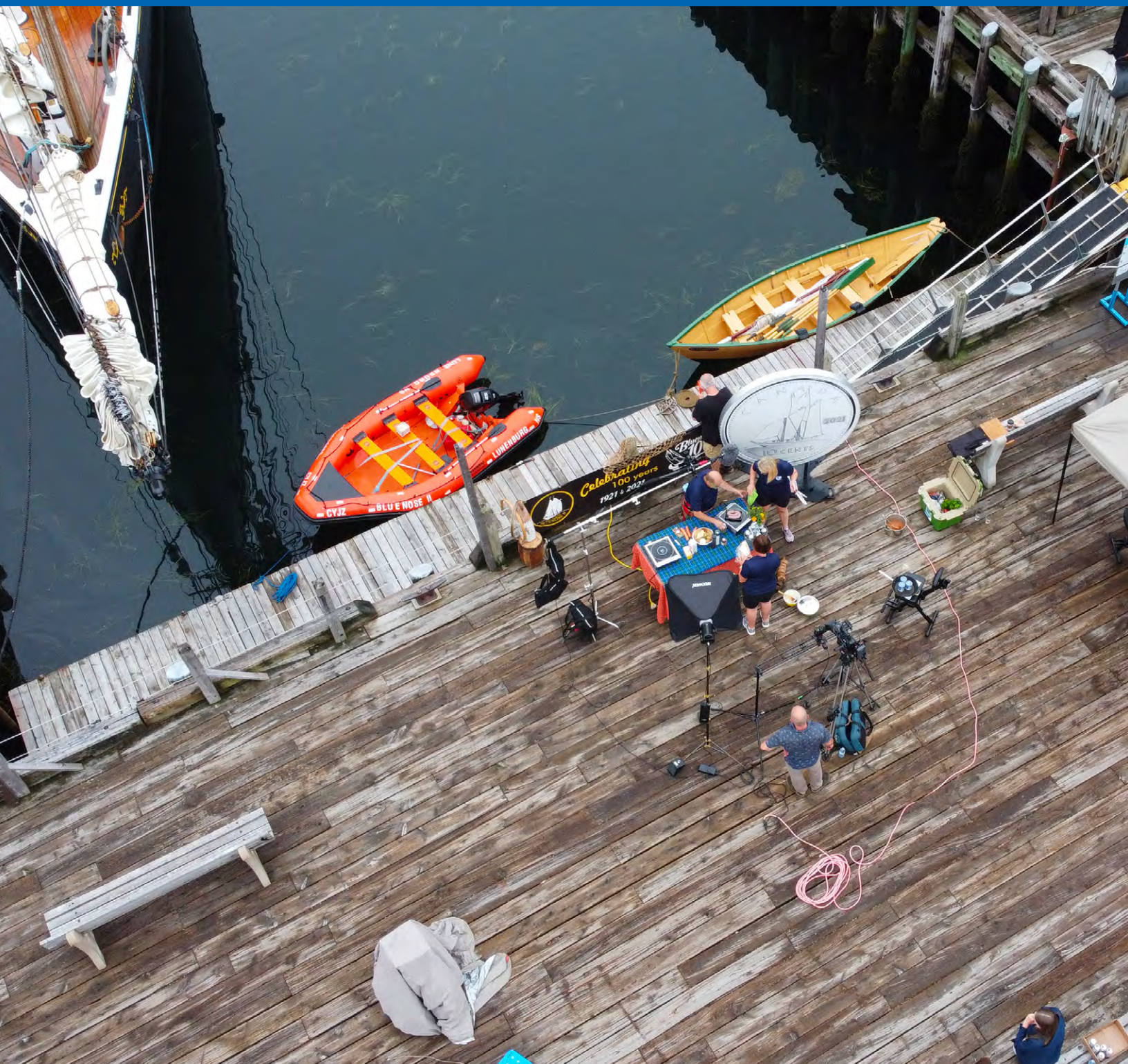


# HOW TO WORK WITH TRAVEL MEDIA TOOLKIT





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This document contains numerous website links. All links were active at the time of publication, but some may have changed since that time.



# OVERVIEW OF TOURISM IN NOVA SCOTIA

A man and a woman are sitting at a wooden table outdoors, enjoying a meal. The woman, on the left, is wearing a blue denim jacket and is smiling while holding a fork with a piece of food. The man, on the right, is wearing a white t-shirt and has a beard; he is also smiling and holding a fork. They are both looking at each other. The table is set with various dishes, including what appears to be seafood, corn on the cob, and bread. There are also glasses of wine and water, and several white lanterns. The background shows a calm ocean under a sunset sky with soft orange and pink hues.

As a division of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, Tourism Nova Scotia works with communities and industry to attract visitors to the province and increase tourism revenues to benefit all regions of our province.

## OVERVIEW OF TOURISM IN NOVA SCOTIA



Nova Scotia's tourism industry has seen tremendous growth over the past several years, and now faces unprecedented challenges with the impacts of COVID-19. The industry has been forced to adapt and innovate to navigate the new tourism environment.

A thriving tourism industry benefits Nova Scotians through:

- growth in the sectors that support the tourism industry (restaurants, accommodations, construction, retail, transportation).
- government programming through the tax revenues generated from tourism activities in Nova Scotia.
- increased air access.
- new business investment.
- increased pride of place.
- a wealth of tourism attractions, activities, and accommodation options for Nova Scotians to enjoy.



## TOURISM NOVA SCOTIA – YOUR TRAVEL MEDIA PARTNER

Tourism Nova Scotia (TNS) is focused on attracting visitors and increasing tourism revenues through marketing, experience and sector development, business coaching, and visitor servicing.

We are the destination marketing organization for the province and are responsible for administering the Travel Media Program, which assists in creating editorial opportunities to promote the unique products and experiences Nova Scotia has to offer. This editorial exposure creates awareness for Nova Scotia as a world class destination.

Tourism Nova Scotia's Travel Media Program contributes to Nova Scotia's strategic tourism plan by fostering and maintaining a strong relationship between the province of Nova Scotia and travel media from various markets so as to present the unique products and experiences we have to offer. Travel Media guests can include television/film, radio, newspaper or magazine writers, freelancers, photojournalists, social media influencers, bloggers, podcasters, and the list goes on.

Nova Scotia is dedicated to maintaining its valuable relationships with travel media throughout the world. We can provide assistance with your travel media research as well as general information on touring and press trips. In addition to providing opportunities to participate in press trips/Familiarization Tours (FAMs), we can also help you vet media you'd like to approach or who have approached you.

We offer partnership programs that can help you grow your business, as well as a wide range of resources and information. Check our website regularly and subscribe to our industry [blog and newsletter](#), for up-to-date information and upcoming opportunities.

Our Travel Media Specialists are here to help!  
Contact us at [travelmedia@novascotia.ca](mailto:travelmedia@novascotia.ca).



# TOURISM PARTNERS & PARTNERSHIPS



A rising tide lifts all boats, so why not work with other tourism operators? You can reduce costs and duplication and bring a broader range of experiences, creating a more interesting story to attract potential media to your area or business ... and ultimately more visitors. When you promote or sell your tourism product through media relations, you are also selling the destination, and by teaming up with neighbouring or complementary businesses you could have a bigger impact.

Your regional destination marketing organization is also a potential partner. They can help connect you to credible media and other tourism operators through their own media relations program.

There are a number of community or municipal tourism organizations across the province and five regional tourism associations in Nova Scotia; all are membership/partnership-based organizations. Their primary role is tourism product development and to market their region for tourism, including working with travel media.

[Discover Halifax](#)

[Destination Cape Breton](#)

[Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shores](#)

[Yarmouth and Acadian Shores Tourism Association](#)

[South Shore Tourism Cooperative](#)



## HALL'S HARBOUR RESTAURANT DELIVERS AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES TO MEDIA

*Hall's Harbour Lobster Pound & Restaurant*

**Sharla Cameron, Owner/Operator**  
**Explorer Quotient:** Cultural Explorer

### **Unique Selling Proposition:**

Hall's Harbour Lobster Pound is a working lobster pound in an authentic fishing village offering casual waterfront dining featuring fresh seafood and informative lobster pound tours – how the lobster gets from the boat to your plate.

**Years in business:** 25+ years

### **Advice for working with media:**

Don't bombard them with information. Give them space and let them find and explore the angle that is of interest to them.

### *Hall's Harbour Lobster Pound & Restaurant*

Hosting travel media and influencers means creating an authentic and engaging experience. When Sharla Cameron, owner of Hall's Harbour Lobster Pound & Restaurant hosts travel media, she works to bring them an authentic Nova Scotian experience.

Located in Hall's Harbour, Nova Scotia, Hall's Harbour Lobster Pound & Restaurant has been serving up fresh local lobster and an authentic Bay of Fundy dining experience for over 25 years. After dining at the restaurant, visitors can take in a tour of the lobster pound – an educational experience that teaches them about Hall's Harbour, lobster fishing and life on the Bay of Fundy.

Sharla says working with travel media has helped grow her business's customer base around the world, drawing people to her restaurant and building demand for the lobsters she exports internationally.

Tourism Nova Scotia facilitates the media collaborations, connecting Sharla with reputable media influencers. "I know that they're connecting me with good quality people that are worth spending our time and effort on. I always say yes when they pitch someone," she says.

Sharla stresses the importance of the trustworthy coverage media and influencers provide in growing her business.



## *Hall's Harbour Lobster Pound & Restaurant*

While Sharla understands the desire to roll out the red carpet for travel media, she says it's just as important to give them an authentic experience, comparable to what other customers receive.

"You need to find a balance between going over the top and keeping the experience real. They're going to be writing about their experience, and it's important for that to represent the experience of other guests," she says.

**“ I can go online and toot my own horn, but to have somebody else – someone that people trust – talking about me is so much more powerful. People appreciate it more.”**

Another piece of advice from Sharla: give media breathing room to explore your offerings. "Don't bombard them with information. The media will look at different angles that interest them. Let them find and explore that angle."

Sharla recalls a visit from John Quilter, a United Kingdom (UK) social media influencer better known as "The Food Busker". Tourism Nova Scotia hosted him and brought him to visit us in Hall's Harbour. After his visit, the video he shared with his followers racked up over 1.8 million views. "You're going into little corners all over the world with that kind of exposure, I can't do that all by myself," she says.

Sharla says her favourite part of working with travel media is building authentic relationships with her visitors and putting Nova Scotia on the map.

"It's not only about the marketing, but about the relationships you build and feeling like you're part of something. As businesses, we're promoting Nova Scotia together."

# WHY USE THIS TOOLKIT?



There has been significant growth in global travel in recent years. While it's great to see this success, it has also resulted in a highly competitive global marketplace, in which travellers are easily able to compare and price opportunities in Nova Scotia against those in Thailand, New Zealand, Alaska, or a cruise down the Amazon. Tourism destinations are no longer competing with the community down the road, the adjoining province, or even the country next door.

Working with travel media as part of your marketing plan can build awareness of your business by getting you in front of tens of thousands (or more) of potential customers usually at a lower cost. But often, operators may not know where to start. To assist industry and inspire travel in the evolving tourism environment, we have created this “how-to” toolkit that provides advice and tools for working with travel media. This educational toolkit will prepare you to work with travel media, either on your own or with partners.

If you are interested in working with travel media, this toolkit will help you:

- learn about the types of travel media.
- understand the benefits of working with travel media.
- choose travel media that best align with your brand and business.
- provide tips on how to manage your business relationships with travel media.
- learn how to host travel media.
- evaluate your investment.

This guide will be of interest to any tourism business looking to engage with travel media as a way to generate business. If you're ready to invest time, and possibly money, into developing media relationships, then this educational, practical guide will help you get started with helpful information and tips from media themselves and other operators who have learned from their own experiences.

## HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

The tips and suggestions in this guide will help you work toward building your own travel media plan, or at the very least, know what to do when travel media contact you.

This guide is available for download by section:

**1. Growing your business: The power of PR**

Learn how working with travel media can result in more customers being aware of your business and, ultimately, more sales.

**2. Today's travel media**

Understand the different types of travel media and what is involved in working with each.

**3. Defining your media goals**

Learn how to define clear goals and determine which media outlet or influencer can help you reach them.

**4. Pitching your story**

Fine-tune your story and make it compelling for media to share.

**5. Choosing your media partners**

Do your research to determine which partner is best suited to help you market your business or destination.

**6. Asks and Expectations**

There are few things more frustrating than having surprises crop up right before a media project is about to begin. Learn to ask the right questions upfront.

**7. To pay or not to pay?**

Both traditional media and social media influencers can require compensation. Evaluate your options and determine what kind of investment is best for you.

**8. Itineraries and hosting**

Develop your plan to make the most of your partnership.

**9. Continuing the momentum**

The benefits of your partnership can often be seen beyond the lifetime of your campaign. Discover opportunities to capitalize on your partnership well into the future.

**10. Evaluating results**

Determine how you will measure success and the effectiveness of your partnership.

**11. What travel media have to say**

It probably goes without saying that because there is such a wide variety of travel media/influencers, their expectations can vary substantially. Learn about some of these expectations and how you can be prepared to meet them.

**12. Resources and templates**

Media relations tips, travel media checklists and more.



## WHY USE THIS TOOLKIT



Special thanks to the operators and travel media who generously provided their experience and advice. The tips and best practices contained throughout the guide are based on their experience.

### We wish to thank:

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Raymond Cua, @TravellinFoodie  
Kelly Deveaux, Parks Canada Cape Breton  
Dany Duguay, @chefdanyduguay  
Dale Dunlop, The Maritime Explorer  
Stuart Forster, @GoEatDo  
Dalene Heck, @HeckticTravels  
Megan Indoe, @BoboandChichi  
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Bonnie MacLeod, Parks Canada Cape Breton  
Dean Leland, Oceanstone Resort  
Jason Nugent, @JasonNugentPhoto  
Darcy Rhino, Freelance Writer and Photographer  
Angelo Spinazzola, River Nest Wilderness Cabins and North River Kayak Tours  
Guy Theriault, Parks Canada Ottawa  
Wes Surrect, Pictou Lodge Beach Resort  
Beatrice Stutz, Le Caveau at Domaine de Grand Pré Winery  
Karen Wenaus, Liscombe Lodge



# 1. GROWING YOUR BUSINESS: THE POWER OF PR



With the right PR strategy, working with travel media can result in more customers being aware of your business and, ultimately, more sales.



## PUBLIC RELATIONS VERSUS MARKETING

Many people use the terms *public relations* and *marketing* interchangeably. While they do have similar meanings and there is crossover, there is also a distinction.

**Public relations** is about building relationships with your audiences to achieve mutual understanding<sup>1</sup>.

**Marketing** focuses on creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers<sup>2</sup>. You may be most familiar with the four P's of marketing – product, price, placement and promotion.

There are pretty thick lines between paid media, owned media, and earned media: you “pay” for paid media, you “own” owned media, and you “earn” earned media.

*Earned media* is the result of media relations efforts and activities. Earned media, or earned content, is any material written about you or your business that you haven't paid for or created yourself. If you pay a publication to write a glowing article about you, that's paid media or advertising. If you write a blog post about your own product or business, that's owned media. If a writer includes you as one of their picks in a round-up article, that's earned media.

Social media can be considered owned, paid, or earned media - it depends on what content is posted and who posts it. If a business sponsors a post about a new product, this is a form of paid media. If a customer posts about this product on his/her own account, this is a form of earned media. Earned media examples can include TV news segments, newspaper articles, tweets, articles in trade publications, product round-up's, organic traffic, customer reviews and word of mouth.

*Media relations* can be a subcategory of both public relations and marketing and is most often referred to as publicity. This is about building relationships with traditional and non-traditional media influencers.

In this guide, we will focus on media relations with traditional and social media influencers. Traditional media include staff and freelancers who work in television, online, radio, print (newspaper, magazines, etc.) and social media includes individuals who share their travel experiences by creating content on their social media channels, whether it be text, photography, videos, etc. We will explore this in more detail throughout the Toolkit.

We believe that regardless of whether media is considered traditional or social, they are all influencers. While their influence comes in many forms, one thing is for certain – the travel media landscape has changed, making it both more accessible and more important to consider in your marketing efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cprs.ca/About.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> American Marketing Association, “Definition of Marketing,” <https://www.ama.org/the-definition-of-marketing-what-is-marketing/>



## WHY COLLABORATE WITH TRAVEL MEDIA?

Working with travel media can not only create awareness of your business, but it can also bring added credibility to your offering. Travel media are often viewed as an unbiased third party and their endorsement can be priceless. Depending on which travel media you work with, the benefits can last for years.

## TOP 10 BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH TRAVEL MEDIA

1. Build awareness and reach new customers.
2. Reconnect with existing customers.
3. Earn credibility by having third parties share their trust and belief in your product.
4. Share your story and what makes your brand unique.
5. Establish your brand as an industry leader.
6. Complement your marketing and extend your reach.
7. Drive sales.
8. Optimize impact through collaborations with other businesses; build relationships.
9. Trackable results to easily measure your investment.
10. Engagement - increase and enhance your interactions with potential customers.

## IT IS A MARKETING INVESTMENT

No doubt, you already have a marketing budget for your business. If it's not already part of your activities, including media relations is a cost-effective addition to marketing your business. It does require an investment of time and money. The cost could include discounted prices or offering complimentary product to visiting media. In some cases, there may be an out-of-pocket expense to work with some media influencers, but we'll cover that on [page 59](#). Bottom line – working with media should be as much a part of your marketing plan as purchasing advertising or printing brochures.

According to at least one Nova Scotia tourism operator, investing in media relations has actually reduced his overall marketing budget, giving him exposure to hundreds of thousands of potential customers around the world and growing his bottom line and decreasing his overhead costs.



## SAVE ON MARKETING COSTS

*River Nest Wilderness Cabins  
(North River)*

**Angelo Spinazzola, Owner/Operator**

**Explorer Quotient:** Authentic Experiencer

### **Unique Selling Proposition:**

A little oasis of meticulously handcrafted cabins in which travellers can stay and experience the great outdoors while enjoying the comforts of home, relaxing in tranquility, kayaking, and connecting with nature.

**Years in business:** 6 years

**Advice for working with media:** Give them an authentic experience, not something that is made up specifically for them, and it will pay off in dividends.

### *River Nest Wilderness Cabins (North River)*

They say nothing in life is free – and while that may be true, Angelo Spinazzola has found that hosting travel media – resulting in a decrease in River Nest Wilderness Cabins’ overall marketing budget – just might be the next best thing.

So how exactly does a cozy little village of five handcrafted cabins along Cape Breton’s Cabot Trail get the word out to those seeking the great outdoors with all the comforts of home? A harmonious blend of unique offerings, personal touches, and storytelling with the help of travel media.

Angelo says that his relationship with travel media, Tourism Nova Scotia and Destination Cape Breton has been an absolutely critical aspect of his marketing activities.

“This allowed us to decrease our marketing budget because of the media stories in publications like The Boston Globe, The New York Times, enRoute and Outdoor Life Adventures,” he says. “We worked hard for the PR, but it didn’t cost us other than the investment we put into it.”

Angelo, who makes an effort to build relationships with guests, hears first-hand anecdotal evidence of the stories that led them to River Nest. This, along with measurable social media metrics, gives him complete faith that the benefits of working with travel media comes back ten-fold.

River Nest continues to have opportunities come its way as a result of travel media visits that took place years ago, resulting in new visitors from Europe, the United States, and Canada – demonstrating that sometimes the ROI is more gradual, while other times it’s more immediate.

**“ I reached out to a media influencer and gave her a cabin night stay with wood-fired pizza, live music, and a free kayak tour. Not only did she write about us, but she came back with her family and booked all five cabins for an entire weekend. This just shows that when you leave an impact on travel media, not only will their followers come, but they too will come back.”**



## 2. TODAY'S TRAVEL MEDIA



Understand the different types of travel media and what is involved in working with each.



At one time, understanding travel media was pretty straightforward and consisted of television crews, magazine and newspaper writers and guidebook authors – what we call traditional media. Today, traditional media aren't the only ones making a living in the travel industry. The ubiquitous nature of social media has made it a popular platform for just about anyone to post or blog about their travel adventures. There are literally thousands of individuals who post photos on Instagram and blogs on their websites, documenting their travels to tens, sometimes hundreds of thousands of followers. Those working in social media are often referred to as non-traditional media or social media influencers.

As a result, the media landscape has changed dramatically over the years. Traditional media – newspapers, radio, magazines, and television – now offer online versions of their content. Some of this content is free to anyone and some is limited to those who have a paid subscription. For example, the Globe and Mail has a well-established travel section. The paper itself is printed for purchase and delivered to some subscribers. Although the Atlantic edition ended in 2017, they offer content online where anyone can read stories for free, while additional content is limited to subscribers only. There may also be audio or video components that accompany some stories. While the Globe and Mail may be thought of as a “newspaper,” the lines become increasingly blurred as they compete with other media, including social, by offering content through a variety of media.



**Online media are an increasingly popular information source for many consumers.**  
**A quick Google search on any topic yields hundreds of results.**



For example, a search of top travel destinations produces results from Forbes, National Geographic, and Huffington Post to Lonely Planet, BuzzFeed, and Tripadvisor, not to mention top social media content creators posting about their travel adventures for their loyal followers.

Whether you're thinking about working with traditional or social media, all are considered influencers, and all want to document and share their first-hand experience of a brand or destination, so it's important to understand each type of media.

## TRADITIONAL MEDIA

### Television

- Travel networks or shows that cover travel destinations.
- Typically consist of a two- to three-person crew – the producer/host, a camera operator and sound technician.
- Require transportation and travel arrangements for their people and equipment.
- Three to five days for filming and a dedicated local person to help them make arrangements (often called a fixer).
- Labour intensive – before hosting a television crew, make sure you have the time to spend to support them and determine if this medium works for you; attention to detail is critical and working with TV can often be time consuming.
- Higher reach and higher costs.
- May be production costs on top of travel expenses, not to mention advertising opportunities.

### Radio

- Live radio interviews or broadcast stories recorded to air at a later date.
- Tell their stories through sound.
- First-hand experiences and interviews are important, as are interesting and unique sounds.
- May need help making arrangements and meeting contacts.

### Magazine

- Travel or other magazines with travel/feature sections.
- More in-depth stories.
- Can be very targeted toward special interests, groups or topics.
- Photography is important to accompany the story.
- Photographer may accompany the writer, be sent to photograph the story separately or the writer may also be a photographer.
- Lead times are quite long, could be 6-18 months after a visit before story is published.
- Many publications now regularly add content online in addition to print versions.

### Newspaper

- Have their own editors and well-established travel sections.
- Stories are usually shorter than magazines.
- Can have a significant reach.
- Writers may take their own photos or request them from you.
- More and more, they are contracting freelancers rather than having dedicated staff.
- Most also publish online.
- Content is usually only published once.
- Freelancers write or produce content and pitch it to various media – the same article can appear in multiple outlets or can be sole-sourced.
- Freelancers may write several stories from different angles and sell to various publications.

## NON-TRADITIONAL MEDIA

### Website writers and bloggers

- Websites dedicated to travel.
- Growing number of bloggers with their own sites.
- Can be generic travel sites or special interest sites.
- Document their travel experiences online for their followers or subscribers, often for a fee or product in exchange for a fee.
- Can earn advertising revenues through Google ads, banners ads, product placement, etc.

### Podcasters

- Works much like a radio story.
- Followers listen to their favourite podcasts on iTunes, Spotify or another platform.
- May charge fees for access to their audiences.
- Earn advertising revenue if their podcasts are popular and/or reach a niche audience.

### Social Media Influencers / Content Creators\*

- Create content and posts to one or several social media channels.
- Followers can feel deeply connected to and influenced by their content.
- Passionate about their topics and post about their experiences on a regular basis; sometimes posts are generated in exchange for goods or services while others may charge a fee.

*\*Sometimes social media influencers / content creators with a larger following are represented by agencies or agents. Because there is a third party involved, expect more communication, a formal contract and usually higher fees to cover third party costs.*

### 3. DEFINE YOUR MEDIA RELATIONS GOALS



Understanding your audience and where they are is the first step in working with travel media. Then, defining clear goals will help determine which media outlet or influencer can help you reach those goals.



## KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Success starts with knowing how to find your audience. Start by asking yourself some simple questions:

- Why do you exist? What is your mission? Everything you do is likely tied back to this mission in some way.
- Who are your current customers? Or if you are just starting out, what type of customer do you want to attract? It may also be necessary to segment your types of customers based on location, income, age or interests.\*\*
- What do customers stand to gain from choosing your business (instead of a competitor)?
- What features do you offer that no one else does? Is there something you can do better than anyone else?

*\*\* Destination Canada and Tourism Nova Scotia use a tool called Explorer Quotient to break travellers into groups or market segments and understand what motivates them to travel. It goes beyond the traditional market research of defining people to look deeper at individuals' personal beliefs, social values and views of the world to learn exactly why different types of travellers seek out entirely different travel experiences. Find out the EQ's of your ideal customers at <https://www.destinationcanada.com/en/tools>*

## WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

### Revenue growth

Revenue growth and driving sales can be a common media relations goal. Many tourism businesses hope that the partnership will help them capture the attention of more prospective customers and create a positive impact on the bottom line.

### Awareness

Sometimes when you partner with a media influencer, your main goal is to increase visibility. You're hoping to get your offering noticed and enhance the level of awareness. For example, if you have a new property or want to promote a destination that isn't on most traveller's radar, visibility enhancement might be your objective. It's about brand, product, or service awareness – not just driving sales.

### Social media engagement

Engagement gives you an indication of how customers feel about your brand. Likes, shares, click-throughs, and comments all give you an idea of the level of interest a campaign generates.

### Create marketing assets

Partnering with a media influencer can be ideal for content generation, an often-overlooked benefit of influencer marketing. Often, negotiating image rights with an influencer is far less expensive than creating content such as videos or photography yourself, and you are also getting access to the influencer's endorsement or third-party review, which can also be valuable.



## 4. CHOOSING MEDIA PARTNERS



If you are keen to engage media to help market your business or destination, then there are several ways to go about finding them.

## HOW TO FIND THEM

### Talk to your people

Engage with your customers over your social networks and ask who they follow. Your local destination marketing organization may also have ideas on who may be right for you. You can also contact your [Media Relations Specialist](#) at Tourism Nova Scotia to see if they have any recommendations, or if they have previously worked with the influencers you've found online.

### Dig deep

Instead of simply searching for “travel media” or “travel influencer” on the web, enter more keywords into your online query. Drill down further to find who is covering travel by using the “News” tab on Google to narrow search results to news stories. Or look for blogs about hiking, fine dining, or even those who blog in other languages. Go beyond the first page of Google and record any results that look interesting.

### Use your social platforms

Twitter is a fantastic way to search for and connect with media. Monitor or participate in Twitter chats to get an idea of some media that are joining in or even hosting the chats. #CanadaChat is a large one hosted by Destination Canada on the third Wednesday of every month.

### Use hashtags

Search Instagram and Twitter using relevant hashtags to find influencers who are already talking about your area. #VisitNovaScotia will show who is currently posting about the province. There are also region- and city-specific hashtags you can use like #VisitCapeBreton and #DiscoverHalifax. Find out which hashtags are commonly used in your area.

### Think broader

It doesn't always have to be about travel – consider searching for media in different niches. For example: If your hotel has an amazing restaurant, consider reaching out to the editor of a food magazine or the Eating & Drinking section of your local newspaper. Or if your resort has a yoga class, consider finding a fitness blogger. Honing in on niche media, with a specific focus, can sometimes yield better results, especially if those ancillary components are major selling points for your business.



## CHOOSING MEDIA PARTNERS



### Join an organization

There are a number of organizations that can provide direct access to travel media and help you build your network faster and more reliably than doing it on your own. Some may charge membership fees or host conferences with additional benefits, so shop around if you are interested in pursuing this route.

Some examples include:

[Travel Media Association of Canada \(TMAC\)](#)

[International Travel Writer's Alliance \(ITWA\)](#)

[Travel Massive](#)

[International Food, Wine and Travel Writers Association \(IFWTA\)](#)

[Society for American Travel Writer's \(SATW\)](#)

[TravelCon](#)

TMAC has regional chapters and can connect you with media in your backyard or in your target market area if you are interested in attracting customers from other parts of Canada.



### ENSURING THE RIGHT FIT

With so many travel media out there, how do you figure out which ones are a good fit for your business? And how do you make sure they are trustworthy and of high quality?

Before beginning, do consider the investment of your time in performing an extensive evaluation. If the request is a simple one (say, an event pass), then a quick perusal of their previous work and relevant channels (to estimate audience size and demographics, engagement on social media if applicable, and if their voice aligns with your business) may be all that you need to make a decision. If you're considering offering a multi-day commitment, then you need to dive deeper to ensure this big investment is a worthy endeavor. In this section, we provide guidance on doing an extensive and thorough evaluation that you can tailor to meet your own needs.

There are a number of tools and methods to evaluate influencers that can be divided into two camps: *qualitative and quantitative*. Together the two should give you a good indication of whether the request is a good fit for you.

### THE EVALUATION

There are two types of evaluation – quantitative, which is the hard numbers and data, and qualitative, which involves softer measures, like writing style, your gut feel, etc.

#### Quantitative

Evaluating traditional media influencers, like those who work for magazines or travel shows, is pretty straight forward. Whether staff or freelance media, they will be able to provide you with quantifiable numbers – circulation, ratings, audience size/reach, demographics and much more, for the outlet they are working with. Carefully look at this information and determine if their audience matches yours. For example, if you know that your customers are primarily families with small children, you may think twice about someone writing for a thrill-seekers publication.

On the social media side, at first glance you might think that more followers equates with more influence. Not exactly. Those followers may have been purchased (this happens more often than you would like to believe). Or, even if they were gained organically, the influencer's followers may not represent the audience that your business is trying to reach.

## CHOOSING MEDIA PARTNERS

Instead of relying solely on external numbers, we encourage you to dig deeper and query the influencer for more valuable metrics, such as audience engagement, how many followers share their content, or click through rates from previously posted stories. Once you have this information, along with your qualitative analysis, you can use both assessments to decide if a partnership with this influencer would be successful.

### Look Beyond The Vanity Metrics

Beware the games. It is incredibly easy and cheap for social media influencers to buy followers on Instagram, Twitter, and even Facebook. There are many ways for influencers to game the numbers they are presenting. And while the numbers may look impressive (which is why we call them “[vanity metrics](#)”), the influence is likely non-existent because they’ve skipped the process of building a loyal and engaged fan base of followers, who are more likely to act on the influencer’s recommendations.

This is not to discourage you from working with social media influencers, but rather to help you correctly identify those who are hardworking entrepreneurs and have organically built real and engaged audiences. Because it’s sometimes difficult to tell the difference, here are guidelines of where to look and what to ask for in order to better assess their actual degree of influence. See [page 88](#) for an explanation of the various evaluation terms.

## REACHING OUT

When you have an idea of who you would like to experience your offering (hotel, product, destination), how do you reach out? The best way to share vital details is via email, but you may also get a quicker response via private message on their dominant social media platform. But many travel writers are on the move and may not have time to read even the most concise pitch. Most are open to being contacted via social media – this means you have to be even more to the point and, however you do it, make it personal. Take the time to find out a little more about them before making contact. Good writers, photographers, and bloggers are often bombarded with messages, and you want to be sure that they read your message or pitch.

### Before you reach out, here are some tips to consider:

- Be sure to include how you found them, what you like about their work and online presence. By showing that you know something about them, you are more likely to make a personal connection and get a response.
- Let them know what you would like to offer and what you are looking for in return.



## CHOOSING MEDIA PARTNERS

- Include information and success stories about your offering and any other important information that will encourage them to consider your pitch.
- Tailor your pitch for a variety of media and interests. By expanding your pool of media and related interests, you won't be putting all your eggs in one basket.
- If contacting by email, the pitch should be no more than a couple of paragraphs. You want to catch their attention by showing that you understand their area of interest and that your product is aligned. Using a catchy subject line can also pique their curiosity.
- Develop your own media kit – even a simple one-pager that highlights your product or operation – and include testimonials, key messages, an image or two, awards or accolades, signature or unique offerings and contact info.
- Before reaching out, be aware of any special needs or requirements. Do they need transportation, internet or accessible accommodation? Do they travel with their children and focus on family adventures? Do they write exclusively about vegan restaurants, etc.?
- If you are organizing a group trip for media influencers, invite media professionals with a history of reporting on your region or the province, who already have some knowledge.
- When working with traditional media freelancers, ensure they have a confirmed assignment with a media outlet if possible. For example, a writer should be able to provide you with a letter from the publication/editor confirming they have been hired to write a story. You can also check with your destination management organization or Tourism Nova Scotia for the influencer's past history publishing stories. Most freelancers secure assignments after the trip these days as they can better articulate a pitch to the appropriate outlet. But don't be afraid to ask them upfront where they are planning to pitch their stories – most media will know who they can pitch to for any press trip or media opportunity in which they are participating.

### TIP

If you're planning to host more than one media guest at a time, try not to mix media on the same trip. For example, don't mix photographers with videographers – they have different needs, requirements, and timing. Photographers who post on Instagram may need extra time in the evening to edit photos and upload in real time. Videographers may need more time to set up and may want to interview people on camera (see Section 6 for more information on avoiding surprises).

## CHOOSING MEDIA PARTNERS

- Avoid sending standard media releases or mass emails. This is almost a surefire way to ensure that it ends up in the trash and will likely end up in a spam folder. A personal approach is always best.
- Building relationships with media takes time. If you aren't successful on the first try, stay the course and follow-up. It can often take a few touchpoints to be successful. Remember that nobody likes being contacted only when you need something. Find ways to add value to the travel media influencer's daily lives as well. You can share and promote their content, even when it's unrelated to you, comment on great pieces they write to demonstrate genuine interest or potentially provide them with sneak peeks to explore your business, your new product or package or meet with your team. Media relationships should be a two-way street, so make sure you meet them half-way and deliver value.

Finding the right media takes time and patience. This investment of time at the outset has a much better chance of resulting in a successful media campaign than randomly selecting the first person to turn up in a search or respond!



## RESPONDING TO MEDIA REQUESTS

Tourism is a popular industry for travel media because so many consumers travel, and capturing great content while visiting a destination is popular. As a tourism business, it is quite likely that, at some point, media will approach you for a complimentary experience, hotel stay, etc. in exchange for promotion on their networks.

### What do you do when travel media contact you?

Don't feel pressured to say yes or no on the spot. Take the time to review the request and make the right decision for your business.

Review the vetting process we've outlined on [page 39](#). While this process may seem overwhelming, with a lot of information to wrap your head around, it does get easier over time. If you capture the information you gather in a database or even a spreadsheet to allow for comparisons, your review time will be complete within minutes as you will soon intuitively know which requests will most likely provide the best value. Most importantly, your review will be thoughtfully done, focusing on key metrics that will make the difference in providing you with real results.

After you have all of the information you requested and you have completed the vetting process, you should be ready to proceed.

**If it's no...**A personalized response is warranted; thank them for their time and advise that even though they may not be a fit right now, you will keep their information on hand should another opportunity arise.

**If it's yes...**Then let the planning begin! At this point, you should address any gaps between what they are asking for and what you can provide, as well as between your goals and what they are offering in return. You also need to know the keys to setting your relationship up for success! (See the section on [Asks and Expectations](#) for more information.)



## TOP 5 TIPS FOR WORKING WITH TRAVEL MEDIA



### 1. Partner with Other Local Operators

Chances are travel media will want to explore your area and take in more than your business or product. Talk to your area tourism association or Tourism Nova Scotia to see if other local tourism operators or nearby attractions would like to work together to make the most out of a media visit.



### 2. Find your ideal match.

Find your ideal media match by spending time reading blogs, searching social media channels or watching what they've previously reported on to help you zero in on a few travel media who write about what you offer.



### 3. Tailor your pitch

Sending an email blast with a generic message to all media isn't going to produce the results you want. Do your research and tailor relevant pitches to the travel media you're contacting.



### 4. Treat Media Guests to an Authentic Experience

Just like you need a hook to catch the interest of travel media, they too need a good angle for their readers, viewers and followers. Provide them with an authentic experience they can cover and the welcoming hospitality Nova Scotia is known for and they will be eager to share.



### 5. Build a Media Visit into Your Marketing Budget

Tourism Nova Scotia works with a number of travel media and are always interested in promoting the Province and its tourism operators. If you're not sure where to start or you'd like to be involved in their Familiarization (FAM) Tours, reach out and see who's on their radar and what it might cost – it may mean discounting costs or providing free accommodation, admission or products.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT TYPE OF MEDIA

### Blogs

A blog is a type of website where the content is presented in reverse chronological order (newer content appear first). Blog content is often referred to as entries or “blog posts”. Blogs are typically run by an individual or a small group of people to present information in a conversational style.

Google Analytics is the industry standard for website statistics, and the primary way to evaluate bloggers. Here are the main metrics to ask for:

- **Users and pageviews.** A large number of monthly pageviews can be impressive, but also very misleading. If there is one blog post on the site that does particularly well with Google, or went viral from one substantial social share, that high number may be short-lived and will not give you any indication of how many people will see new posts on the site. A look at the average pageviews per blog post (ask for an average of the last five posts) will give a more accurate assessment of what you can expect for a post referencing your business. (Although it must be noted that this will only represent early pageviews, which may grow exponentially with more time.)
- **Demographics.** It is important to know where the outlet or blogger’s readers come from, which is why you should ask for their top countries. If your target market is a small area in Alberta but the blogger is only influential in Brazil, then perhaps he or she is not a great fit. Don’t write them off completely, though, before considering other intrinsic benefits, such as search engine optimization (SEO) value and the quality of their social media audience.
- **Bounce rate.** Defined as the percentage of visitors to a website who navigate away from the site after viewing only one page, bounce rate can indicate how well the blog captures readers and inspires them to read more. The lower the bounce rate, the better. It is a common assumption that anything below 80% is a good bounce rate. Know that if a blogger is reporting a substantially low rate (i.e., less than 20%), then it is likely that their Google Analytics is set up incorrectly, which will alter their reported stats significantly (often wrongly doubling their pageviews).





### Instagram

Instagram is a visual platform used to share moments and communicate your point of view to the world via photos and videos. It's owned by Facebook and integrates very effectively with the Facebook advertising platform. It offers a fully visual and mobile experience where users can take, enhance, manipulate, and share photographs and videos with their friends and followers. Its audience is younger than the Facebook audience and it is predominantly mobile too. Instagram Stories offers users the chance to create ephemeral content lasting just 24 hours. IGTV (Instagram TV) provides a place to host longer videos than the 60-second limit on an Instagram feed.

Instagram is currently one of the hottest platforms, touted as the one which provides the best engagement overall. With over a billion active monthly users, it simply cannot be ignored.

But it is also a platform that is famous for manipulation. Upon seeing friends and colleagues enjoying all-expense paid trips worldwide while publishing only one photo per day, Instagrammers are often looking for ways to quickly ramp up their numbers in order to garner similar opportunities.

So how do you decide which Instagram influencers to work with? There are a number of ways to evaluate them:

- **Do an in-depth analysis.** Don't just glance at the number of followers or how many likes one receives on their photos. Click on a number of photos and examine the engagement. Look specifically at who is "liking" the photos and then click on those accounts and see if they look like real people. A large number of "likes" come from "like" farms; these accounts are not authentic and won't be useful for you.
- **Evaluate comments.** If you see a stream of non-specific comments such as "amazing photo," "incredible," or comments that only contain an emoji, be suspicious that the comment came from an automated system, or from a [comment pod](#). If you see the same commenters on one account over and over, those are from comment pod participants. This is engagement that has been clearly gamed or purchased and is not reflective of the poster's actual influence.
- **Ask the influencer for their data.** If the influencer has a business account with Instagram, then he or she should be able to provide you with relevant stats for your analysis. You should ask for important demographics (top five countries of where their followers are from; top three age ranges; and the gender split), current interactions (the number of times users have interacted with the Instagram account, calculated for the previous week), and reach (the number of unique accounts that have seen any of the posts, calculated for the previous week). If the influencer doesn't have a business account, then they should at least have access to a platform such as [Iconosquare](#) to provide you with similar information.

## CHOOSING MEDIA PARTNERS

- **Use an online tool.** There are a number of websites and companies who can assist with doing this deep dive for you.
  - » [Social Blade](#) is free. Simply input an Instagram handle into the field and the website will give a one-page report detailing the follower and following growth of an account. Note that large upticks of followers, especially on a continual daily basis, is highly suspicious of manipulation. The user is most likely part of a comment pod or purchasing followers.
  - » Purchasing a [HypeAuditor](#) report offers a lot of valuable insight into an influencer's credibility on Instagram. Some tips on using the report:
    - › HypeAuditor provides an audience score for each influencer you evaluate. This score is only an indicator and not the only thing you should use as your opinion for an Instagram account. Some creators with high scores have manipulated the system to gain high audience scores. It is wise to dig a little deeper into the reports rather than just relying on the influencers who receive top scores as the only metric that matters.
    - › The tool provides age and demographics of an account's followers, so see if this fits with the audience you are trying to reach.
    - › Engagement rates normally are in the 1-6% range. Anything above this is highly suspicious of comment pod or bot manipulation.
    - › The metric comments authenticity is the best indicator of engagement legitimacy.
- **Ask for Instagram Stories to be archived.** Photos and videos shared to Stories disappear from the feed and profile after 24 hours, unless they are added as a highlight. Instagram Stories can now be automatically archived to a private part of an influencer's profile when they disappear 24 hours after being posted. Ask that they archive their stories so that they can provide a link for you either a month or six months down the road to gauge the traffic to this type of post, as well. It's also good to have them archived so that they can be saved as a file in a metrics report or as part of your final report and/or ROI measurables.

Please note that while the above online tools are valuable, they are also at the mercy of the social media platforms making their information available. Sometimes, [they are shut down](#). Check with Google for current availability of these tools and/or others.

### Facebook

Facebook is the largest social networking platform in the world. Its mission is to enable people to share information and content with others who work, study, and live around all around the world. Additionally, Facebook is a platform for brands and businesses to connect and build relationships with their customers.

When Facebook advertising was introduced several years ago, a rash of influencers jumped on the bandwagon by pushing out ads to the countries that would provide “likes” at the cheapest rate (many in Southeast Asia, India, etc.). Page “likes” ballooned with numbers that would otherwise have taken years to accumulate organically. That is another perfect definition of inflated vanity metrics. Unless you are a travel business pushing your product or service into those markets, fans engaging on those pages are less likely to buy your product or visit your destination. When conversing with influencers, it’s important that you ask for the demographic and geographic breakdown.

But don’t forget that some good old fashioned “creeping” can also provide you with valuable information – how many followers do they have; how often do they post; what are they posting (photos, opinions, links, etc.); what is their engagement like; etc.

“Facebook Insights” provides breakdowns of where an audience comes from, and much more. Influencers can easily provide key metrics to you, including:

- **People.** This tab on the Facebook Insights page offers valuable information: percentage of followers that are men vs. women, plus top countries, cities, and languages. Ask for those that are most relevant to you, or a screenshot of this entire page.
- **Reach.** This is the number of people who have seen the Page’s posts in their news feeds, calculated for the previous week. It is a good benchmark number for comparison to others, and over time.
- **Post engagement.** This is the number of likes, shares, comments, or clicks on posts, calculated for the previous week. Engagement, as with other platforms, may be more indicative of audience acknowledgment and action. Again, this is a good benchmark number for comparison to others, and over time.





### Twitter

Twitter is a social network that enables its users to send and read short posts called ‘tweets’ on a public platform. Part of what differentiates Twitter from the other social platforms is that it’s very conversational in nature, due to the fast-paced, real-time dimension of its users’ timelines. Twitter also introduced hashtags to the social sphere, which makes it a great place to discover content.

[Sparktoro](#) is a valuable online tool to assess the authenticity or engagement of an influencer’s followers. Keep in mind that a certain level of fake followers is unavoidable – you simply want to avoid influencers who have a large number of their following made up of bots or inactive accounts.

It is also possible to gain some insight via Twitter analytics provided by the influencer. Unfortunately, “impressions” is the only useful statistic Twitter currently provides. This is equivalent to “Facebook reach” and indicates how many people saw the post, which is not helpful on its own because it does not address the most important metric: engagement. Thus, bloggers could be pushing out all kinds of tweets to increase impressions, but if no one is clicking through or engaging, then those numbers may be worthless.

The best analysis may be qualitative. Spend a few minutes going through the influencer’s Twitter stream. Are they sharing relevant information? Are people engaging (replying and retweeting) with their content? If so, and they can demonstrate a viable audience, then promotion for your business via Twitter could be helpful.

### YouTube

YouTube is the largest video-sharing platform in the world. It is where users can watch, like, share, comment on, and upload their own videos. YouTube is used to watch music videos, comedy shows, how to guides, product reviews, recipes, hacks, and more.

With over 2 billion active users, YouTube presents a very useful opportunity for businesses to work with influencers who have a presence on this huge video-sharing site.

To determine if they are a good fit, look at their style and content first and foremost. YouTube influencers often become popular because of their personality, so give careful consideration if their style is aligned with your brand.

There are a few metrics you can use to evaluate a YouTube channel. Ask for:

- **Top five countries of viewership.** Again, this is useful to see if their audience demographics align with your target.
- **Number of subscribers.** Subscribers are the number of followers of a particular YouTube channel. However, the number of subscribers doesn't necessarily reflect how often they are watching videos.
- **Average view duration.** Are viewers sticking around or dropping off early into the videos?
- **Total likes, comments, and shares.** These should all be considered in conjunction with the vanity metrics of total subscribers, total videos and total overall views, and compared with others over time.

While these are the most popular social media channels, there are others, such as Pinterest and Tik Tok, that are becoming more popular. Contact Tourism Nova Scotia's Travel Media Specialists at [travelmedia@novascotia.ca](mailto:travelmedia@novascotia.ca) if you're thinking about partnering with an influencer. We're here to help!

## CHOOSING MEDIA PARTNERS

SOCIAL NETWORKS	DEMOGRAPHICS	PURPOSE
 <p><b>Facebook</b></p> <p>Connects friends, family, acquaintances and businesses through photo, video and text</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>86% of people</b> ages 18-29 use Facebook</li> <li>• <b>77% of people</b> ages 30-49 use Facebook</li> <li>• <b>51% of people</b> ages 50-65 use Facebook</li> <li>• <b>34% of people</b> that are 65+ years old use Facebook</li> <li>• <b>54% of Facebook users</b> are female</li> <li>• <b>46% of Facebook users</b> are male</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Users connect with people and brands online</li> <li>• Brands can increase awareness, build relationships, improve customer service, etc.</li> <li>• Shareable and clickable content</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Twitter</b></p> <p>Real-time channel where users share up to 280-character updates (tweets)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>38% of people</b> ages 18-29 use Twitter</li> <li>• <b>26% of people</b> ages 30-49 use Twitter</li> <li>• <b>17% of people</b> ages 50-64 use Twitter</li> <li>• <b>7% of people</b> that are 65+ years old use Twitter</li> <li>• <b>50% of Twitter users</b> are female</li> <li>• <b>50% of Twitter users</b> are male</li> </ul>	
 <p><b>Instagram</b></p> <p>Photo &amp; video sharing app</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>67% of people</b> ages 18-29 use Instagram</li> <li>• <b>47% of people</b> ages 30-49 use Instagram</li> <li>• <b>23% of people</b> ages 50-64 use Instagram</li> <li>• <b>8% of people</b> that are 65+ years old use Instagram</li> <li>• <b>51% of Instagram users</b> are female</li> <li>• <b>49% of Instagram users</b> are male</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Users find and share photos and video online; good for trends</li> <li>• Brands share strong and creative visuals or videos where the image or video itself is at the forefront, with the option to add text or captions</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Youtube</b></p> <p>Video sharing website where users store, share and search videos in a search engine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>81% of people</b> ages 15-25 use Youtube</li> <li>• <b>71% of people</b> ages 26-35 use Youtube</li> <li>• <b>67% of people</b> ages 36-45 use Youtube</li> <li>• <b>66% of people</b> ages 46-55 use Youtube</li> <li>• <b>58% of people</b> that are 56+ years old use Youtube</li> <li>• <b>Over 50% of Youtube users</b> are female</li> </ul>	

Source: <https://khoros.com/resources/social-media-demographics-guide>





### Qualitative Evaluation

When it comes to selecting travel media to partner with, it's not just the size of the audience that you need to make a value judgment on, but also the degree of influence you can expect. And so much of that is based on things that can't be measured in numbers.

It's gut check time. Spend time perusing all of their relevant and recent articles and channels while considering your goals. **Please do not skip this part of the analysis.** It's not as easy as a simple number crunch, but it's an extremely important component in picking the media that is the right fit for your business.

## CHOOSING MEDIA PARTNERS

Consider the following points:

- **The quality of writing and style.** Check their last five to ten articles or social media posts. Are they reasonably good writers? Do they write professionally or with a lot of symbols/emojis or spelling errors? Would you be proud to have them write about you? If they are television media or vloggers, watch their last few videos. Does their content and style align with your needs?
- **How often do they write?** The gauge for what is acceptable can vary widely. Bloggers who write long-form posts tend to blog less frequently, and their audience expects that, while many others post multiple times a week. Freelancers may sell an article on a monthly basis or have a weekly column. Instagrammers may post once a day. What's important is to look for some sort of consistency that shows that what they're doing is not just a random hobby.
- **Is their personal touch true to your brand?** Are they humorous? Ironic? Emotive storytellers or list churners? Most audiences respond to an authentic and friendly voice – do they write in a friendly tone? Also watch for the type of content they put forth – are they truly passionate about travel and sharing their experiences or are they more motivated by lifestyle and product/brand placements?
- **Design of the website/blog page.** Is it easy to read? Not too cluttered? How does it look on your mobile? Whether traditional or social media, readers are turned off by a website that is not easily navigable or is difficult to read. At a minimum, their story should have a search function, archives, and a good “About” page that gives a thorough overview of the publication's brand and the writer's story and personality.
- **The visual.** Travel is often sold with a simple photograph. Travel media who do not invest in improving their skills with a camera are often only telling half the story. Good visuals will help draw the audience in and compelling photographs are a necessary part of a professional publication or blog. Be cautious of the type of photography – are they showcasing the destination or product or are the images all about them and their lifestyle or fashion choices? Lifestyle influencers are very different from travel influencers and once you learn the difference, it will be easy to spot. Both have their advantages, just be sure of who you want to best showcase your product and reach your desired customers.
- **Engagement.** Review all social media channels (traditional media have their own social media channels too) and their blog/vlog, where applicable. Do they have their own channels or do the outlets they are working for have channels? Are they just pushing out content or are they engaging in the conversation? Is there positive interaction in the comments, and what are readers saying about the articles or posts? While some of this is quantifiable, a quick review will also indicate how much conversation they are initiating and participating in.

## CHOOSING MEDIA PARTNERS

- **Match the brand to the niche.** Working with a writer dedicated to promoting budget travel when you are an exclusive high-end resort does not make sense as their audience will not be interested in the resulting coverage. Or, if you are a company that focuses on a family-friendly message, you may not want to hire a blogger who frequents night clubs or posts risqué photos on social media.
- **Do they work with any competing businesses?** It is worth doing a quick search to see who else they have worked with and what they have said about them, especially if they are your competitors. It could actually work for you that they have written about your competitors. Having the media showcase other attractions or activities in your community shows potential visitors that they have options and choices...including you!
- **Do they publish elsewhere?** Some media are not just writing for themselves, but also syndicate their content or regularly write for other outlets, which could mean additional exposure for you. Check their “About” page, where other outlets are often listed.
- **Do they seem pleasant to work with?** This may not be the easiest thing to judge from a brief correspondence, but it is an important thing to consider if potentially embarking on an involved campaign. This is where your trusty gut check comes in, but also discuss it with your local destination management organization to see if they have any insight based on past experiences.

This initial review of their entire presence may bring to light some non-starters that will warrant immediate dismissal, which is sometimes why we suggest this step is completed before numbers are even considered.

## OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER

- **Blog age.** A minimum blog age of one year will have given the blogger some time to build up a viable audience, reach and statistics. Some professionals we have spoken to have even set their minimum at two years.
- **Domain Authority (DA).** This is a calculated metric for how well a given domain is likely to rank in Google’s search results; it is important to assess if the content will pay off in the long-term. Most of the top travel bloggers who have been blogging for several years have a DA above 40. [Learn more](#) about DA and how to check for it.
- **Email/newsletter subscribers.** This is a valuable number to consider when evaluating bloggers, because these subscribers have invited the blogger directly into their inbox. This is the equivalent of inviting someone in past the front door! These are people who want to read everything that the blogger has to say.

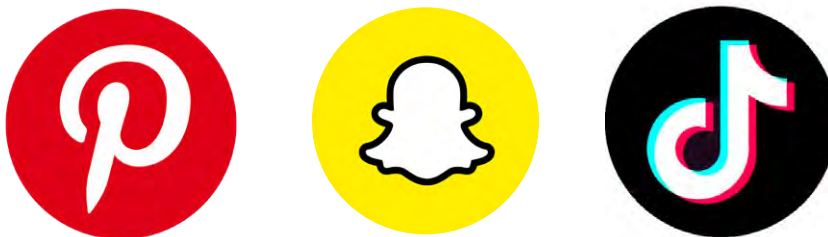


## CHOOSING MEDIA PARTNERS

- **Other social media networks.** New platforms emerge and disappear all the time, and there are others that may be better suited for key segments within travel.
  - » For food, travel clothing, etc., you may want to take a deeper look into a blogger who dedicates time to Pinterest. Pinterest is a social network that allows users to visually share and discover new interests. They do this by posting (known as 'pinning') images or videos to boards which have specific themes, and by browsing what other users have pinned. Users are in discovery mode, often looking for ideas. Every idea is represented by a Pin, which is an image that is searched and saved by Pinterest users. Pins can also link back to websites, which is why Pinterest is great for driving traffic and sales. In fact, most do not even consider Pinterest a social network but instead another search engine like Google.
  - » Snapchat is a multi-media messaging app that can be used by marketers for effective, ephemeral (lasting only a short time) storytelling and showcasing products through its vertical video format. The platform is widely known for being popular with a younger audience. Results via this platform are only available for specifically invited (or verified) influencers.
  - » TikTok is a short-form, video-sharing app that allows users to create and share 15-second videos, on any topic. It has seen a meteoric rise in the last year, with monthly users [currently estimated at 1 billion](#). That puts the app ahead of Snapchat, Twitter, and Pinterest.

Considering an influencer who is heavily invested in any of these additional platforms requires thoughtful consideration (and current research, as it changes rapidly).

- **Ask for case studies or references.** These should be readily available from previous campaigns and may provide the best insight into what value an influencer may be able to provide.



## CHOOSING MEDIA PARTNERS

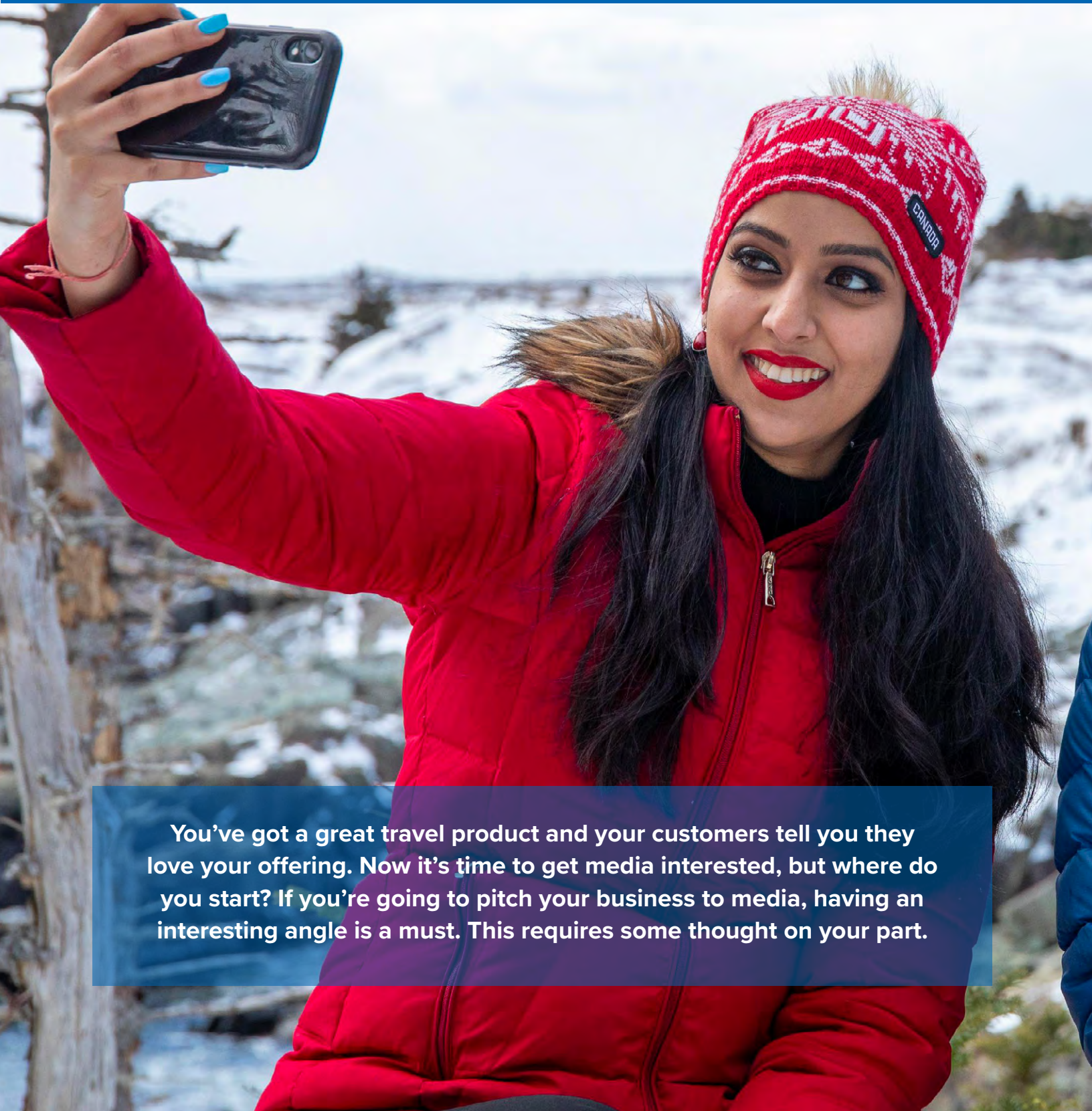
- **Engagement rate.** You also want to make sure you work with someone with a healthy engagement rate. While the “likes” feature is hidden now from most Canadian mobile accounts, you can still often see the numbers by viewing through a browser on your computer. To calculate the engagement rate, add together the number of likes and comments on one post, divide by the influencer’s total number of followers and multiply by 100 to get a percentage. You may want to do this for a few recent posts to get a better understanding of how an average post performs.

Number of Followers	Healthy Engagement Rate
Less than 1,000	8% +
1,000 to 10,000	4% +
10,000 to 100,000	2.4% +
100,000 to 1,000,000	2% +
1,000,000 and over	1.7% +

This resource includes an extensive list of key questions and data to ask for, but keep in mind that **it is also about balance**. Some influencers, depending on the value of the exchange, may not see a detailed data request as being worth their effort. Similarly, you don’t want to be overwhelmed with data that you won’t use. Focus on key metrics in addition to your qualitative analysis, and you’ll quickly get answers on what matters most to you.

*All of the suggested data requests have been summarized into a Google Form that you can issue to potential partner influencers, as well as a one-page evaluation checklist (both available in the “[Resources](#)” section).*

## 5. PITCHING YOUR STORY



You've got a great travel product and your customers tell you they love your offering. Now it's time to get media interested, but where do you start? If you're going to pitch your business to media, having an interesting angle is a must. This requires some thought on your part.



## PITCHING YOUR STORY

Travel media can be inundated with pitches from tourism operators all over the world, especially if they have a successful career, or a large audience or following. Think about how crowded your inbox gets. Now put yourselves in the shoes of a top-tier travel media influencer, many of whom receive dozens of pitches a day – they are bombarded with emails, phone calls, and tweets, which makes cutting through the clutter a significant challenge. The key to success is finding your angle and pitching it in a way that appeals to their specific interests. The good news is no matter how broad your story idea, there's usually a unique angle waiting to be found.

Put aside the notion that one size fits all and think about different ideas that can reach different media. This is where the work comes in. Try bringing in your staff to brainstorm or ask your customers what they think is unique about your offering. For example, if you are a restaurant, it would make sense to pitch to food and beverage related media. But if you think outside of the box a little, you may find angles that include more than one niche. Does your location have any interesting geographical, historical or cultural aspects that might pique the interest of media who write about cultural tourism? Do you have a signature or innovative product? Does your chef have an enormous, larger than life personality?

Test out your pitch on friends and customers – [use the elements of storytelling](#) to explain your pitch succinctly and clearly. Having your pitch ready will also be useful if media call you, that way you will be in a better position to decide if they are a fit for your business and customers.

### Be a storyteller

- Create a narrative your customers care about. First and foremost, your guests care about how what you offer benefits them.
- Think outside the box. What are you doing that's remarkable? Unique? Different? Ground-breaking? Popular? Charitable?
- Create remarkable content. Travel media are humans and prefer remarkable, interesting, dynamic content. Tell it your way, not the textbook way.



## MEASURABLE RESULTS & EXPOSURE

*Le Caveau at Domaine de Grand Pré Winery*

**Beatrice Stutz, Owner/Manager**

**Explorer Quotient:** Free Spirit

**Unique Selling Proposition:**

The winery is a family business and it's evident in every corner of the operation. The restaurant specializes in global cuisine, using seasonal local ingredients matched with fine wines, produced just steps away from the kitchen. It was named "One of the 20 World's Best Winery Restaurants" by Wine Access Magazine (2011).

**Years in business:** 20 years

**Advice for working with media:** Put your best foot forward to promote not only our business, but the area and province as a whole.

## *Le Caveau at Domaine de Grand Pré Winery*

Wine, weddings, family, friends, and food – what more could you possibly offer to entice guests to your winery? Beatrice Stutz, Le Caveau restaurant manager at Domaine de Grand Pré Winery, understands that every family has a story, and sharing hers is what gives this world-class destination a competitive edge.

As a family owned and operated business, Grand Pré Winery is built on a love and passion for Nova Scotia, something Beatrice believes all guests and travel media alike should experience.

“Our most intriguing angle is the family story and the fact that Le Caveau at Domaine de Grand Pré Winery is family run and has been since day one. We are not just running it but are involved in its day-to-day operations – from having the third generation working in the vineyard and wine shop, making the wine or being front and center in the wine shop conducting tours and tastings,” says Beatrice.

Beatrice shares their everyday customer experience with travel media, and then some. “Overall, we try to be ourselves, tell our story, and let our passion, combined with our food and wine, show media the same experience anyone else would have if they were to visit,” says Beatrice.

These visits, thanks in part to the long-standing relationship with Tourism Nova Scotia, have led to measurable results and exposure over the years. “There are certainly articles that put us on the map differently, resulting in an increase in traffic on our website,” says Beatrice. “I remember after a German article was published, we even had emails asking if we would send wine to Germany.”

Whether travel media visit the province, or their fanbase seeks a little taste of Nova Scotia in Germany, Beatrice recognizes that the collaboration with Tourism Nova Scotia has great reach, near and far.

“It’s an honour when Tourism Nova Scotia reaches out to bring media to us and have us represent Nova Scotia and our business. We all have to work together.”

**“When we work with travel media, we feel it’s our duty to put our best foot forward to promote not only our business, but the area and province as a whole,” says Beatrice. “There has to be something for everyone – the wine enthusiast, the outdoor fan, the foodie, etc. We’re so lucky that our province has it all.”**



## 6. ASKS AND EXPECTATIONS



Beyond assessing statistics and alignment, you should have all questions asked and answered before deciding to work with any media.

## ASKS AND EXPECTATIONS

There are few things more frustrating than having surprises crop up right before a media project is about to begin. Here are some things to consider asking in advance:

- **What are the expected deliverables?** Whether you have been asked to supply an event pass or something as large as a fully hosted trip in your region, it is not unreasonable to ask for details of what will be offered in return. Ask them to get as specific as possible, right down to how many videos, articles, blog posts or photos will be supplied or published.
- **Are there any fees associated with the deliverables?** In the following section “to pay or not to pay,” you’ll find further advice on navigating what can be a tricky conversation regarding paying media. It is always recommended to ask the questions about deliverables and fees early on so that a full picture of the potential relationship can be considered and negotiated.
- **Are there any diet limitations?** Those that follow a strictly vegan diet, for example, may have a hard time with restaurant choices in more rural areas. Also ask about any allergies of which you need to make operators aware.
- **Are they comfortable participating in your suggested activities?** If not, these could substantially impact the itinerary, and perhaps not meet your goals for promotion.
- **Any other special circumstances to be considered?** Will their return flight be to a different city than the originating one? Does the influencer always travel with their pet? Do they travel as a family unit (which can mean additional costs)? Do they work with an agent? Do they insist on bringing a photographer along?
- **Do they have a preference for a particular airline or brand hotel?** Because they travel frequently, media will likely have loyalty cards for additional travel benefits. Or they may have brand partnerships in place. Always a good idea to ask in advance if they have preferential elements. If it makes no difference to you (in terms of cost), this can be important to any traveler.



## ASKS AND EXPECTATIONS



## UNDERSTANDING YOUR GOALS TO ENSURE SUCCESS

*Oceanstone Seaside Resort (Indian Harbour)*

**Dean Leland, CEO & Managing Partner**

**Explorer Quotient:** Free Spirit

**Unique Selling Proposition:**

Fully-equipped cottages and boutique guest rooms with ocean views and access, minutes from Peggy's Cove.

**Advice for working with media:**

Assess every campaign individually and know what you want to achieve. Is it an increase in sales, awareness, social media followers or something else?



### *Oceanstone Seaside Resort (Indian Harbour)*

When the team at Oceanstone Seaside Resort hosts travel media at their award-winning coastal getaway, they ask themselves two simple yet vital questions: Why? and What?

Oceanstone Seaside Resort, where the Atlantic Ocean greets you at your doorstep, is nestled into a seaside community just outside of Halifax and is a premiere resort destination for rest and relaxation, whether guests are looking for a winter getaway by the fire, a summertime beach vacation, or other events like whiskey tastings, learning seminars, and more.

With so many unique offerings for all occasions that guests can dip their toes into, the team understands that each travel media campaign in partnership with Tourism Nova Scotia should be approached differently, depending on the desired outcome.

We always go back to the Why? and What?...you have to know what you want to achieve... an increase in sales, awareness, social media followers or something else?" says Dean Leland, CEO and managing partner of the resort. "If you have travel media visiting from the UK and you give them a code for their audience, you can track your ROI. If your goal is to gain new followers, you can track that through insights on your social media platforms, and if you gain new followers and keep those followers, then you have a successful campaign."

The team recalls a particularly successful campaign in partnership with Tourism Nova Scotia, where Oceanstone welcomed Scottish interior decorators and television presenters, Colin McAllister and Justin Ryan.

"This was an incredible opportunity for Oceanstone and an experience for them," says Dean. "We were able to showcase our property, our cottages and, of course, our dining to two wonderful people and their audience. They captured some incredible shots, candid moments on social media and overall, it was a huge success."

Following this visit, the team observed an increase in exposure and social media followers, which is just one example of many successful visits he credits to the success of strategic marketing.

"We believe in a multi-faceted marketing approach including working with travel media and influencers," says Dean.

**“ We truly believe that travel media, influencers and bloggers are such an important part of marketing, but we also believe that every campaign needs to be looked at individually and the questions of Why? and What? need to be assessed.”**

### ABOUT DISCLOSURE

Over the past few years, the Canadian government has taken notice of influencer marketing practices. It's important to understand what constitutes an ad and how that needs to be disclosed by influencers.

Ad Standards Canada (ASC) has published a set of [Influencer Marketing Disclosure Guidelines](#). The recommendations boil down to a single point: all relationships between businesses and influencers need to be clear and concise to their audiences.

Here are the key points you should know:

- If an influencer is compensated or given something for free, with the expectation that they will mention it on their digital channels, that needs to be disclosed to their followers within the post. Review the ASC document for detailed advice on this topic. In the eyes of the ASC, any relationship between an influencer and a business counts as an endorsement and warrants disclosure. As it says in the ASC guidelines: “when in doubt, spell it out.”
- One of the easiest ways to disclose is via hashtag. The approved hashtags are #ad, #sponsored, and #promotion. These hashtags can't be buried in dozens of others in an Instagram caption; the disclosure needs to be upfront and clear.
- Influencers should state how they were compensated (e.g., free products, monetary compensation, exclusive invite to an event, etc.) by the business they're writing about or promoting.
- Bloggers must disclose their relationship with a business in every post where they mention them. There can't just be a blanket statement on the blog's “About” page or on the homepage, and there can't just be a link to a disclosure page in their post. They must clearly spell out the nature of their affiliation in the post, each and every time. This includes social media posts (with the exception of such platforms as Instagram Stories, where it only needs to be disclosed on the first chapter).

Are you hosting an influencer from the US? They are obliged to follow slightly different rules. To learn about those differences, and the typical liabilities of businesses, read the [FTC guidelines](#).

### How do you negotiate this with your influencer?

Businesses obviously have limited control of the actions of the influencers they work with. You can request, or even attempt to require, that bloggers stay ASC compliant, but you can't force them to properly disclose.

The best way to start the discussion is by tackling the topic at the same time you're going through all the other aspects of the arrangements you are making. Ask influencers how they normally handle disclosure and what hashtags they like to use.

Don't look at disclosure requirements as a burden, but as a way for you and the influencer to push yourselves creatively. A clever and well-placed disclosure can build confidence in both your business and the influencer.





### AGREEMENTS

Having an executed agreement in place is one of the most important things you can do in any relationship where you are offering complimentary goods, services or paying for coverage. It is a way to ensure that every important detail is discussed and understood prior to a project beginning and will also help to elevate responsibility. Having travel media signing on to specific terms will arguably give them greater impetus to stick to them.

The truth about agreements though is that they are only as good as your willingness to enforce them. In other words, you can have all the official terms and signatures in the world, but if you aren't willing or able to back them up with the full force of a court of law, then they may not be worth the paper they are written on.

If a small project or campaign goes wrong, you aren't likely to take it to court. Lawyer fees alone will outweigh the few thousand dollars you may hope to recoup. Never mind the value of your time lost or bad press that may result. In most cases, when a marketing relationship turns sour, each party will likely go their separate ways quietly and absorb the loss. Take comfort in that you have learned a valuable lesson for next time.

However, a contract is still key, especially if your project involves payments or the exchange of high-value services. If you are doing a simple exchange in-kind, like a single ticket to an attraction or a meal, then it may not be worthwhile to create a formal contract. The clarification of deliverables via email exchanges may be all that you need to formalize the arrangements.

#### **You should consider a formal agreement if you are:**

- Paying for services.
- Offering an extensive hosted experience, such as a multi-day trip with multiple components.
- Offering an experience that comes with some risk (i.e., an extensive sailing trip, repelling excursion, segwaying, etc.); a contract should be in place to limit your liability and ensure that media have proper insurance in place.
- Working on a partnership that takes place over a longer period of time with multi-faceted deliverables.
- Involving multiple partners.

### Get it in Writing

A good contract clearly spells out the expectations of both parties and leaves little room for ambiguity or misunderstanding. Important things to include are:

- **Details!** Don't let things get lost in your sea of emails or meeting notes. A lot of back-and-forth will happen in approaching work with travel media and having a final contract in place will ensure that everyone is on the same page (literally!) going into a campaign. The agreement should include details about fees, payment schedule, clearly defined deliverables, and everything that defines what the project entails. Don't assume and let no item go unsaid.
- **Designation of rights of content.** Who will own the content resulting from this project, and what rights will be assigned? Have this discussion ahead of time, and ensure it is spelled out in an agreement. This is a common point of contention after the fact and is best cleared before a campaign begins.
- **Protection for yourself.** Consider negotiating for payment terms that will hold back at least part of the fee until all deliverables are met. Is this campaign covering an adventurous trip with some risk? Ensure that proper travel insurance is in place by stating requirements in the contract. Worried about your secret campaign leaking early and losing impact? Include a confidentiality clause. What about limits of liability, and ensuring Ad Standards Disclosure Guidelines are followed? Yes, all of these should be covered in the final agreement (and more).





## MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

It is crucial, in any relationship with travel media, that expectations are managed from the get-go. Part of this is handled, as discussed above, by asking and answering any question that you may have about the impending relationship. In addition, honesty about every aspect of the campaign is crucial. If the weather is typically unpredictable during a specific time of year and there is concern that a kayak tour may be cancelled, be up front about that. If the only hotel available in a remote area is on the more rustic side, be honest about that too. It can be hard to hide disappointment when publishing live (as many do on social media), and if an experience is built up to be more than it is, being let down will likely come through in the coverage.

Most especially, it is important to be forthright when it comes to WiFi availability. For media, especially social media influencers, WiFi is like air, and they rely on it daily to stay in touch with their editor or audience. If an off-the-grid experience is on the itinerary, be sure to highlight this. Most will be fine with being disconnected for a short time, as long as they know in advance and can plan for it.

Finally, and, most importantly, don't forget to consider the expectations of any potential future travellers as well. Feature sellable product only – don't create an exclusive experience if it is not replicable for others. As tempting as it is to pull out all the stops to make a lasting impression, if an interested traveller attempts to book the same experience and finds out that it is not actually available, their disappointment may be hard to overcome.

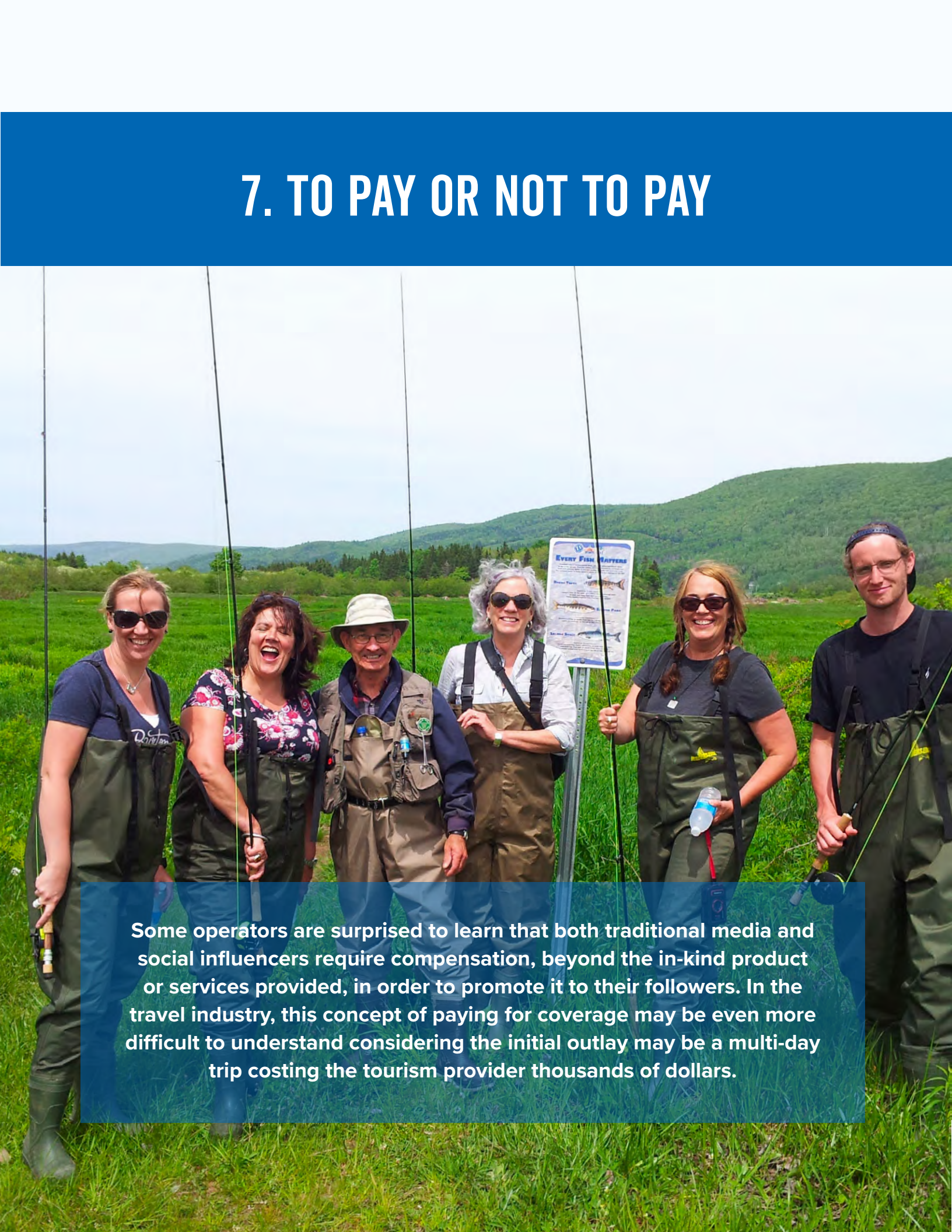
### WAIVERS

Now, more than ever, travel-related businesses need to mitigate risk for customers and employees. One critical component of that playbook is the use of waivers.

- **How and why waivers can be used to mitigate risk:** When signing a waiver, a guest agrees to give up (or waive) the right to sue you for any accidents or injuries that occur during your tours or activities. Waivers are contracts that shield your business from those costs. They lay out the reasonable risks a guest needs to know about and let guests decide whether they're willing to take those risks. If they are and they sign the waiver, your company may be able to avoid being found liable for any incidents. By providing a clear, concise liability release to your guests, you can be sure everyone knows their rights and responsibilities. With that out of the way, you can get back to giving your guests the time of their lives. No need to worry that a single misstep could be a lawsuit waiting to happen.
- **Digital, contactless waivers:** The use of electronic waivers and signature processes can help you go contactless with customers. Helping your customers stay safe is expected and all steps to make a safer experience for everyone will be appreciated (and expected) by your customers.
- **COVID-19 waiver considerations:** There is uncertainty as we navigate around guidelines and procedures put in place while we slow the spread of COVID-19 in Nova Scotia and around the world. As such, be sure to clearly communicate what is permitted in terms of travel and visitation during such times and any time unprecedented circumstances may warrant it.



## 7. TO PAY OR NOT TO PAY



Some operators are surprised to learn that both traditional media and social influencers require compensation, beyond the in-kind product or services provided, in order to promote it to their followers. In the travel industry, this concept of paying for coverage may be even more difficult to understand considering the initial outlay may be a multi-day trip costing the tourism provider thousands of dollars.

It's important to realize that the new media landscape simply isn't business as usual. There has been a dramatic shift over the past decade from traditional media ad buys to investment in social media marketing. Social media influencers act as their own CEOs. Unlike freelance journalists who are paid by the publication that buys their stories, bloggers and influencers must work countless unpaid hours building their audience and gaining credibility. Their payday comes when they can leverage their networks and influence into brand partnerships.

Compensation does not always have to mean money. The travel industry is unique in that the products being offered for review are often high value: multiple-night hotel stays, tours, or even all-expense paid trips. When the perceived value is very high, some media and businesses see a swap of goods/services for coverage as a fair exchange.

What is considered fair varies greatly, which is what makes this step challenging. In some cases, when the media influencer's audience or community is smaller, businesses will only offer a discount. At the same time, renowned travel media in high demand will often require monetary compensation on top of any travel-related expenses. It is important to know that this is all subject to negotiation.

You can expect to pay if:

- **This is a part of your bigger marketing plan.** If the expectation is set as to what they should cover and/or share across their platforms, then this is no longer editorial – it is marketing.
- **You are asking for special services.** Examples: hosting a Twitter chat, promoting an event live on Facebook, executing an Instagram takeover, etc. Depending on the size of the social media influencer's community (if small, they may include these extra services as a part of their base offering), these are often considered add-ons and come with a fee.
- **You are asking for content for your own advertising use.** If you've found a talented photographer, videographer or vlogger and you'd like some of their high-resolution photos or video for your marketing purposes, then they will expect to be compensated. This should not be confused with sharing links to their published content (e.g., sharing their articles, Facebook posts or retweeting) – as this is usually welcomed and encouraged as long as you give them proper credit.
- **There is a set rate for working with brands.** Always hear an influencer out if they have set rates for working with a tourism business like yours. Don't discount negotiating if you believe a lower fee is warranted based on the experience. However, note that in some cases, bigger influencers have a strict pay-to-play policy. It will be up to you to gauge if the value of that additional investment will be returned, and the relationship is worth pursuing.



## TO PAY OR NOT TO PAY

- **You are just asking for exposure for your business with limited value in return.** Have a new product to sell and want media to promote it? Media receive dozens of such requests each week to promote products, and if they see no match between the product and their audiences, then the request you are making may go entirely ignored.

At the end of the day, it comes down to perceived value. If a relevant travel media influencer sends an email asking for a night at your hotel in exchange for a review and you have availability, this may be a simple yes. If they are also asking you to pay them, then they had better be able to demonstrate their worth.





## HOSTING MEDIA: WHO PAYS FOR WHAT?

When hosting media, the division of costs is not dissimilar to most company policies. Incoming/outgoing travel, plus all costs incurred while on the campaign, are typically covered, save for such things as alcohol and gratuities.

One particular scenario, however, may be more prominent when working with social media. Whereas hosting traditional media most often just involves the journalist traveling solo, it is increasingly common that some social media influencers will want to bring someone with them. Sometimes it is a legitimate ask, given that there are such things as “couple bloggers” or “family influencers” - their audience expects and enjoys the content produced by them travelling together.

In other cases, especially with those whose prominent channel is Instagram, solo travel media often work more efficiently when they have a photographer with them to take staged photos or document their experiences. The decision of whether or not to also cover the photographer’s cost is up to you and your budget, but if this is a viable option for you, then also consider asking for the following:

- **Additional deliverables from the photographer.** If the photographer has their own social media presence (they often do), it would not be unreasonable to also ask for the photographer to post about the campaign to their own audience.
- **Additional deliverables from the influencer.** It is no small ask to request that costs be covered for a plus one. It is also not unreasonable to ask for additional deliverables. Expecting that the result of bringing a photographer along will be highly stylized photos, consider asking for some of these photos to be licensed to you for use in future marketing initiatives.
- **Split the costs.** Double occupancy rooms and vehicle rentals are often the same price, no matter if it’s for 1 or 4 people. Sometimes, having a photographer accompany the influencer is worth it to them and they would be willing to agree to having just the room and transportation costs covered and negotiate for the additional guest to cover their own meals or excursions. Everything is negotiable and the worst they can say is no!

## 8. ITINERARIES & HOSTING



You've done your homework in setting your goals, researching your options, determining your deliverables, you've signed all necessary documents and are now ready to put the campaign into action! This may seem like the easy part but there are a few things we recommend to keep in mind when it comes to hosting your media guests.



### Itinerary Development

- **Prepare your guests** - let them know the places that will be visited and the amount of time they need to spend there. Provide a detailed itinerary, specifying all travel, accommodation and activity arrangements for the media guest plus all contact details throughout the journey.
- **Don't cram the writer's itinerary so full that they are running around from sunup to sundown.** Media are not looking for a property tour or site visit – they are looking for a story that will resonate with an audience that might not have been told before, or at the very least told in their way. Leave them time to make their own discoveries in addition to the visits you've set up for them.
- **Provide them with adequate downtime.** Getting a story is a lot of work – they need time to digest the experience and take notes. As most media are self-employed, they need time to run their business as well. They need time to check emails, post to social media, return phone calls or even take a nap, especially if there are evening activities involved.
- **Allow time for taking photos** – most self-publishing media and photographers prefer to take photos in the early morning or late afternoon when the light is optimal. Try to avoid scheduling activities during those times for those taking their own photography.
- **Provide a suggested packing list and general weather information**, especially if they are not familiar with our region.
- **Provide fact sheets, recommend websites they can visit in advance or specify pieces of literature for research ahead of time.** Always remember what you say may appear in print. It is vital that you provide anecdotes – lively, historical stories, perhaps including local characters of interest or a humorous saga about some aspect of the business or activity – as these are the ingredients that make their stories come to life.
- **Include any necessary passes, letters, official documents, paperwork, etc., in one convenient package.** Using a branded USB is a convenient way to store a lot of information, including images, and avoids your guests having to lug around a lot of paper!
- **A media kit can be a good way of giving additional background info on your destination or tour**, but make sure it's fact-checked, up to date and available in PDF. Be clear about any key messages or brand identifiers that you want the influencer to convey.
- **Be cognizant** of any possible language or cultural barriers, especially if your guests are from outside of Canada.
- **Make connections with other partners or local officials in your area.** Media value the opportunity for local engagement and providing suggestions so that they can prepare or make arrangements in advance means they have more time to focus on your deliverables.



## ITINERARIES & HOSTING

- **Don't show off** by setting up unreal experiences that are not available to any other guest. A travel journalist should not ask for this either. The last thing you want is guests arriving and expecting something you don't offer.
- **Send a final itinerary** at least two weeks in advance of arrival so they can prepare for the visit.

### Pre-trip

- Be clear on what is included in the travel arrangements and what must be paid for by the media guest – such as airport taxes, taxis, alcoholic drinks, WiFi costs, gratuities, etc.
- Do they require supplied images or video if they are not producing their own? If so, have them ready for arrival or send in advance.
- Are there any special activities they want to do? If yes, be sure to include as part of itinerary.
- Are there any dietary limitations or allergies?
- Are there any fitness limitations?
- Are there any other special circumstances that need to be considered: are they travelling with family members? Do they travel with a pet? Do they have a driver's licence or do they need a guide or escort?
- Communicate with your staff – let them know who is coming and why.

### During the Trip

- WiFi is like air for all of us these days, but especially for content creators - they cannot work without it! Make sure that WiFi, MiFi or SIM cards are available.
- Be active with your own social media accounts and share or re-share the influencer's experiences with your followers when appropriate. Be prepared to engage with followers and answer any questions that readers may have.
- Comment about how excited you are to host your media guest, have them use your product or stay in your accommodation.
- Be available! Provide your contact information and assure them you are accessible to answer any questions or be of assistance to them during their visit.

### Post-trip

- Thank them for visiting!
- Wait a few weeks and then solicit feedback. What did they enjoy most / least? Do they have any suggestions for improvements? Do they need any additional information?
- Fact checking and insisting on a website link or mention in the story or post is fair and should be included in your deliverables. Expecting the writer to print what you say is not. Most writers are only taking notes and won't even start writing the story until after they get home. Don't expect to be able to vet or edit their story but if you have done your homework, they should have all the correct and relevant information upfront and included in the goals and agreements.
- Ask for results and document them for future reference or to be shared with your staff or partners.





## 9. CONTINUING THE MOMENTUM



Just because a campaign is over does not mean that the full benefit has been reached!



There are even more opportunities to capitalize on the collaboration well into the future:

**Continue to push the content.** A commonly shared frustration among travel media is that businesses and destinations do very little to share and amplify the content generated from their collaboration. This is something that is very easy and beneficial to do. Whether a television crew or social media influencer, let your social media followers know how much fun you had hosting them, and it may certainly make a difference. You have paid for this – whether in time or currency – and you want to get the most bang for your buck.

Make sure you share the content generated by the media across your social media channels. You can do this immediately but also continue to share periodically over time. Push the content out to your partners and others in the community who may find it useful. You want to get as much leverage out of good content as possible.

**Continue the relationship.** You worked with media who were professional and accommodating, who created engaging and interesting content, and who really helped you meet your business goals. Why let go of such a great working relationship?

Continuously partnering can be mutually beneficial as your business benefits from increased authenticity and buzz (after all, they must have enjoyed themselves if they are coming back for more). It also gives you the opportunity to flex your creative muscles.

Consider brainstorming more collaboration opportunities with travel media you like and trust. Perhaps you can invite them back to experience another aspect of your business, to take a different tour, or to participate in a special event.

You can also continue to keep travel media updated of new features or changes in your business. That way they can keep their evergreen posts up to date with the most recent information (an evergreen post is search-optimized content that is continually relevant and stays “fresh” for readers over a long period of time).

**Seek feedback.** Eager to continue their relationship with you as well as market themselves to other businesses, some travel media may ask you directly for feedback and/or references. Be honest and constructive in your response and, in turn, ask them for feedback on your campaign. Consider each campaign as an opportunity to sharpen your approach for the next one.

Like all marketing strategies, working with travel media is a continuous learning experience, and one that will become more straightforward and effective over time. Take every opportunity to increase your knowledge and apply new creative ideas, as it is an avenue that can pay off for years to come.



## THE LASTING BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH TRAVEL MEDIA

*Yarmouth and Acadian Shores Tourism Association*

**Neil MacKenzie, Executive Director**

**Explorer Quotient:** Authentic Experienter, Cultural Explorer,  
Free Spirit

**Unique Selling Proposition:** Undiscovered, rugged and full of joie de vivre. A place of time and space. A landscape and spirit forged by the sea. A land unknown, steeped in mystery and resilience. This place is not the Nova Scotia you know, but somewhere you wish you'd known all along. The Southwest region of Nova Scotia is where English and French cultures have coexisted for generations with a mutual dependence on the sea and our environment.

**Years in business:** 11 years

**Advice for working with media:** Use the partnership to negotiate and collect photography and b-roll that you can repurpose later.

## *Yarmouth and Acadian Shores Tourism Association (YASTA)*

When Neil MacKenzie opened an email from an influencer that gave him goosebumps in the heat of July, he knew the partnership was going to be a success.

YASTA – a non-profit organization that promotes authentic experiences and products that tell the stories of Yarmouth & Acadian Shores – loves where they're from. And they want the world to see why. This is just one of many reasons that viewing an experience from the eyes of an influencer aligns with their vision. Neil recalls a time before social media and the prominence of influencers when you had to wait patiently to see a return on investment with travel media. Now, content can be seen almost instantly.

**“Our online followers are both local and from away, so when locals see content from an influencer visiting the Yarmouth & Acadian Shores, they get to celebrate the exposure and, even occasionally, see experiences they didn't know existed right here at their doorstep.”**

“There's a value in partnering with influencers who produce high-quality, professional-looking content,” says Neil. “Not only do you get an initial bang when an influencer posts on social media, but you get to collect photography and b-roll that you can repurpose later and see content from their visit trickling in online overtime.”

Reflecting on recent successes, two partnerships come to mind for Neil: one with Ayngelina Brogan, a culinary focused influencer and publisher of @BaconisMagic, and another with David Anderson and Skylar MacDonald, better known as @DaveyandSky, outdoor and travel influencers. Neil recognized the potential immediately.

“When I saw their content, I got goosebumps and realized I could bank it and use it for years to come. They completely immersed themselves in the experiences. Angelina went off the beaten path and asked for freedom to experience the area for herself. Each were authentically impressed, happy, and loved the experience,” says Neil. “The content was excellent, some of which is still trickling in to this day.”



## FOLLOW UP

You've successfully pulled off a travel media campaign! Whether it was a media trip, a complimentary meal, or an experience review, your work isn't done when they publish or air their work. Now it's time to follow up and evaluate the success of your collaboration.

### Post campaign conversations

When the campaign is complete and/or after the story is aired or blog posts are published, follow up to engage in a conversation about how it went.

- Discuss how pleased (or not pleased) you were with the aspects of their story or social media posts and which you believe added the most value.
- Go over the results they have presented.
- If things go well, ask if they would consider returning or participating in additional campaigns if the opportunity presents itself. An ongoing relationship could potentially lead to bigger partnerships in the future or even repurposing their content down the line. Consider connecting with the influencer in a year's time and asking them to do additional posts or a new story based on their previous visit without having to visit again. There are many ways to tell the story and content repurposing is a great way to maintain your relationship with the media and stay on the radar of your potential visitors. ([see the Evaluating Results section for more on this.](#))
- If it was fantastic, ask what other travel media they believe would be interested in a similar offering. First-hand referrals are generally trustworthy and will help simplify your ongoing search. If it wasn't a success, ask why. You need to find out if there were problems or issues and remedy them for the next visit or next media that you partner with. Constructive feedback is a good thing.

### Requesting reports

Any travel media you work with should provide you with detailed results, especially if you are paying them for their services. This should be discussed before the campaign begins so your expectations are understood, and the media knows what to collect. If your deliverables include social media posts or online content, wait about a month before asking for results of the campaign in order to allow time for the content to work. Pieces of data that you should ask for (depending on the goals set up):

- Confirmation that agreed upon deliverables were received, especially if they were negotiated in advance. You may have tracked the deliverables yourself but ask the media to

## CONTINUING THE MOMENTUM

provide you with a final/summary report confirming they have delivered what you asked and all relevant statistics, links, copies, etc. to accompany them.

- Number of articles or broadcast stories and any online links as well as reach.
- Number of Instagram (and Instagram Stories) posts, reach, and engagement.
- Number of Facebook posts, reach, and engagement.
- Number of Twitter posts, impressions, and engagement.
- Screenshots of key comments or messages on any of the above that relate to influencing a reader's future travel decisions.
- Other social media stats, as applicable.

After publishing a blog or vlog, allow for a minimum one-month lapse in order to allow the posts to accumulate views. For bigger campaigns, you may also want to ask for stats again after six or twelve months of publishing. This is what you should ask for:

- Number of pageviews per blog post.
- Number of Instagram (and Instagram Stories) posts, reach, and engagement related to promoting the blog post.
- Number of Facebook posts, reach, and engagement related to promoting the blog post.
- Number of Twitter posts, impressions, and engagement related to promoting the blog post.
- Number of YouTube posts and views.
- Screenshots of key comments on any of the above that relate to influencing a reader's future travel decisions.
- Other social media stats, as applicable to individual influencer strengths.

Another option is to use [sharedcount.com](https://sharedcount.com) to get an overview of the top-level metrics across each blog post. Although it cannot present deeper statistics such as pageviews or engagement on any of the social networks, it does offer the basics on some networks.



# 10. EVALUATING RESULTS



Monitoring mentions of your brand or destination can be accomplished in a number of ways, and, in reality, all should be done to ensure that nothing is missed.



### MONITORING COVERAGE

- **Ask for information.** If you are working with a media influencer on a particular campaign, you can simply include this in your results request when it is complete. In addition to the coverage statistics (readership, viewership, following, etc.), also ask for links to all posts made online.
- **Encourage hashtag use and/or tagging.** Outside of specific campaigns where tags to your social accounts are required, it is still nice to hear when they (or the general public) are talking about you! One way to do this is to encourage anyone posting about your brand or destination to use a custom hashtag so that you are sure to notice. That way, if you search on that hashtag across social media regularly, you can monitor what is being put out there.

## TIP

Take Tourism Nova Scotia's cue on Instagram, where the profile says: "Use #VisitNovaScotia for a chance to be featured in our posts" or "Tag @VisitNovaScotia to be featured in our stories."

- **Get set up to listen.** There are many [free online tools](#) that can assist with social media monitoring. Stipulate a hashtag, keywords, or your website address, and these tools will send notifications when anything related to those is posted online. There are some limitations (usually to the number of searches you can make) and updating to a paid version will allow you to monitor more freely.
- **Purchase a media monitoring service.** Media monitoring is “listening” to who's saying what about your brand, your competitors, your industry, and any other topic that's important to you and your operations. In today's world, media monitoring can include more than just print, extending to online, broadcast and social media.

### MEASURING RETURN ON INVESTMENT

After your partnership is complete, it's time to evaluate the success of your campaign. How do you measure the return on investment (ROI) of your efforts and any resulting media coverage?

Reach is one way – this is the number of people who subscribe, watch or potentially read the story. Each media outlet can provide you with these numbers. Look for or ask for media or advertising kits with print publications – they will always give an in-depth analysis of their readers, how many they have, where they distribute their publication and even the average cost of advertising with them. Today, most print metrics are recorded by the number of “eyes” that have the potential to read the article. You can also measure the media value – how much it would cost to buy the equivalent of the article space in advertising. For example, Canadian Geographic Magazine has a readership of 3,294,000 per issue! Two full-size pages of advertising would cost \$35,000 but a two-page article that was purchased from a freelancer who visited your property and sold the article might cost you only a few hundred dollars ... that is an excellent return on your investment!

Perhaps the easiest way to measure media coverage is through website metrics. How many people visited your website or emailed you after the story was printed, broadcast or posted? In order to fully understand this, it is important to have Google Analytics integrated with your website to track activity.

Measurement can be trickier with social media, which is still in its relative infancy and has no equivalent. What is a Facebook “like” worth? Or a tweet? What is it going to mean to the bottom line?

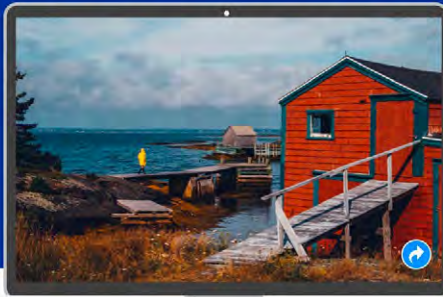
This is hard to answer because of the nature of travel purchases. It is not often a spontaneous buy, like a simple product. It is good to keep in mind that a single Instagram post may not be the deciding factor for travel, but multiple sources will build awareness and interest over time. If done well, coverage on a blog or other avenues of social media may bump up a destination on the consumer's “consideration list” for their next holiday destination, although, that decision may not come for a year or more and will be difficult to attribute to its initial source.

The fantastic thing about new media, compared to traditional, is that it is possible to measure the reach. You can't calculate how many people noticed your billboard or how many of the million magazine readers paused and considered your ad, but you can tell how many people clicked on a blog post, how many people liked it on Facebook and Instagram, or even better, how many clicked through to visit your website. All of these factors will lead to success in some form, and it's important to track these results and reflect on them.

## EVALUATING RESULTS

Having all this data at your fingertips will undoubtedly lead you to conclusions about what is working or what is not in order to bring people through your doors and/or buy your product.

### CASE STUDY: NOVA SCOTIA



[click here](#) to see our Film

We partnered with Nova Scotia Tourism on a high exposure road trip campaign highlighting the unique experiences you can enjoy through the culinary, drink, and incredible landscapes of Nova Scotia through various efforts through video, editorial, and social media content.

Through video, written articles, daily social media posts, and continued coverage on social media after our 9 day campaign/trip we yielded impressive results including 214K impressions in views likes and comments.



### DELIVERABLES:

#### Twitter:

11 Tweets, 35k impressions, 95 average engagements/post

#### Blog Posts:

2 Blog Posts, 1k avg. views/post in first month of publication

#### Facebook Videos:

1 Video, 26K Views, 844 engagements/clicks

#### Instagram Posts:

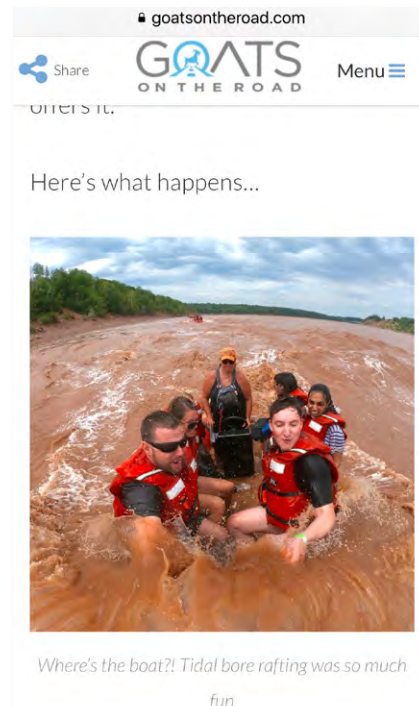
12 Instagram Posts, 55k impressions, 543 avg. likes, 41 avg. comments

#### Instagram Stories:

161 Stories, 47K views, 289 avg. views, 3 avg. interactions/post

#### Facebook Posts:

13 Facebook Posts 29K reach, 101 average engagements/post





### INTEGRATING WHAT YOU LEARN IN YOUR STRATEGY

Each media campaign or press trip will not only increase your brand awareness and potential future visitors, but it will also give you a fantastic opportunity to learn. It is important, as outlined above, to not just declare a campaign or visit “over” once media leave. Gathering data, monitoring media and conversations online, plus having an honest conversation with the media about their experience will all drive an understanding of what worked and what didn’t.

Besides optimizing future campaigns or hosting opportunities based on feedback and direct data comparisons between media, some specific things to look for:

- **Which content/social media channel provided the best results?** While such a determination is likely also impacted by the authenticity of the audience the individual has, understanding the results by type of content and platform may help inform your decisions of who to work with in the future.
- **Nano vs. micro vs. macro vs. mega.** There is a perpetual discussion online about which [level of influencer](#) (segmented by social media followers) provides for the best ROI. While mega-influencers (e.g., celebrities) may have a substantial reach, the fee to work with them may be prohibitive. Nano- or micro-influencers might work for free as they are just beginning to build their own brand, but they likely don’t reach a substantial audience. Finding that sweet spot for your destination or brand may take some trial and error in order to balance the cost with the return.

### REPURPOSING CONTENT

One of the greatest benefits of working with media on marketing campaigns is the unique and engaging content that they produce. Sure, the primary goal is to publish it for their audiences but consider how powerful it can be to amplify it to your own. Not only are you getting fresh content to populate your own channels with and saving yourself some time and/or money, but you are also sharing a new perspective. And posting a positive review from a third party can go a long way to endearing your fans even more.

However, there are best practices that are important to follow when resharing or repurposing content from media or other creators:

When you reshare content, you are redistributing a story, TV broadcast or social media post that has already been published. This includes a retweet, or when the Facebook share button is used, etc. In these cases, the system automatically gives the original poster credit for their work.

## EVALUATING RESULTS

Resharing is always encouraged. If the content is high quality and you believe it will resonate with your audience, then feel free to hit the retweet or share button or load up that blog, magazine or newspaper link to Facebook directly while properly tagging the media you hosted. This is an easy way to amplify good content and, as a bonus, media always appreciate getting their work in front of new viewers, which can go a long way to maintaining a positive relationship.

When you repurpose content, you are reusing a piece of content by publishing it directly to your own channel, website, or beyond, thus not automatically giving the author credit. In some cases, you may even have permission to edit the content to suit your needs (for example, cropping a photo).

In most cases, you are more likely to repurpose content if you own it (for example, if deliverables for a media partnership or campaign included photo or video assets). This will allow you to use it over time in a variety of capacities. However, please note that ownership does not always preclude having to tag the creator; proper attribution is often a requirement. And regardless of whether it is required or not, crediting the creator of the photo, video, or more, is always recommended. In addition, if you wish to make any alterations to the content, no matter how slight, always ask permission to do so.

A few other notes on best practices for resharing or repurposing content:

- On Instagram, there is no share button. If you wish to repost another user's photo or video to your own account, always ask permission before downloading it, and always give credit when posting.
- You can give attribution by simply referencing the media's name in the caption, but it is recommended to add a live tag to their social account, as it is certainly appreciated by the creator.
- The great thing about solid content is that you can reuse it more than once. Just be sure to space out the time in between posts!

## 11. WHAT TRAVEL MEDIA HAVE TO SAY







## WHAT SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS LOOK FOR / EXPECT

**Dalene Heck, @HecticTravels**  
[hecktictravels.com](http://hecktictravels.com)

*Dalene Heck is a multi-award-winning travel blogger (including being honoured as Traveler of the Year by National Geographic), and knows how to craft compelling travel content, and how to market it. She has devoted her life to travel since 2009 and built HeckticTravels.com to be one of the top travel blogs in the world. The blog has taken her kayaking through the fjords of Greenland, to live on the side of an exploding volcano in Ecuador, and to many more amazing places in between. Throughout her travels to over 50 countries, she has seen the best and worst in tourism practices and marketing, and in 2013, decided to put that knowledge to work by co-founding Hecktic Media Inc. (HMI).*

## WHAT TRAVEL MEDIA HAVE TO SAY

It probably goes without saying that because there is such a wide variety of social media influencers, their expectations can vary substantially. When it comes to what substantiates a satisfactory transaction for a social media influencer, some may simply request an in-kind exchange of services, while others will not consider a partnership unless thousands of dollars are paid as well. This will largely depend on the size of the influencer's audience, their desire to partake in what you have to offer, and how in-demand they are.

While payment (or not) is likely the largest point of discussion in any potential relationship with an influencer, there are other important key things that influencers look for in their work with brands/operators while on the project, including:

- **Lesser-known experiences.** Influencers are commonly looking to share places or experiences with their audience that have never been seen before. While it is understood that each brand or destination has some key items they want marketed, planning for some of these hidden gems will go a long way.
- **Stick close to niche.** A food blogger isn't likely to enjoy a long adventurous hike. Or a landscape photographer will likely get nothing out of a farmer's market. As much as possible, stick to providing experiences that jive with the influencer's niche (and don't expect them to promote things that are not in alignment as it will look inauthentic to their audiences).
- **Free time.** It is common practice to stuff the media's itinerary from day to night with as many activities as possible. When working with influencers, however, allotting some space for them to explore on their own often reaps plentiful rewards. This allows them to connect with locals and find some of those hidden gems on their own.







## HOW FREELANCERS WORK AND HOW TO WORK WITH THEM

**Darcy Rhyno, Freelance Writer and Photographer**  
[darcyrhyno.com](http://darcyrhyno.com)

*Darcy Rhyno is a travel writer and member of TMAC. He's a native Nova Scotian who has travelled the globe, researching travel to publish stories and / or photographs in BBC Travel, Canadian Geographic, Trivago, Travel Life, Dreamscapes, Flight Network, Living France, Coastal Life, Saltscapes, Coastal Discovery, Good Taste, Atlantic Business, Next Avenue (a PBS affiliate site) and elsewhere. Darcy writes about food, drink, culture, history, art, family travel, adventure, eco-tourism, travel issues and travel philosophy. He often publishes his own photographs of people, places, events and food with his articles.*



## WHAT TRAVEL MEDIA HAVE TO SAY

As a freelance travel writer/photographer, I'm always grateful to tourism operators, DMOs and PR firms that host and support individual and group press trips or FAMs, which I need to gather experiences, interviews and photos for my work. At the same time, some trips are more useful and enjoyable than others. Here are some principles and tips to help streamline the work of freelancers like me for the benefit of everyone:

**Staff vs freelance.** Staff at newspapers, magazines and websites usually publish immediately after a trip. Freelancers gather material and experiences to pitch to outlets AFTER a trip. Patience is important, as is thinking long term. One of the benefits of working with freelancers is that they often publish repeatedly over a long period of time about your destination.

**Customized Itinerary.** Work with your partners to create an itinerary that meets the needs of the freelancer. For example, tours of hotel rooms are a waste of time if the freelancer specializes in cuisine or adventure. Confirm that the itinerary meets the freelancer's needs and has all the details necessary for an efficient trip loaded with useful content.

**Free time.** Build free time into the itinerary. Freelancers need to explore the destination to seek out material that meets their needs. A destination's priorities will not always match those of the freelancer. Free time often results in unexpected rewards for everyone. Freelancers post to social media on the fly and need time to catch up on work, so a free afternoon and evening is welcome.

**Spruce it up!** Photos and impressions are made very quickly on a press trip. Properties need to be spotless, staff super friendly, activities well organized and everything photogenic.

**Show off your best assets.** About those hotel rooms – if you have one like no other on Earth, give them a night in it. Have a million dollar view? Seat them at the best table in the house. Go local with a complimentary glass of local wine or signature dish. Go above and beyond their expectations and not only will you make a lasting impression, your ROI will be through the roof.

**Interviews and pics.** Make yourself available and be ready for quick interviews and photos. Freelancers can find factual information online, so express your opinions, tell short anecdotes, and offer personal relevant background that can't be found elsewhere.

**Photo ops.** Midday is the worst time of day for exterior photos. Sunrise and sunset are best. Pointing out, as you drive by, a historic site, unique shop or stunning view or just mentioning them in passing is of no use to freelancers. Stop and shoot the roses.



## 12. RESOURCES AND TEMPLATES



Planning a media partnership takes time and energy. In this section, we've compiled some helpful resources and templates to set you up for success.



We talked to Nova Scotia tourism operators who have worked with media influencers in the past as well as media influencers themselves and asked them the most important do's when considering working with the media.

- **Check them out in advance.** Doing your research to understand what they have covered in the past. Understanding their focus and style will help you determine if they're a good match.
- **Do your homework.** Read travel articles and watch travel shows to see what trends are popping up and how you might be able to capitalize on them with a pitch of your own.
- **Have a good pitch.** Understanding what makes your offering unique and being able to pitch it to the right media influencer will ensure that what you have is of interest to them.
- **Reach out personally.** Media are more receptive when they know they're not part of an e-blast. Tailoring emails or calls to the interests of the influencer lets them know you are not wasting their time.
- **Be truthful and realistic.** Don't oversell what your organization is or does if you can't deliver.
- **Pre-set or flexible itinerary.** Some media like to be able to experience and meander on their own, while others expect an itinerary and pre-arranged interviews. Make sure to ask their preference. If you are asked to create an itinerary, do include time for breaks and don't overschedule.
- **Make yourself available.** Media will have questions for you throughout their stay, so make sure you are available. Let them know you're genuinely interested in helping them put the best possible story together.
- **Connect them with other operators** if there is a complementary offering or alignment.
- **Keep in touch.** After the visit, most media will be open to staying in touch. In fact, many of them will encourage you to do so.
- **Contact Tourism Nova Scotia.** They have experience working with media and can help with introductions and advice if wanted or warranted. Not every media person visiting the province will contact TNS. However, they have extensive networks and resources to provide you with additional insight or assistance if required.



## TRAVEL MEDIA CHECKLIST

Influencer Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### Influencer Handles:

<input type="checkbox"/> Blog URL: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> UVM: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> YouTube: _____	#Subscribers: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Instagram: _____	#Followers: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook: _____	#Followers: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Twitter: _____	#Followers: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	#Followers: _____

## BACKGROUND CHECK:

### Costs:

- Do they charge fees/daily rates?
- Are they independent suppliers or work through an agent?
- What is their payment schedule?
- Do they charge HST? If so, ask for their HST number.

### Reputation/Credibility:

- Have other operators/destinations worked with them?
- How long have they been in the industry? How did they get started?
- Do they deliver on schedule?
- Do they under or over produce?
- Ask for or seek out references.
- Ask for a media kit.

### Quantity of followers:

- A large audience is not always better than a smaller, engaged following. Are their followers legit (i.e., not bots)?
- A quick way to check is by searching their handle on Socialblade. A large jump in followers over a short period of time means they probably purchased them.

### Quality of followers:

- Are their followers and target audiences a match to yours? The point of working with an influencer is to get to their following, so make sure they are reaching your target audience. Scroll through their followers to see who they are.
- Ask for a breakdown of their audiences by geography – if they have a large percentage that is based on third world countries, they may not be the right fit for you (unless you are marketing to third world countries!).

### Engagement:

- It doesn't matter the size of their audience if no one is engaging with their posts. Look at how many likes, comments, shares, retweets, etc. their posts get. The engagement should be proportional to the number of followers. For example, it's not a good sign if they have 50,000 followers but their posts receive under 100 likes.
- How often does the influencer engage with their followers?
- How do you calculate an influencer's engagement rate? Engagement is considered to be calculated as the total number of likes and comments per post. Here's the formula:
  - »  $\text{Engagement rate} = \text{total engagement} / \text{followers} \times 100$ .
  - » For example, John Smith's latest post has 2,092 likes and 41 comments, which brings the total engagement to 2,133. His follower count is 13K. So:  $2,133 / 13,000 \times 100 = 16.4\%$ .
  - » John Smith has a high engagement rate for travel influencer marketing. As a reference, you should look for influencers with an engagement rate of 3% or higher.

### Frequency of posts:

- How often do they post on their platforms? You want to host someone whose blog or social channel has momentum, not one that has been stagnant.
- Instagram influencers should post every couple of days, if not every day.
- Bloggers should post an article every couple of weeks (and share them across their platforms!).

### Content of posts:

- What do they typically post about, and does it align with your destination?
- When it comes to blog posts, what do they write about? Are they digging into a destination's hidden gems such as the best biking trail to catch a sunset? Or, do they simply share listicles of things to do or collages of photos with no context (which is totally okay if listicles or collages works for you)?

### Quality of posts:

- Make sure their website or blog looks professional and well-maintained and is kept up to date.
- Spelling errors, incorrect grammar or poor photography are all turn-offs.
- Click on their social icons to make sure they are linked properly to their accounts.
- Look for photos that are well-lit, well-balanced, in focus, and tell a story. How do they show off a destination? Do they take beautiful landscapes, up-close details or is it always in the background of their selfie?
- Be wary of clickbait – pay attention to blogs with titles that over-promise, or captivating Instagram photos with captions that promote an influencer's contest or referral code on a frequent basis.

## **DATES FOR HOSTING:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **What Is Being Provided? (Check if applicable and provide details.)**

- ☐ Accommodation (place): \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Transportation (flight and car rental details): \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Meals (\$ per day): \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Additional excursions: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Free access to WiFi (MiFi device if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Specific exclusions (alcohol, gratuities, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

### **What Is Being Provided By The Influencer?**

**(Check if applicable and summarize the details, including #'s / frequency.)**

Blog posts (number and expected publication dates): \_\_\_\_\_

YouTube videos (number and expected publication dates): \_\_\_\_\_

Instagram photos: \_\_\_\_\_

Instagram Stories: \_\_\_\_\_

Facebook mentions: \_\_\_\_\_

Twitter mentions: \_\_\_\_\_

Other social media mentions: \_\_\_\_\_

Assets (photos, video, written content, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

### **Social Media Accounts Of Participating Businesses To Be Tagged:**

Instagram: \_\_\_\_\_

Facebook: \_\_\_\_\_

Twitter: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Specific Hashtag(s) To Be Used:**

### **Reporting To Be Provided By Influencer Following The Campaign:**

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## MEASUREMENT 101

Social media and website analytics allow you to measure the success of your online communication and marketing efforts and inform future strategies. Below are some of the metrics and analytics you may encounter when measuring social media and website data.

**Traffic:** The volume of users visiting a website or page. A general term that does not measure anything specifically.

**Visits:** The total number of times a website or page has been accessed. Also known as sessions.

**Visitors:** The number of unique visitors who have accessed a website or social media page. If a user visits a website multiple times, this activity will be logged as one unique visitor, but multiple visits. Also known as unique visitors.

**Unique viewers per month (UVM):** The number of visitors who access a website per month.

**Pageviews:** The number of times users have visited a page on a website.

**Hits:** The number of actions taken on a website by users. Hits can be misleading as few visitors can create many website hits by visiting different pages, clicking buttons or taking other actions.

**Bounce rate:** The percentage of users that exit a website after visiting only one page.

**Average time on page:** The length of time the average user spends on a specific page of a website.

**Average view duration:** The length of time the average viewer watches a video.

**Referrals:** In Google Analytics, referrals indicate how users were directed to a website. Google Analytics can display how many website visits came from social media.

**Conversions:** When a user visits a website and completes a purchase. A social conversion refers to a purchase that was completed by a user who was directed to a website by a social media platform. Also known as a goal in Google Analytics.

**Impressions:** The number of times users have seen a website, page or social media post. If users view a page more than once, multiple impressions will be recorded. Also referred to as views.

## RESOURCES AND TEMPLATES

**Reach:** The number of unique users who have seen a social media post or visited a website.

**Followers:** Users who subscribe to an account's content. Followers will see updates from accounts they follow on their news feed. Also referred to as subscribers.

**Engagement rate:** A metric that indicates how engaged users are with an account's content. Engagement is measured by the total number of likes, comments and shares on a post, divided by the posts' reach or the number of followers an account has. Typically, accounts with more followers have lower engagement rates than accounts with fewer followers.

**Vanity metrics:** Metrics that look impressive but don't contribute to business goals. For example, having lots of followers looks good, but these followers may not convert to being paying customers.

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### Sources

- [A Simple Guide to Web Traffic Terms for the PR World, PR Revolution](#)
- [The most important social media metrics to track, Sprout Social](#)

## DOWNLOADABLE FORMS, REPORTS, AND TEMPLATES

Click on the icon of the document you wish to either view or download below and you'll be re-directed to the file.





# THAT'S A WRAP!



Working with travel media as part of your marketing plan can build awareness for your business and help to draw in thousands of new customers. In an effort to assist industry and inspire travel in the evolving tourism environment, we hope this educational toolkit has helped prepare you to work with travel media, either on your own or with partners.

Should you have any questions or if you require assistance in implementing your travel media strategy, we welcome you to reach out to our Travel Media Specialists at [travelmedia@novascotia.ca](mailto:travelmedia@novascotia.ca). We are excited to work with you to help promote and grow your business!