

The Essential Guide for Assessing Your Community's Tourism Potential

By Bill Metcalfe and Mike Stolte

TOURISM 360°

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Centre for
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FORWARD

“While tourism isn’t the economic ‘silver bullet’ some communities think it is, there is no doubt it is of increasing importance to the well-being of small communities, whose economies are undergoing continuous and often gut-wrenching transition. With worldwide tourism numbers expected to grow steadily (visits have doubled every 11 years worldwide [a stunning 6.5 % compound growth rate since 1950] while one in 10 jobs worldwide is tourism-related), and the explosive growth of niche industries like medical tourism (ouch!), recession tourism (small ka-ching), culinary tourism (mmm!), and dark tourism (think John Lennon’s murder), communities that do not plan strategically, collaboratively and innovatively are likely to be left behind.”

Excerpt from “Seven Deadly Sins Small Communities Make” by Mike Stolte, originally published in Black Press

Communities often struggle with tourism. Are we getting the most bang for our buck? Could we do things better? Where can we even start improving things?

If you’ve asked any of these questions, this *Tourism 360 Guide* is for you. It’s written to help you better diagnose what you are doing well and perhaps, not so well, in six critical areas: web-site, social media, branding, creating tourism experiences, sustainable tourism and community vitality. Communities that are doing well in tourism are often doing well in these six areas.

This guide has been written so that you can better understand your community’s tourism situation and find great strategies and resources to make yourself better. Whether you’re just starting out in developing your community’s tourism potential or running a sophisticated destination marketing organization (DMO), there’s something here for you. If you are a tourism operator, you can think of your business as a community and use this guide to assess your organization.

The guide offers an easy-to-use format we’ve used in our popular [Starting Strong: Rural Community Economic Development \(CED\) Guide](#) that helps communities decide where to start in the overwhelming field of economic development. Like *Starting Strong, Tourism 360*:

- introduces each of the six important tourism concepts,
- has a survey and scoring guide that allows you to quickly see how well you’re doing on a particular concept,
- provides strategies for improvement, and
- links you to the best resources (appendices) that we’ve come across.

If you want more, the Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership (CIEL – www.theCIEL.com) offers:

- in-community *Tourism 360* facilitation to help communities assess their potential and guide them in jump-starting action and developing a doable action plan
- workshops, training and certification of communities (or experienced community facilitators) to carry out the *Tourism 360* process themselves.

CIEL is an organization that has developed innovative, yet practical, tools and processes for communities and organizations. Our *Communities 'Life Cycle' Matrix* has been used in more than 15 countries. Our *Business Vitality Initiative* (BVI) and *Community Vitality Initiative* (CVI) have a 90%+ success rate in helping communities bridge the gap between study and action.

Like each of these, we believe that the best place to start is to know where you are. Good luck!

Mike Stolte & Bill Metcalfe
Nelson, BC, Canada

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TOURISM 360: The Essential Guide for Assessing Your Community's Tourism Potential

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	5
Why Tourism 360?	5
How Tourism 360 Works	5
Tourism: More Than Meets the Eye	7
The Impact of Tourism	8
Benefits of an in-Community Facilitation of Tourism 360	9
2. ASSESSING YOUR COMMUNITY'S TOURISM POTENTIAL	9
A. THE TOURISM WEBSITE—AN INTRODUCTION.....	11
INTERNET MARKETING Part 1: The Tourism Website	12
Strategy 1: Improve the Basic Content of Your Website	13
Strategy 2: Improve the Basic Usability of Your Website	13
Strategy 3: Add Value to the Content of Your Website	13
Strategy 4: Learn How To Track Web Traffic And Optimize Visits To Your Site	14
B. SOCIAL MEDIA—AN INTRODUCTION	15
INTERNET MARKETING Part 2: Social Media	17
Strategy 1: Maintain an Active, Engaging Facebook Page For Your Business	18
Strategy 2: Track What People Are Saying About You, and Respond.....	18
Strategy 3: Start A Blog On Your Website	19
Strategy 4: Use Twitter	20
Strategy 5: Learn about Location Technology	20
C. BRANDING: PERCEPTION AND PROMISE—AN INTRODUCTION.....	22
BRANDING: Perception and Promise	23
Strategy 1: Understand the Importance of Branding.....	24
Strategy 2: Understand the Changed Definition of a Brand	24
Strategy 3: Examine Your Current Brand in Light of The Above Principles .	25
Strategy 4: Develop a Brand.....	25

D. EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM—AN INTRODUCTION	26
CREATING TOURISM EXPERIENCES	28
Strategy 1: Study tourism trends, demographics and motivators.....	29
Strategy 2: Assess your tourism experience opportunities	29
Strategy 3: Offer geographic, cultural, and personal exploration; give visitors real encounters with real people	29
Strategy 4: Develop Regional Packages, Clusters, Partnerships and Itineraries	30
Strategy 5: Develop a community or regional tourism plan.....	30
Strategy 6: Support tourism experiences with good dining and shopping....	31
E. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM—AN INTRODUCTION	32
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM	35
Strategy 1: Conserve Energy	36
Strategy 2: Reduce Waste	36
Strategy 3: Purchase Sustainable Products and Services	36
Strategy 4: Hire and Purchase Locally.....	37
Strategy 5: Publicize, Partner, and Connect Around Sustainability.....	37
F. COMMUNITY VITALITY—AN INTRODUCTION	39
COMMUNITY VITALITY	41
Strategy 1: Revitalize downtown.....	42
Strategy 2. Create an annual community festival.....	42
Strategy 3. Develop artistic and cultural tourism.....	42
Strategy 4. Initiate a First Impressions program	42
Strategy 5. Measure Community Vitality	43
YOUR TOTAL SCORE	44
3. APPENDICES: RESOURCES TO HELP YOU LEARN MORE.....	45
APPENDIX A: TOURISM WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT—RESOURCES	45
APPENDIX B: SOCIAL MEDIA IN TOURISM—RESOURCES	47
APPENDIX C: TOURISM DESTINATION BRANDING—RESOURCES	52
APPENDIX D: CREATING TOURISM EXPERIENCES—RESOURCES	54
APPENDIX E: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM—RESOURCES	60
APPENDIX E: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM—STUDIES AND STATISTICS ON CONSUMER DEMAND AND ATTITUDES	66
APPENDIX F: COMMUNITY VITALITY—RESOURCES	69
About CIEL.....	73
About the Authors.....	74

1. INTRODUCTION

Why Tourism 360?

In CIEL's work over the past decade with rural communities, many of them have told us they would like to develop and promote tourism for economic development.

Often this is in response to the decline of a natural resource industry that has supported the community for generations. Communities want to turn to tourism, but often they don't know where to start.

CIEL is committed to the health and vitality of rural communities, and we have an excellent track record when it comes to working with them. With *Tourism 360* we are responding to a clear need that has presented itself again and again from all parts of the country.

We are the developers of the *Business Vitality Initiative* (BVI), the *Community Vitality Initiative* (CVI), the *Community Check-up*, and the *Communities Matrix* (a tool used in more than 15 countries). We use these tools to measure and facilitate business friendliness and quality of life in rural communities. Our work is practical and action-oriented. Our tools have been used by dozens of communities in Canada, the U.S., and Australia.

Many rural communities in Canada have found creative ways for tourism to contribute to the economic, social and environmental health of their town or region. At CIEL we believe that tourism should not be a separate economic development activity but should be part of the overall vitality of your town. With *Tourism 360* we hope to assist you in making your town attractive to both visitors and residents alike.

How *Tourism 360* Works

This free manual has been designed to educate individuals and communities about tourism and help them to look at tourism in new ways. It combines CIEL's years of experience working with rural communities with our recent exhaustive research into the latest tourism trends and wisdom.

But there is more to *Tourism 360* than this manual. CIEL is available to:

- provide professional in-community facilitation to help communities assess their potential and guide them in realizing that potential, using our 4-step *Tourism 360* process described below, or

- train and certify communities or experienced community facilitators to carry out the 4-step process themselves.

The *Tourism 360* process follows the method established in CIEL's BVI and CVI, in which we help communities thoughtfully assess their issues, then focus on what will work, then decisively act. CIEL's highly successful 'ASSESS-FOCUS-ACT' process, fine-tuned over time working with dozens of communities, offers a 90%+ success rate.

Tourism 360 is intended for use by local tourism planning groups. But the process and material can also be adapted for individual tourism operators who want to evaluate their operations and educate themselves.

Tourism 360 follows a four-step process:

1. Visit by a "secret tourist"

Our tourism consultants will analyse your community's tourism marketing materials and pay an anonymous visit to your town. CIEL will assess your community's tourist-friendliness from the point of view of a tourist.

2. Community assessment meeting

CIEL will then meet with your tourism planning group—this could be a Chamber of Commerce, a municipal government committee, or another group formed to develop tourism. Tourism operators and members of the public with an interest in tourism will also be invited. At that meeting, CIEL will ask everyone to fill out the *Tourism 360* questionnaire and will form several focus groups to discuss targeted tourism issues. We will also recommend getting additional people to fill out the survey online.

People attending the meeting will receive a copy of this manual.

3. Analysis and recommendations

Over the next few weeks, CIEL will analyse the surveys (allowing for an invaluable comparison with other communities we have worked with), the focus group results and the observations of the "secret tourist" visit, and write an easy-to-read report pulling out key themes, with a short-list of short-term (good for immediate action) and long-term recommendations (essential for strategic tourism and economic development planning). But the process does not stop there. We don't want the report to sit on the proverbial shelf.

4. Kick-start to action

At a second meeting of the tourism group and the public, the recommendations will be put into action. In a process CIEL has developed and fine-tuned working with dozens of communities in Canada,

the US and Australia, CIEL will harness the passion and energy of the community. CIEL's *"Reality Check"* will be performed on chosen priority (immediate) actions chosen through this process, enhancing the chance of success.

CIEL will also assist in the formulation of a doable strategic action plan that can guide the community over the coming years.

CIEL will periodically check in with the organizing group over the next year, offering advice and/or direction.

Tourism: More Than Meets the Eye

We each have our own individual perception of what tourism means. Sometimes we forget how varied the industry is. Tourism includes a vast range of activities including:

- themed attractions
- nature-based activities (cycling, mountain biking, hiking, canoeing, kayaking, sailing, skiing, snowboarding, hunting, fishing, horseback riding, backcountry skiing and touring, swimming, bird-watching, camping, diving, rafting, climbing, surfing, waterskiing, wildlife viewing, skydiving, etc.)
- parks and natural areas
- festivals and events
- specialty resorts
- conferences and meeting facilities
- sporting events and facilities including golf
- ski resort activities and facilities
- heritage and arts/culture events
- food and wine attractions
- learning and volunteer activities
- industrial or farm related activities

The economic sectors that depend significantly on tourism are:

- Transportation
- Accommodation
- Food and beverage
- Recreation and entertainment
- Travel services

We tend to think of tourists as people from other countries or continents. In fact, less than 7% of British Columbia's tourists come from outside North America. Many tourists only travel a few hours by car within their own province or region.

There are three unique features of tourism that sometimes require a mental adjustment for small communities or businesses just entering the industry.

- The customer comes to the product or service and does not take it away as he or she would take away a pair of shoes or a truckload of lumber.
- The product is an intangible experience. It is true that there are tangible products involved (hotel rooms, meals, etc.) but ultimately the product consists of experiences, feelings, learning, fun, and memories.
- Quality of service is as important as the product. In some ways it *is* the product.

Because of these three unique characteristics, running a tourism enterprise requires attitudes and skill sets different from any other industry. This applies not only to individual tourism operators, but to communities as a whole. Those attitudes and skills, mostly as applied to whole communities, are the subject matter of this manual.

The Impact of Tourism

In Canada, tourism is directly responsible for about 600,000 jobs and contributes 2% of our Gross Domestic Product. In B.C. it's close to 4%. Worldwide, tourism's importance is much greater: it is the main economic activity of many countries, accounting for one in ten jobs worldwide.

In rural Canadian communities, tourism creates jobs and opportunities for entrepreneurs, especially in the sectors listed above. There is a tendency to think of tourism jobs as being low-paying, seasonal, and part-time.

“People who do not understand the industry may not think of these critical tourism-generated jobs: pilots, website developers, accountants, tour operators, fishing guides, resort operators, and golf and ski sector positions. The reality is that tourism offers a wide range of employment options all along the pay scale.” (From *Transforming Communities Through Tourism*. See Appendix D.)

Tourism can bring out the best in a rural community by:

- Focusing on the community's potential cultural and natural assets and developing them creatively
- Stimulating improvements and pride in downtowns, cultural events, infrastructure, and businesses
- Bringing local people together who might not otherwise associate with each other

- Bringing in money, new ideas, and perhaps new residents from the outside
- Increasing the variety of types of businesses

Tourism has a strong impact not just on economies, but on cultures and the environment as well. There is no doubt that tourism has been responsible for the destruction of some cultures or natural areas across the world. But in other cases it has enhanced or preserved them. Would the large wildlife preserves in Africa exist without tourism?

Benefits of an in-Community Facilitation of *Tourism 360*

- Improves economic development and tourism prospects for community and businesses
- Identifies underutilized assets and new opportunities
- Quick & cost- effective
- Finds gaps and strengths in 6 key areas
- Provides easy-to-read report
- Community (not consultants) sets priorities & realistic actions through a fun, engaging, transparent process
- Allows comparison to similar communities
- Helps to leverage resources
- Jumpstarts immediate actions
- Provides a doable strategic action plan
- Becomes foundation for sound strategic tourism and economic development planning
- Conducted by objective outside facilitator
- Builds capacity & networks in the community
- Helps move a community from indecisiveness to action
- Demonstrates community commitment and progressiveness to tourism and economic development

2. ASSESSING YOUR COMMUNITY'S TOURISM POTENTIAL

The *Tourism 360* assessment consists of six sections, each representing a key area of tourism:

- A. Internet Marketing 1: The Tourism Website
- B. Internet Marketing 2: Social Media
- C. Branding
- D. Creating Tourism Experiences
- E. Sustainable Tourism

F. Community Vitality

We have chosen these six areas based on our recent comprehensive research into tourism trends as well as changes in the technologies that affect tourism. We have found that successful tourism businesses and tourism savvy communities tend to be up to date and effective in those six areas.

In each of the six sections below you will find a short survey that asks about your perceptions of tourism and of your community. A scoring summary is provided at the bottom of each of the six surveys. When you have completed all six you can calculate your overall score in the section entitled *Your Total Score* on page 44.

With those mini-surveys, you can gauge your own individual knowledge and attitudes about tourism. In addition to the mini-survey, each of the six sections below contains a series of suggested strategies for improvement.

Following the six sections we have included six appendices containing comprehensive lists of online resources for each tourism area. These are all current as of August, 2011.

This manual can be a valuable resource for individual tourism operators. But the greatest value comes when a group of community members fills out the surveys and analyzes the results together, with a facilitator.

When CIEL facilitates *Tourism 360* in your community, we use a more comprehensive questionnaire, completed by as many community members as possible. We then score the results using a more sophisticated method than those in the mini-surveys in this manual. We report back with results and recommendations for the whole community, following the four steps outlined in the previous section above.

A. THE TOURISM WEBSITE—AN INTRODUCTION

Most people research, plan, and book their travel online. This means that a community's tourism website needs to be comprehensive, attractive, professional, and up-to-date. Whether it's the website of an individual tourism operation or that of the community as a whole, potential travellers want professional quality photos and videos of your services, the ability to book a trip online from home or from a mobile phone, a map of how to get there, suggestions for nearby restaurants and attractions, and quick and easy site navigation.

"Your website should be good enough to close the sale."—Roger Brooks.

INTERNET MARKETING Part 1: The Tourism Website

<p>Most tourism travel is researched, planned, and booked online. Therefore the website needs to be the main marketing tool, whether for an individual business or a whole community.</p> <p>Please tick one box for each question, based on your perception of tourism in your community.</p>	Completely Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Completely Disagree	Don't Know
	☺		☹		☹	?
	4	3	2	1	0	
A1 The community's main tourism website is a priority in our community tourism efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A2 Our community's internet tourism promotion promises visitors something specific and unique.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A3 The photography or videos on the main tourism website for our town or region are professional looking and beautiful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A4 Local government or local tourism organizations make it a priority to help businesses learn how to use the internet and improve their websites.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A5 Our community tourism website has relevant links to local tourism operators and experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A6 Our community tourism website is user friendly and easy to navigate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A7 Our community tourism website for our town or region conveys a sense of excitement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Score for each column (number of tick-marks times the number at the top of the column) Total of all columns except "don't know": _____ (Highest possible score: 28) Enter this score on page ()					0	X
A8 What is your community's greatest strength in the area of tourism marketing on the internet?						
A9 What needs to be improved in your community, in the area of tourism marketing on the internet?						

Strategies and Tools for Tourism Website Development

The advice in these strategies is aimed at both individual tourism websites and whole-community tourism websites. Some of the information may appear to be aimed solely at individual tourism businesses. But these are strategies that community tourism organizations could use, and that they could be encouraging and training individual business to implement.

NOTE: For further reading and a comprehensive listing of great online resources on this topic please see the appendices.

Strategy 1: Improve the Basic Content of Your Website

All information on a tourism website must be completely up-to-date. Photographs must be of professional quality, and should show people enjoying your service (not just pictures of landscapes or buildings). If you are an individual accommodation venue, include a photo of each room. The site should show your pricing and rates. Your spelling and grammar must be perfect, and the site should convey charm and professionalism. It is often a good idea to hire a professional web designer to help you with this.

Many tourism operators and community tourism groups are unaware of the limitations of their websites, according to a very interesting recent study in Atlantic Canada, which found a large gap between tourism operators' perceptions of their site and those of potential travellers. The operators' opinions of their own sites were much higher than that of travellers. Read about exactly what the travellers said was missing in the *On-Line Readiness Review* link in the resource list in Appendix A.

Strategy 2: Improve the Basic Usability of Your Website

A quickly increasing number of vacation trips, including accommodation, are booked online. Travellers will ignore companies and communities where this is not possible. This must be possible not just from a computer from a hand-held device such as a smart phone. Travellers also want to know whether an individual tourism business is close to shopping, the airport, business meetings, or tourist attractions. Therefore the site should contain maps and detailed driving directions. Many travellers will pass over websites with no map. Navigation of the site itself should be quick and easy. Travellers will move on almost immediately from a site that is complicated or slow. See Appendix A for information and resources.

Strategy 3: Add Value to the Content of Your Website

We recommend that you do not take on this strategy unless you are satisfied that you are doing well with Strategies 1 and 2, above.

There should be professional quality video on your site. It should depict people enjoying your services, and/or a 360-degree scan of your premises, your rooms, or a nearby attraction. Offer specials, and highlight them on your website. There should be a calendar of special events in the community, and descriptions of nearby attractions (with photos and links). If you are a restaurant, provide a constantly updated menu. If you are not a restaurant, provide a guide to nearby dining with maps, contact information, and menus. Include information about your policies such as pets and smoking. See Appendix A for resources.

Strategy 4: Learn How To Track Web Traffic And Optimize Visits To Your Site

If you put an ad on the radio or in a newspaper or travel magazine, you have no way of tracking how many people have actually seen it. If you write an article for a trade journal about your field of expertise, you have no evidence that anyone read it. With your website, you do. Talk to the person who set up your website or who advises you on it, and get them to teach you how to track your web traffic. Once you become aware of how many visits you get, you can plan to increase that traffic. This involves learning about keywords, and providing Google with the right key words so when, for example, someone looking for a summer kayak tour vacation types “kayaking in B.C.” into Google, your kayak tour company or your community turns up near the top of the Google search list.

B. SOCIAL MEDIA—AN INTRODUCTION

The following is a partial list of typical internet-based activities used by a rapidly growing number of travellers:

- Viewing and posting travel photos or travel video on Flickr or Facebook or specialized travel sites.
- Posting daily travel updates on Facebook or Twitter.
- Reviewing and reading other travellers' reviews of accommodations, restaurants, and destinations on TripAdvisor.com and similar sites.
- Researching and booking long distance travel, hotels and tours based on other travellers' online tips and advice.
- Joining Facebook travellers' groups.
- Using mobile audio guides.
- Viewing virtual tours of accommodations or travel attractions.
- Blogging about the trip and reading other travellers' blogs.
- Interacting with tourism hosts on social media before, during, and after the trip.
- Finding their way on Google Maps.

Increasingly these activities will be done on hand-held devices during a trip. Tourism operators and community tourism organizations should learn about one of these things at a time to avoid being overwhelmed. But don't ignore social media. It is not a passing fad. It is a fundamental shift in the way we communicate.

Social Media is The New Word-Of-Mouth

Web technologies have created two brand-new communication paths:

- Travellers who may or may not know each other are interacting across time and distance. They are talking about their tourism experiences and recommending them (or not) to others.
- Travellers are interacting with their tourism hosts before, during, and after the trip.

Who uses social media for travel?

A recent study of the media practices of 1,050 travellers in the U.S. concluded that:

- 52% of travellers use social media,
- Travellers who use social media are younger, take more trips, and have a greater economic impact (even though they individually spend less per trip) than non-social media users,
- The median age of a travelling social media user is 40, versus 52 for non-user travellers,

- Social media users share their travel experiences through many media, while non-users are unlikely to share their experience through any media,
- Travellers who are users of social media are more likely to want to explore new cultures and history, have stories to share back home, pursue a hobby, provide educational experiences for their children, to pamper themselves, and to challenge themselves physically,
- Travellers who are users of social media are more likely to want to participate in an event or experience, rather than simply go sight-seeing.

INTERNET MARKETING Part 2: Social Media

<p>Social media is not a passing fad. It's the 21st century version of word-of-mouth. And it's a powerful marketing tool.</p> <p>Please tick one box for each question, based on your perception of tourism in your community.</p>	Completely Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Completely Disagree	Don't Know
	☺ 4	3	☺ 2	1	☹ 0	?
B1 Many tourism businesses in this community have a Facebook page or use some other form of social media.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B2 There is a program or course in this community where businesses can learn how to use social media for marketing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B3 In general, using social media is an effective marketing strategy for tourism organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B4 Our tourism organizations (including businesses) use social media in a way that grabs your attention.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B5 Our tourism organizations (including businesses) keep their social media current.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B6 Our local tourism marketing organization or municipal tourism group uses social media as part of its marketing strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B7 Our local tourism marketing association or municipal tourism group is aware of what people are saying about local businesses on TripAdvisor.com.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Score for each column (number of tick-marks times the number at the top of the column) Total of all columns except "don't know": _____ (Highest possible score: 28) Enter this score on page ()					0	X
B8 What is your community's greatest strength in the area of social media marketing for tourism?						
B9 What needs to improve in your community, in the area of social media marketing for tourism?						

Strategies and Tools for Social Media for Tourism Operators

Our advice in these strategies is aimed at both individual tourism operators and whole-community tourism planners. Some of the strategies may appear to be aimed solely at individual tourism businesses. But these are strategies that community tourism organizations could be encouraging and training individual business to follow.

The following list of strategies is arranged in a logical sequence. Get used to one strategy before continuing on to the next. If you are already familiar with some of it, skip ahead.

NOTE: For further reading and a comprehensive listing of great online resources on this topic please see the appendices.

Strategy 1: Maintain an Active, Engaging Facebook Page For Your Business

“You might say, ‘Oh, I don’t like Facebook.’ Well, your customers do like it.”
—Scott Stratten

If Facebook were a country it would be the world’s third largest, with 750,000,000 users (September 2011), nearly half of whom access it on their mobile phones.

To start a business page on Facebook you must have a personal page as well—your business page is an offshoot of your personal page.

On your personal page, be active. Post status updates, comment on other people’s postings, put photos up, contact old friends. Don’t just join up and then not participate—you will never learn that way and it won’t be any fun either. Don’t take months to learn it. Get in there and master it right away. If you need help, find a mentor.

Then you can start a business page, which should function like a newsroom for your business, not an ad agency. Give people news about your business and other businesses, and about events in the community that interest you. Be useful to the community. If you just post promotions for your business, people will consider it spam.

If you are sponsoring an event of any kind, create a Facebook page for it. It is nearly impossible to market an event to anyone under 40 without a Facebook event page. See Appendix B for a list of resources about Facebook.

Strategy 2: Track What People Are Saying About You, and Respond

A growing number of travellers use social media to influence destination selection, and of those, more than 75% say online reviews impacted hotel choice, method of travel, and choice of dining.

Social media is a new kind of word of mouth—what’s new about it is that you can search for it.

A Nielsen study reports that 90% of travellers place their greatest trust, for travel advice, on people they know. Seventy percent of consumers trust online recommendations while only 14% trust advertisements.

The popular online travel review site TripAdvisor has 34 million annual unique visits and 35 million reviews. Ninety-eight percent of topics posted in the forum are replied to within 24 hours. Tourism operators should encourage and respond to online reviews.

Click here for [an example](#) of how TripAdvisor can help a small rural tourism operator. Click on the TripAdvisor logo on the left side to see reviews by past guests. Then, on the TripAdvisor site, type Nelson, B.C. in the search box, then click on B&Bs.

TripAdvisor ratings come up on Google Maps of cities. For example, look up a hotel in Oaxaca, Mexico, on Google Maps and you are likely to find an excerpt from a TripAdvisor review and be linked to others right from the map.

Social media is about conversations and dialogue between a tourism business and its potential, current, and past customers. Responding to online reviews is one way of taking up this conversation. Being aware of what people are saying about your business, and responding to a negative review, indicates to customers that you are listening and that you want to improve.

See Appendix B for resources.

Strategy 3: Start A Blog On Your Website

A blog is an addition to your website. It can function like your own little newsroom from which you can say anything you want. You are the writer and editor. The point is to share information, facts, anecdotes, success stories, statistics, and opinions—all aimed at creating a conversation by and about your business and your community.

It is estimated that there are more than 150,000,000 blogs in the world and that a new one starts up every few seconds. Most of them have an audience of one, so the challenge is to create a blog with original, useful content and to find the time to do it well.

Your Facebook page and blog posts can be linked: every time you post something new on your blog, tell people about it on Facebook.

You will find blogging resources in Appendix B.

Strategy 4: Use Twitter

Twitter and Facebook are often mentioned in the same breath, but they are different. Twitter tends to be more informational and less social. It is also less reciprocal: you can “follow” someone on Twitter without them following you and without their permission, as opposed to Facebook where “friends” are always reciprocal and by permission.

Twitter is sometimes referred to as *micro-blogging* because Twitter only allows you 140 characters per entry. But don’t forget that that short space can include a link— to your blog, website or Facebook page or to anything else on the web that you want to tell people about.

If you are already using Facebook or a blog, Twitter will extend your reach further.

Strategy 5: Learn about Location Technology

Facebook asks, “What’s on your mind.” Twitter asks, “What’s happening?” But with the advent of the mobile internet, the question, “Where are you?” has become just as important.

Services such as Foursquare, Gowalla and Facebook Places allow people with smart phones to “check in” at bars, restaurants, clubs and even offices and railway stations so their friends know where they are. With a mobile internet-capable phone, we can find places that have been recommended by our friends, or by strangers.

Foursquare, for example, uses GPS technology to pinpoint your location. You share where you are by “checking in” at a restaurant or other location. You can create lists of your favourite (geolocation-linked) locations and activities by sharing those lists with your friends. This is *real-time information sharing*. You can earn badges by checking in frequently at a particular business, and then earn prizes or discounts from that business. This process has aspects of marketing, gaming, social media and GPS location technology. Foursquare had 7.5 million users as of March 2011.

Another application for the leveraging of geography is Wikitude. Owners of GPS-equipped smart phones can point the phone at, for example, a landmark building

and instantly get geo-tagged information about that building from Wikipedia. This can be communicated in real time to friends on Foursquare or other geolocation services.

The technology and possibilities in this area are changing rapidly.

C. BRANDING: PERCEPTION AND PROMISE—AN INTRODUCTION

The definition of a brand has changed over the past decade or so.

A brand used to be something else. It used to be a logo or a design or a wrapper. Today, that's a shadow of the brand, something that might mark the brand's existence. But just as it takes more than a hat to be a cowboy, it takes more than a designer.... to make a brand. Design is essential, but design is not brand.—Seth Godin

A brand is a perception and a promise. The brand communicates how you are different from or better than your competition. If your brand could be about anywhere, discard it in favour of something that is true only for your community (or business). If you have to explain its meaning to your own residents (or customers): discard it.

Let's look at two car companies as an example. Volvos are known for safety. BMWs are known for excitement. They're both cars, but they deliver two different promises, thus, their brands set them apart and attract different types of customers.—Tourism Nova Scotia

The brand's focus should be not on geography or places, but on experiences, activities, emotions, and the senses. See Appendix C for resource materials.

BRANDING: Perception and Promise

<p>A brand is not just a logo or a slogan. It's your identity. It's what people think of when your name is mentioned. It's your way of differentiating yourself from your competition.</p> <p>Please tick one box for each question, based on your perception of tourism in your community.</p>	Completely Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Completely Disagree	Don't Know
	☺ 4		☹ 2	1	☹ 0	? ?
C1 Our community has a story or image that is conveyed effectively through its promotional materials.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C2 Our community promises something specific for tourists.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C3 Our community's unique features are communicated well through our brand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C4 The meaning of our community brand is clear—you don't have to explain it to people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C5 Our brand is authentic. We are able to deliver what we promise.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6 Our brand is accepted and promoted by the community, its businesses and tourism operators.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C7 Our brand is used consistently.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Score for each column (number of tick-marks times the number at the top of the column) Total of all columns except "don't know": _____ (Highest possible score: 28) Enter this score on page ()			0			X
C8 What is your community's greatest strength in the area of tourism branding?						
C9 What needs to improve in your community, in the area of tourism branding?						

Strategies and Tools for Tourism Destination Branding

The advice in these strategies is aimed at both individual tourism brands and whole-community tourism brands. Some of the information may appear to be aimed solely at individual tourism businesses. But these are strategies that community tourism organizations could be using, and they could encourage and train individual businesses to use them.

NOTE: For further reading and a comprehensive listing of great online resources on this topic please see the appendices.

Strategy 1: Understand the Importance of Branding

With hundreds of marketing messages bombarding us each day, only a few grab our attention. When a brand or marketing message promises us something we are looking for, we notice it. When the message is presented in a compelling and original way, it catches our attention. That's why a business or a community needs a marketing message that stands out from the crowd.

To do that, a community needs a unique identity, not a generic one that is trying to be all things to all people. A brand is an expression of that identity.

"Your brand is what we think of when your name is mentioned."—Roger Brooks

See Appendix C for resource materials.

Strategy 2: Understand the Changed Definition of a Brand

The definition of a brand has changed over the past decade or so.

"A brand used to be something else. It used to be a logo or a design or a wrapper. Today, that's a shadow of the brand, something that might mark the brand's existence. But just as it takes more than a hat to be a cowboy, it takes more than a designer.... to make a brand. Design is essential, but design is not brand."—Seth Godin

A brand is a perception and a promise. The brand communicates how you are different from or better than your competition. If your brand could be about anywhere, discard it in favour of something that is true only for your community (or business). If you have to explain its meaning to your own residents (or customers), discard it.

"Let's look at two car companies as an example. Volvos are known for safety. BMWs are known for excitement. They're both cars, but they deliver two different

promises, thus, their brands set them apart and attract different types of customers.”—Tourism Nova Scotia

The brand’s focus should be not on geography or places, but on experiences, activities, emotions, and the senses. See Appendix C for resource materials.

Strategy 3: Examine Your Current Brand in Light of The Above Principles

We recommend the section on the Nova Scotia brand on pages 18 and 19 in the *Experience Nova Scotia* material cited in Appendix C for an example of brand attributes that have obviously been done with care.

“A destination brand is the totality of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings that customers hold about a place.”—Bill Baker

Strategy 4: Develop a Brand

We recommend you enlist the help of someone with experience in branding and marketing.

But first, read all of the material in Appendix C, particularly the writing and videos by Roger Brooks and Bill Baker. Then select your facilitator or consultant based on how well aligned he or she is with the principles expressed by those two experts.

D. EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM—AN INTRODUCTION

Eighty percent of travel money is spent by “boomers” (those born between 1945 and 1964). Here is tourism expert Roger Brooks’ list of their preferred travel activities:

- Culinary tourism: Visiting chefs, restaurants, education
- Art: Artists in action, learning new hobbies, education
- Ethnic events: Learning and experiencing other cultures
- Home & Garden: Education, training, garden tours
- Public markets, farmers markets

The next highest spending group, according to Brooks, is the “millennials”, born between 1977 and 1994. Their preferences included all of the above activities plus:

- Environment: Kayaking, climbing, canoeing, extreme recreation
- Hanging out: Coffee places, public squares, sidewalk restaurants, etc.

Your tourism brand (which should not be just a logo or slogan) should appeal to tourists with those preferences.

“A tourism *product* is what you buy. A tourism *experience* is what you remember.”

The tourism industry sells personal experiences. Although there are identifiable products involved such as air tickets, hotel rooms, and restaurant meals, the important part of tourism is intangible—it’s the feeling, the experience, the learning. Those intangibles, if they are captivating, motivate tourists to try a tourism experience, to recommend it to others, and to return next year.

Roger Brooks recommends that you stop marketing geography and start marketing experiences, and that you heed this basic traveller’s question: “What do you have that I can’t get or do closer to home?”

Experiences, Not Sight-Seeing

Increasingly, tourists want a unique experience with multiple activities (not just sight-seeing) and a personal connection to nature or local culture. They expect that the experience will be professionally presented with impeccable service in all the details.

“Travel experiences engage travellers in a series of memorable events that are revealed over a duration of time, that are inherently personal, involve the senses and make a connection on an emotional, physical, spiritual or intellectual level.”—Canadian Tourism Commission

This experiential tourism approach can be embraced by both individual operators and whole communities. The material listed in the resources section below will be useful to both.

A Shift in Thinking

Rural communities with a historical reliance on natural resource industries may see tourism as a poor alternative—low-paying, seasonal, and unfamiliar. But many small communities in Canada have gone beyond that perception and found creative ways for tourism to contribute to the economic, social and environmental health of their town or region.

Tourism includes a vast range of activities:

- themed attractions
- nature-based activities
- parks and natural areas
- festivals and events
- specialty resorts
- conferences and meeting facilities
- sporting events and facilities including golf
- ski activities and facilities
- heritage and arts/culture events
- food and wine attractions
- learning and volunteer activities
- industrial or farm related activities

Whatever the attraction, the task is to make a visit to your community an interactive, surprising learning experience that appeals to the senses and the emotions.

CREATING TOURISM EXPERIENCES

	Completely Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Completely Disagree	Don't Know
<p>“A tourism product is what you buy. A tourism experience is what you remember.” Tourists want experiences that engage them on a personal level, not just sight-seeing.</p> <p>Please tick one box for each question, based on your perception of tourism in your community.</p>	☺		☹		☹	?
	4	3	2	1	0	
D1 This community has an up-to-date tourism plan or strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D2 In tourist season many downtown businesses here are open in the evening.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D3 This community understands the need to develop in-depth tourism experiences that are truly memorable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D4 This region has many features and natural assets that could be turned into great tourism experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D5 Citizens of this community have a positive attitude towards tourists.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D6 Our signage allows visitors to easily find their way around town and to experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D7 Tourism operators and organizations across the region work together to provide better tourism experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Score for each column (number of tick-marks times the number at the top of the column) Total of all columns except “don’t know”: _____ (Highest possible score: 28) Enter this score on page ()			0			X
C8 What is your community’s greatest strength in the area of tourism branding?						
C9 What needs to improve in your community, in the area of tourism branding?						

Strategies and Tools for Creating Tourism Experiences

The advice in these strategies is aimed at both individual tourism operations and whole-community tourism organizations. Some of the information may appear to be aimed solely at individual tourism businesses. But these are strategies that community tourism organizations could follow, and could encourage and train individual businesses to follow.

NOTE: For further reading and a comprehensive listing of great online resources on this topic please see the appendices.

Strategy 1: Study tourism trends, demographics and motivators

Where do tourists come to your area or your province/state from? How old are they? What kinds of experiences do they prefer? How long do they stay? What do they pay? Is there a group or demographic that you want to attract? These questions are about travel motivators and buying preferences. Experts have studied these things and tourism people have interpreted them, and it's useful to know what they have come up with. There are some suggested references in Appendix D, which also contains general references about the various reasons people travel: to escape, to indulge, to learn and renew, to challenge themselves with an adventure, or as part of their business or studies.

The question, "Who travels, and to where, and what do they want?" is a first step toward deciding what you can offer them.

Strategy 2: Assess your tourism experience opportunities

Know the value of your business or your hometown as a tourist destination. What sets it apart? What can visitors find there that can be found nowhere else? We suggest using the assessment process and worksheets in section 4 of *Experience Nova Scotia: A Toolkit*, referenced in Appendix D. It is a bit Nova Scotia-oriented but you can easily adapt it. We also recommend the material by Roger Brooks.

Strategy 3: Offer geographic, cultural, and personal exploration; give visitors real encounters with real people

This quote from the Aboriginal Tourism Association of B.C. website expresses the desire of an increasing number of tourists for an active rather than a passive experience.

Not for you, the sightseeing bus tour. You want the real thing: to feel the pull of the paddle, hear the rushing water, view the timeless mists and

ancient rainforests and smell the campfire. You want a full experience and to perceive your world from a new angle.

The Canadian Tourism Commission's *Experiences Toolkit* and *Experience Nova Scotia: A Toolkit* are good resources because they contain both strategies and success stories. We recommend both resources, along with the Roger Brooks, material, all listed in Appendix D.

Strategy 4: Develop Regional Packages, Clusters, Partnerships and Itineraries

In the marketing sections of this material we discussed the wisdom of cross-promoting with other local businesses on your website, to give potential visitors a more integrated invitation to your community as a whole. We recommend extending that approach by forming partnerships with other businesses to provide local packages of experiences for visitors.

By collaborating, operators have the potential to reach much larger markets than they would by working alone. Packages of experiences add value to your offering and they expose visitors to experiences they may not have found otherwise. As a result, the tourism economy of the region benefits.

The Nova Scotia manual is a good resource. Here's a quote:

For example let's say you have a guest who is interested in local foods. Where are the top five places you can send your visitor in your region that speak to this passion? Consider farm experiences, restaurants that offer local tastes, opportunities to savour cultural dishes, or a café with the best darn cookies ever. Is your guest interested in the great outdoors? Point them to the best hiking, favourite local beaches, or the kayak operator that is also an expert on local flora and fauna. Remember to include some hidden gems or things only locals may know.

You may want to just inform people about such attractions, or you could go a step further and work with those businesses to form an itinerary of activities for visitors.

The creation of itineraries, clusters, and packages can be a regional tourism strategy.

There are many case studies in the materials in Appendix D. See especially *Regional Flavour Strategies for Rural Tourism Development*.

Strategy 5: Develop a community or regional tourism plan

Tourism as an economic development tool can be approached comprehensively by an entire community or region. To do this the community needs to understand the potential benefits (and pitfalls) of tourism and how the industry works. The plan needs to be inclusive by including generous amounts of community input and participation.

Goals, strategies, product development, destination development, promotion—these are all components. See especially *Transforming Communities Through Tourism*, and *Regional Flavour Strategies for Rural Tourism Development* in Appendix D.

Strategy 6: Support tourism experiences with good dining and shopping

The tourism marketing expert Roger Brooks, in one of the videos referenced in Appendix D, says:

The number 1 activity of visitors in the world is shopping, dining, and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly setting. That is where 80% of all travel spending takes place. So it might not be the reason we came here but whatever the reason was, the second we are done, that is our activity.

Seventy percent of consumer spending takes place after 6pm. Are you open?

Many small communities do not have the business resources to provide this sort of business back-up for tourism. Why open a restaurant to cater to tourists if there are no tourists? How can we attract tourists if we don't have any good restaurants?

This chicken-and-egg dilemma is an argument in favour of community-wide planning for tourism, to get the right mix of tourism marketing and local business development.

E. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM—AN INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the fourth largest industry in Canada, and the main industry for many countries. It is estimated to provide 1 in 10 jobs worldwide. Visits have doubled every 11 years worldwide [6.5 % compound growth rate since 1950] and the World Tourism Council expects that to double again by 2020.

Tourism has great potential to either destroy or enhance natural environments and local cultures. Across the world we have seen tourism overrun natural ecosystems and displace local indigenous societies and economies. Tourism has the potential to have a big carbon footprint.

But tourism has also served to protect biodiversity and culture. "Without tourism, the Pantanal (in South America), the world's largest wetland, would have just turned into a major cattle feed-lot for McDonald's," writes Costas Christ, a former board chair of The International Ecotourism Society and an editor at National Geographic Traveller. "If it weren't for tourism, Africa would not have its game parks and nature preserves, and the Coral Triangle would have been devastated by overfishing."

Protecting tourism's assets

It could be said that tourism sells nature and culture. Without those assets there would be no industry. The sustainable tourism movement aims to ensure that the industry protects its assets, namely the natural systems and the cultural treasures of the planet.

Sustainable tourism aims to maintain and enhance the economy, the natural environment, and local culture by taking on business practices that:

- conserve non-renewable resources,
- sustain the local economy,
- achieve a low carbon footprint,
- respect and support local or indigenous cultures,
- contribute to biodiversity,
- conserve energy, and
- not pollute the environment.

Becoming mainstream

Sustainable tourism is a new international tourism movement that has several names and related practices including fair trade tourism, responsible tourism, green tourism, community-based tourism, and ethical tourism. There are new organizations such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, tourism alliances, websites, government commissions, and conferences devoted to sustainable tourism. The Tourism for Tomorrow Awards, sponsored by the World Tourism Council, recognize achievements in sustainable tourism internationally. The

online travel agency Travelocity has a program called Travel for Good that promotes green travel and “voluntourism” and offers green hotels, hybrid cars, and carbon offsets. A new travel agent in Toronto is dedicated entirely to green travel.

It’s more than ecotourism

Sustainable tourism is different from ecotourism even though they have some things in common. Ecotourism provides tourists with a low-impact, educational experience of nature. Sustainable tourism may do this too, but it is concerned with the sustainability of all systems in all types of tourism operations including purchasing, energy use, water use, handling of waste, and labour practices.

Sustainable tourism is an opportunity to develop a niche market, and there is mounting evidence that an increasing number of travellers will respond to a well-marketed sustainability campaign. The resources in this section are chosen to help communities or individual operators do that.

Do tourists care?

Increasingly sustainable tourism makes a difference to travellers as they become aware of its existence. If price and convenience are still competitive, an increasing number of tourists will choose it. A growing number will insist on it and will pay a premium. They are educating themselves about it and talking about it on social media.

But how many tourists will seek out a business that engages in sustainable practices? Much of the evidence is anecdotal, based on tourism operations that have reported great success adopting sustainable practices and publicizing them to a niche market. But a few studies of traveller attitudes have been done, and we have provided a summary in Appendix E1.

It’s a competitive business strategy

“Sustainable tourism is moving out of the idea of a labour of love,” says Costas Christ in a video referenced below. “It is becoming a competitive business strategy. So the issue now, if you are a business, isn’t do you really care about the planet. If you are a smart businessperson you will act in a way that cares about the planet.”

There are four interrelated business reasons to increase the sustainability of a tourism operation.

- Sustainable practices will save money in the short run by reducing energy, water, and waste costs.

- The market for sustainable tourism is growing, and it is an opportunity to make a mark in a unique way.
- Because one aspect of sustainability is buying, using, and selling local products and services as much as possible, sustainability efforts will build the local economy and create local ambassadors for the sustainable tourism business.
- Sustainable practices will help to protect the local resources (nature and culture) that the tourism business depends on, as well as the global resources that underpin the international tourism industry.

Start small, do it well, engage your staff

To paraphrase the case study on Canadian Mountain Holidays in the *Experiences Toolkit* referenced in Appendix C, the best approach is to start small and do it really well. Take one or two of the strategies below and get really good at them before starting a new one. Know the environmental, social, and cultural implications of each action. Engage your staff.

Tourism and Climate Change

One reason for tourism operators to keep abreast of sustainability issues is the projected effect of climate change on tourism. Beach destinations, winter sports resorts, and all outdoor tourism activities are all dependent on a predictable and favourable climate.

Climate change may transform the natural environment that attracts tourists in the first place—eroding coastlines, damaging coral reefs and other sensitive ecosystems, or limiting snowfall in mountainous regions—as well as affecting basic services like water supplies, especially during periods of peak demand.

Because Canada is so vast and so distant from tourist markets, its tourism industry is unavoidably dependent on long distance travel. Because tourism marketers here are in effect urging people to increase their carbon footprint by flying, many tourism operators are finding it doubly important to find other ways to be sustainable.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

<p>Sustainable tourism maintains and enhances the environmental, cultural, and economic resources of the world. Its aim is to protect and enhance nature and culture. Its practices include conserving energy, protecting natural areas, minimizing waste, improving human rights, and supporting local cultures and economies. It can apply to all aspects of a tourism operation from purchasing to transportation to labour practices to waste management and more.</p> <p>Please tick one box for each question, based on your perception of tourism in your community.</p>	Completely Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Completely Disagree	Don't Know
	☺ 4	3	☺ 2	1	☹ 0	?
E1 This community would support the idea of sustainable tourism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E2 There are opportunities for partnership around sustainable tourism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E3. Local governments or local tourism organizations should provide incentives for tourism businesses to become more sustainable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E4 Local governments or local tourism organizations help operators learn how to be more sustainable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E5 This community has an official sustainability plan OR a tourism plan that includes sustainability principles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E6 There is a good business case for taking on sustainable practices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E7 Local governments or local tourism organizations encourage operators to buy and hire locally.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Score for each column (number of tick-marks times the number at the top of the column) Total of all columns except “don’t know”: _____ (Highest possible score: 28) Enter this score on page ()			0			X
E8 What is your community’s greatest strength in the area of sustainable tourism?						
E9 What needs to improve in your community, in the area of sustainable tourism?						

Strategies and Tools for Sustainable Tourism

The advice in these strategies is aimed at both individual tourism operations and whole-community tourism organizations. Some of the information may appear to be aimed solely at individual tourism businesses. But these are strategies that community tourism organizations could follow, and encourage and train individual businesses to follow.

NOTE: For further reading and a comprehensive listing of great online resources on this topic please see the appendices.

Strategy 1: Conserve Energy

Energy use is the most controllable of tourism operating costs, and energy conservation is probably the most effective sustainability measure available to hotels or restaurants. Energy costs typically include washing, lighting, heating, and cooling, as well as transportation fuel costs.

Conservation measures range from things you can do right now (more efficient light bulbs, turning down the thermostat on your hot water tank, etc.) to things you may have to plan for such as purchasing more efficient appliances or installing new energy sources. Case studies in this area suggest that most hospitality businesses could reduce energy costs by up to 20%.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, hotels and motels investing in energy-efficient lighting upgrades can expect to yield a profit of \$6.27 on each dollar invested.

There is an impressive amount of good information out there for those who want to get started, and government programs to help. We have provided references in Appendix C, along with information about government assistance.

Strategy 2: Reduce Waste

Sixty percent of Canada's garbage goes to landfills, resulting in considerable CO₂ emissions as well as large amounts of methane, a greenhouse gas more dangerous than carbon dioxide.

Recycling preserves resources, decreases greenhouse gases, creates jobs, and is much cheaper than the \$1.5 billion per year it takes to dispose of the country's garbage. Consult a recycling group in your area and see Appendix C for resources.

Strategy 3: Purchase Sustainable Products and Services

Sustainability purchasing is a growing global trend, led by governments and universities. As larger chain suppliers such as Wal-Mart begin to engage in sustainable purchasing practices, the barrier of high cost is starting to disappear.

Cleaning products, paper, office supplies, equipment, furnishings, electronics, and building supplies are typically the top product categories. Sustainability factors include:

- what the product is made from and how long it lasts
- the energy, material and emissions "footprint" associated with its manufacture and transport
- who has made it, how it's made and under what working conditions
- how it will ultimately be disposed of, and
- whether the purchase is needed at all.

See Appendix C for information on where and how to find out about products manufactured in ways that enhance the environment and human rights.

Strategy 4: Hire and Purchase Locally

This can be tricky in rural communities with limited access to goods, services, and skilled labour. But sustainability is not just an environmental issue—it is also about enhancing the local culture and economy. This is of course especially true in “third world” locations where tourism has often not benefitted local communities and cultures. But even in Canada, with rural communities struggling for an economy and an identity, it is important that tourism be an overall benefit to the local community. Tourism operators that approach this with imagination and resolve will develop a legion of local champions, and the good word will spread.

Strategy 5: Publicize, Partner, and Connect Around Sustainability

Sustainability should not be seen as a marketing gimmick, but it can be something that sets you apart from the competition. All other things (price, location, convenience) being equal, many people will choose a vacation with sustainability values. But they can't do that if you don't tell them about your sustainability efforts.

You can go beyond telling them about it by getting them involved, and making it fun— that's the main message of the extraordinary booklet *Keep It Real*, referenced in Appendix C, which contains some very creative ideas on how to make sustainability marketing work for you, your customers, and the planet.

If there are other businesses in your vicinity engaged in sustainable practices, partner with them and publicize that partnership. A restaurant menu with

ingredients purchased from a local organic farmer, a great deal from a local bike shop for a low-carbon outing for your guests, etc.

Find businesses that do sustainable purchasing, buy from them, and publicize it. These kinds of partnerships are encouraging and supportive for businesses and they are attractive to many customers. Get involved in local sustainability events, issues, advocacy or philanthropy, and tell your customers about it.

Many people want to do something for the world but are confused about how to go about it. Your sustainability efforts can help customers feel they are doing something useful.

Engage you staff. A reputation for taking sustainability seriously can make you an employer of choice.

Avoid “greenwashing” (making your business appear more sustainable than it really is).

F. COMMUNITY VITALITY—AN INTRODUCTION

This section is not about specific tourism destinations or marketing, but about your town and how attractive it is to your own people and to visitors of any kind. If your own citizens are excited about where they live, you're in a good position to create a great tourism destination.

Measuring prosperity using the Gross Domestic Product, the number of housing starts, or the unemployment rate is no longer enough. Perhaps it never was. Communities that appear wealthy according to such measures may nevertheless have a poor quality of life-- a ruined natural environment, high crime rates, debilitating traffic congestion, or stagnant local political processes. On the other hand, some communities that do not appear rich on paper might have a vibrant and satisfying community life.

In the past, people looking for jobs in rural areas tended to gravitate toward towns with a major industry—a pulp mill, a mine, a smelter. There are fewer of those towns now, and many of them are having trouble re-defining themselves after the loss of major industries. It is becoming clear that trying to attract a new factory or smelter or mill may not be the most productive use of a community's time and energy.

Towns that Appeal to Young Adults

With the advent of the “knowledge economy” and the global internet economy, more and more jobs can be done anywhere. As this trend continues, people looking for a place to settle down and raise a family are less likely to look for a place where there are lots of jobs. Instead, they will move to a place they like, and they will do their job from there, or create a job there.

What kinds of places do such people want to move to? Our research shows that young adults looking for a community to call home want many or all of these things:

- a vibrant and varied cultural life
- a diversity of educational options for themselves and their children
- a variety of health care options
- a diversity of different kinds of people (interests, backgrounds, occupations)
- progressive and open local government
- a clean environment
- an entrepreneurial mindset, where new ideas are valued

In other words, many young adults are looking for a place with a high level of community vitality. And they are the ones communities need, because they are the ones who are starting families and businesses.

Towns that Appeal to Youth

Another group that small rural towns and cities need to attract is their own youth. Many community leaders have told us that they need to find a way to stop youth from moving away. While it is true that the availability of jobs may be an important part of this equation, our research and experience also tell us that youth want to live in an interesting place with a variety of lifestyles, cultures, and recreational opportunities, along with a positive sense of community.

The materials listed in this section and in Appendix F are about community vitality—what it is and how to get it.

COMMUNITY VITALITY

<p>Do young adults want to move to your town because of its interesting variety of people, vibrant cultural life, colorful and bustling downtown, and positive community spirit? If so, tourists will probably like it too. Tourism development is part of community development.</p>	Completely Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Completely Disagree	Don't Know
<p>Please tick one box for each question, based on your perception of tourism in your community.</p>	☺ 4	3	☹ 2	1	☹ 0	? ?
<p>F1 There are friendly public spaces where a variety of kinds of people feel welcome: e.g. parks, squares, fountains, outdoor cafes, benches, playgrounds.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>F2 Community members greet each other when they meet.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>F3. Young adults (age 25-34) consider the community a desirable place to live.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>F4 Women consider it safe to walk alone downtown at night.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>F5 A spirit of life-long learning and a hunger for knowledge is present in the community.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>F6 The community has at least one public festival that generates a feeling of magic and excitement.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>F7 This town believes in itself. We think that with enough support, we can do anything.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Score for each column (number of tick-marks times the number at the top of the column) Total of all columns except “don’t know”: _____ (Highest possible score: 28) Enter this score on page () Note deletions of questions F8 and F9</p>			0			X
<p>F8 What is your community’s greatest strength in the area of community vitality?</p>						
<p>F9 What needs to improve in your community, in the area of community vitality?</p>						

Strategies and Tools for Community Vitality

Strategy 1: Revitalize downtown

Successful rural downtowns are friendly public spaces, with a variety of shops, services, and places to hang out. People want to be in a downtown because it is attractive, welcoming, and relaxed and it is geared as much to pedestrians as to the automobile. Downtown revitalization can be an effective economic development strategy for:

- growing existing small businesses,
- creating optimum conditions for new businesses,
- attracting shoppers including tourists, and
- increasing the attractiveness of the town to potential new residents and investors.

NOTE: For further reading and a comprehensive listing of great online resources on this topic please see the appendices.

Strategy 2. Create an annual community festival

A community festival can be a very inspiring expression of, and creator of, community pride. A festival focuses attention on the community, brings the uniqueness of the community to the attention of the outside world, generates volunteer opportunities, creates new connections between community members, and gives the community a chance to celebrate itself. See Appendix F for references and resources.

Strategy 3. Develop artistic and cultural tourism

An arts-focused town will attract tourists and will appeal to professionals looking to relocate from larger centres. It will also attract other artists. Many rural artists or performers sell their work in cities or go on tour, drawing money from elsewhere and spending it locally. The arts can play a large part in downtown revitalization. See Appendix F for references and resources.

Strategy 4. Initiate a First Impressions program

First Impressions Community Exchange is a structured process that reveals the first impression a community conveys to outsiders, including tourists, potential investors and retirees. It offers a fresh perspective on the community's appearance, services and infrastructure and helps communities learn about their strengths and shortcomings. Volunteer "visiting teams" from two exchange communities do unannounced, *incognito* visits, record their observations, and give constructive feedback to their exchange community. See Appendix F for references and resources.

Strategy 5. Measure Community Vitality

Some people think quality of life is determined by the employment rate. Some believe outdoor recreation is the key. Others say it's about the arts or public safety or access to health care. Whatever "quality of life" means, does your community have a good enough supply of it to attract new citizens with varying interests, retain its existing citizens, and inspire them all? Quality of life can be measured—it's a matter of coming up with the right indicators. See Appendix F for references and resources.

YOUR TOTAL SCORE

Now that you have scored each of the six sections above, enter them all in the table below.

If you scored below 14 in any of the sections this probably indicates that:

- your community needs to find ways to improve in that area, and/or
- you, as an individual, are encouraged to learn more about that particular area—in general and as it applies to your community.

Section	Your Score
A. The Tourism Website	
B. Social Media Marketing	
C. Branding	
D. Creating Tourism Experiences	
E. Sustainable Tourism	
F. Community Vitality	
Total (highest possible score: 168)	
Divide that total by 1.68 to determine a score out of 100	

The short questionnaires that led to these scores are a simplified version of the questionnaire CIEL would use if we came to your community and facilitated Tourism 360. The questions in this manual are less detailed and the scoring mechanism is less sophisticated. Also, in a community process you would not see your own scores but the average score for all participants. You would also be able to compare your score to an average of similar communities, something many communities find very useful. CIEL's reporting also details the most polarized responses to questions.

3. APPENDICES: RESOURCES TO HELP YOU LEARN MORE

APPENDIX A: TOURISM WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT—RESOURCES

On-Line Readiness Review

Atlantic Canada Partnership for the Tourism Industry

<http://www.tourismtechnology.com/>

Accessed July 2011

Click on *Online Readiness Review* under the *Presentations* heading.

This is a Power Point summarizing the Atlantic Canada survey mentioned in Strategy A1 above, and its results—a very good summary of basic website issues.

The Web is Priority #1 and The Power of the Internet

Roger Brooks

<http://www.destinationdevelopment.com/video-tips-tricks-2/>

Accessed July 2011

These are two of the excellent short videos on Roger Brooks' site. Brooks is an eminent expert on creating and marketing tourism destinations. While you are on his site, check out his other insightful videos. You have to sign up to view some of the material on this site but it is easy and worth it.

Is Your Rural Tourism Website a Marketing Asset or Liability?

Rural Tourism Marketing

<http://ruraltourismmarketing.com/2010/04/rural-tourism-business-a-marketing-asset-or-liability/>

Accessed July 2011

The days of the static website that can only be changed by the designer are gone. You need a website you can update yourself. Customers will not pay attention to a website that is obviously static. This article has good ideas about simplicity and how to write great content.

Tourism Technology

Atlantic Canada Partnership for the Tourism Industry

<http://www.tourismtechnology.com/>

Accessed July 2011

This website is one of the results of the Atlantic Canada tourism study described above. It contains a number of very good articles about the importance and techniques of a compelling web presence.

Making the Internet Work for You, Your Business and Your Town

Rural Tourism Marketing

<http://ruraltourismmarketing.com/2011/01/making-the-internet-work-for-you-your-business-your-town/>

(Accessed 2011)

This is one of many good articles about internet marketing under the *Success for Small Town Businesses* tab on the Rural Tourism Marketing website.

Experiences Toolkit

Canadian Tourism Commission

<http://en-corporate.canada.travel/Corporate/Flyout.page?id=313&fid=385>

Accessed July 15, 2011

Click the *Experiences Toolkit* link. You have to register and log in, but it is simple and worth it. For guidelines on photos, video, and language for your website, see page 37 and 38 of the *Toolkit*.

Effective Web Design

Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International

<http://www.tourismtechnology.com/>

Accessed July 2011

Click on *Effective Web Design* under the *Articles* heading.

This is a good discussion of the basic elements of a website: colour, typography, navigation, photography, video, and so on.

Experience Nova Scotia: A Toolkit

Government of Nova Scotia

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/tch/pubs/ExperienceToolkitApril2010.pdf>

Accessed July 2011

The Marketing chapter of this document has good material on the optimum language, photos, and design of tourism promotional website material.

How to Create a Customized Google Map for Your Rural Tourism Website

Joanne Steele

<http://www.ripplenw.org/authors/20/posts/121>

Accessed July 2011

World Immersive Tour

Telecom Design

<http://www.telecomdesign.it/video-world-immersive-tour.html>

Accessed July 2011

This short video explains and demonstrates the value of 360 interactive video technology as a marketing tool.

101 Awesome Marketing Quotes (Slideshow)

Hubspot Internet Marketing

<http://www.slideshare.net/HubSpot/101-awesome-marketing-quotes>

Accessed September 2011

You're sure to find something here to inspire you—great one-liners presented well.

APPENDIX B: SOCIAL MEDIA IN TOURISM—RESOURCES

Sites to visit regularly because they always have good new social media material:

- **Engage (the blog)**
<http://engage.tmgcustommedia.com/>
- **Mashable**
www.mashable.com
- **Rural Tourism Marketing**
www.ruraltourismmarketing.com
- **Chris Brogan**
www.chrisbrogan.com

HOW-TO MANUALS AND USEFUL ARTICLES

How to Create a Company Profile in Facebook

Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/help/?page=904>

Accessed July 2011

Ten Content Ideas for Your Tourism Business Facebook Page

Tourism New Zealand

<http://www.tourismindustryblog.co.nz/2010/10/10-content-ideas-for-your-tourism-business-facebook-page/>

Accessed July 2011

This is a brief, clear, point-form list of practical things you can do. In addition to this article, this site has many other good resources, updated often.

How to Set Up a Facebook Fan Page

Mashable

<http://mashable.com/2009/09/22/facebook-pages-guide/>

Accessed July 2011

A step by step guide.

How Facebook is Helping a Successful Rural Tourism Business

Rural Tourism Marketing

<http://ruraltourismmarketing.com/2010/05/how-facebook-is-helping-a-successful-rural-tourism-business/>

Accessed July 2011

This is a short, down-to-earth case study. The rest of the site is very useful too.

Social Media Revolution (video)

Socialnomics

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NhPgUcjGQAw>

Accessed July 2011

This short video runs through a dizzying and entertaining series of facts and numbers about social media.

Claim your Google Places Page, Now... Today!

Rural Tourism Marketing

<http://ruraltourismmarketing.com/2011/08/claim-your-google-places-page-now-today/>

Accessed September 2011

Google Places automatically makes your website more prominent in Google search results.

Lessons in Social Media Marketing Parts 1 and 2

Wanderlust

<http://www.news.nhatrangtraveltours.com/lessons-in-social-media-marketing-part-2/>

[http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article54570Lessons in Social Media Marketing Part .html](http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article54570Lessons_in_Social_Media_Marketing_Part_.html)

Accessed July 2011

This is a very good list of “dos and don’ts” of social media marketing. They stress that social media is social, not commercial, and that readers are put off by traditional marketing disguised as social media.

How to Use Your Facebook Page to Market Your Whole Town

Rural Tourism Marketing

<http://ruraltourismmarketing.com/2011/03/use-your-facebookpage-to-market-your-whole-stown/>

Accessed July 2011

“For every hour a person drives, they expect to be entertained for half a day.”—Roger Brooks. This practical and down-to-earth article explains how you can promote local businesses other than you own, and everyone benefits.

How to Set up Google Alerts to Track Online Comments About Your Business

Rural Tourism Marketing

<http://ruraltourismmarketing.com/2009/09/set-up-google-alerts-to-track-online-comments-about-your-business/>

Accessed July 2011

You don’t have to spend hours searching for online comments about your business: you can arrange to have them land in your inbox automatically.

A Social Media Must: Respond to Online Reviews

Rural Tourism Marketing

<http://ruraltourismmarketing.com/2011/01/social-media-must-respond-to-online-reviews/>

Accessed July 2011

Responding to online reviews creates dialogue between you and your guests, and you learn a lot about how people perceive your business.

Three New Years Resolutions Every Business Can Adopt Today

Out and About Marketing

<http://www.outandaboutmarketing.com/2011/01/3-new-years-resolutions-every-business-can-adopt-today/>

Accessed July 2011

The three resolutions are: *make your business social*, *seek first to understand and then to be understood*, and *quality message please*. They are all short, practical, and related to social media.

2010 Social Media Marketing Industry Report: How marketers are using social media to grow their business

Social Media Examiner

<http://marketingwhitepapers.s3.amazonaws.com/SocialMediaMarketingReport2010.pdf>

Accessed July 2011

This report examines the main questions marketers want answered, the main good reasons for using social media, and best practices.

Some Eye-Opening Social Media Travel Statistics

Stikkymedia and World Travel Monitor

<http://www.stikkymedia.com/articles/social-media-and-the-tourism-industry-statistics>

<http://www.stikkymedia.com/packages/tourism-accommodation-marketing>

<http://www.travelcolony.com/global-travel-goes-trendy-with-social-media-mobile-phones-in-tow/>

Accessed July 2011

How many travellers are using what social media for what tourism reasons? The numbers are bigger than you might have thought. Find out here.

50 Ideas on Using Twitter for Business

Chris Brogan

<http://www.chrisbrogan.com/50-ideas-on-using-twitter-for-business/>

Accessed July 2011

Six Social Media Marketing Roadblocks and How to Plough Through Them

Engage—The Blog

<http://engage.tmgcustommedia.com/2011/04/6-social-media-marketing-roadblocks-and-how-to-plow-through-them/>

Accessed July 2011

This very good piece deals with some common obstacles, and has good comments on creating good content in a blog.

Why Lee Hopkins and I are going to Coos Bay Oregon

Desirable Roasted Coffee

<http://desirable roasted coffee.com/2009/03/why-lee-hopkins-and-i-are-going-to-coos-bay-oregon.html>

Accessed July 2011

This is a humorous story of a Twitter campaign taken right over the top.

Four Brilliant Tourism Social strategies

t2.0

http://travel2dot0.com/2011/02/4_brilliant_tourism_social_media_strategies/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=rss

Accessed July 2011

Four examples of original ways of using social networking for marketing, including a really stunning promotional video example.

Social Media Guide for Small Businesses—Social Media 101

Mashable

<http://mashable.com/2009/12/04/small-business-guide/>

<http://mashable.com/2008/11/07/social-media-marketing-plan/>

Accessed July 2011

At the first link there is a good variety of how-to articles on social media. And check out some good material in the video section. The second link is about how to create a social media marketing plan. And spend the rest of the day on their articles on other social media subjects.

Web 3.0: Emerging Insights for Travel Marketers

Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International

http://www.tourismtechnology.com/tourismtechnology/cms/documents/files/TIG_Global_Web3.0_Emerging_Trends_for_Travel_Marketers.pdf

Accessed July 2011

This article is about the future. Five years in the future (i.e. by 2016), this material will be either mainstream or abandoned for technology even more amazing.

APPENDIX C: TOURISM DESTINATION BRANDING—RESOURCES

The New Age of Tourism

Roger Brooks

<http://www.destinationdevelopment.com/2011/06/02/the-new-age-of-tourism/>

Accessed August 2011

This article is about how the internet has made the destination second to the activity. It also discusses how rural communities can take advantage of the high price of gas by luring tourists from close at hand. And Brooks looks at the art of differentiation, because tourists will ask “What have you got that I can’t get closer to home?”

Brands Are About Ownership and Logos and Slogans: The Truth (Short videos)

Roger Brooks

<http://www.destinationdevelopment.com/video-tips-tricks-2/>

Accessed July 2011

Two videos of less than 2 minutes each summarize Roger Brooks’ wisdom about branding.

Ten Things You Need to Know about Branding

Roger Brooks

<http://www.destinationdevelopment.com/2011/06/02/10-things-you-need-to-know-about-branding/>

Accessed July 2011

Excerpt:

“Community brands MUST be experiential or activity-driven, not just based on something to look at or a warm and fuzzy feeling. Geography, historic downtowns, scenery and “feel good” slogans are very rarely effective brands. They are part of the ambiance, the stage. People are looking for experiences, things to do.”

Define: Brand and The Brand Formula

Seth Godin

http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2009/12/define-brand.html

http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2007/04/the_brand_formu.html

Accessed July 2011

Two short blog posts about what a brand is and is not.

Eleven Myths and Pitfalls That Weaken City and Destination Branding and 15 Common Destination Branding Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

Bill Baker, Total Destination Marketing

http://www.destinationbranding.com/articles/11_Myths_of_Destination_Branding.pdf

http://www.destinationbranding.com/articles/15_Pitfalls.pdf

Accessed July 2011

The first three of the pitfalls listed are: “We already have a logo”, “We already have a tagline”, and “We created our brand this afternoon...”

Twenty Benefits of a City Branding Strategy

(Bill Baker, Total Destination Marketing)

http://www.destinationbranding.com/articles/Benefits_of_Strong_City_Brand.pdf

This good advice is not just for cities, but for any destination. There are lists of benefits here for marketers, customers, and the community.

And there are many more good branding articles by Bill Baker here:

<http://www.destinationbranding.com/articles/>

Experiences Toolkit

Canadian Tourism Commission

<http://en-corporate.canada.travel/Corporate/Flyout.page?id=313&fid=385>

Accessed July 2011

When you arrive at the linked page, click the *Experiences Toolkit* link. You have to register and log in, but it is simple and worth it.

The Experiences Toolkit is graphically interesting, well-written, and user-friendly. It provides:

- Information on how you can differentiate your tourism product in a competitive market
- Diagnostic tools to ensure that your product is aligned with the expectations of today's experiential traveller
- Access to the CTC's Explorer Quotient types so that you can identify Canada's best target market segments and get snapshot profiles of the nine international marketplaces in which the CTC works.

Experience Nova Scotia: A Toolkit

(Nova Scotia.com)

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/tch/pubs/ExperienceToolkitApril2011.pdf>

Accessed July 2011

Although it focuses on Nova Scotia, this toolkit contains much that is relevant to other places because it is about the thought processes necessary to develop rural tourism, including brand development (pages 18 and 19), assessing opportunities, developing experiences, and understanding the desires of different traveller demographics. The Top Ten Tips on page 31 are excellent.

This handbook is worth a look just for the stunning photos (especially the captivating pictures of children enjoying themselves)—this is the quality of promotional photographs any tourism venture should aim for.

There is a good section on collaborating with other tourism operators to create local itineraries and complementary clusters of experiences for your guests.

Regional Tourism Strategic Planning Manual

(Government of Alberta)

<http://www.linkbc.ca/torc/downs1/RegionalTourismStrategicPlanning.pdf>

Accessed July 2011

This is a step-by-step guide to planning.

APPENDIX D: CREATING TOURISM EXPERIENCES—RESOURCES

Experiences Toolkit

Canadian Tourism Commission
<http://en-corporate.canada.travel/Corporate/Flyout.page?id=313&fid=385>
Accessed July 2011

When you arrive at that page, click the *Experiences Toolkit* link. You have to register and log in, but it is simple and worth it.

The Experiences Toolkit is graphically interesting, well-written, and user-friendly. It provides:

- Information on how you can differentiate your tourism product in a competitive market
- Diagnostic tools to ensure that your product is aligned with the expectations of today's experiential traveller
- Access to the CTC's Explorer Quotient types so that you can identify Canada's best target market segments and get snapshot profiles of the nine international marketplaces in which the CTC works.
- Information on how you can deliver the most memorable experiences, both individually as an operator and as a community.
- Access to the latest trends and research insights as well as where you can find more detailed information
- Examples of Canadian tourism experience operators who are doing a great job of applying these lessons.

Transforming Communities Through Tourism: A Handbook for Community Tourism Champions

http://www.linkbc.ca/torc/downs1/TCTT_Web_b.pdf

LinkBC

Accessed July 2011

This manual's intended audience is whole communities, rather than individual tourism operators although the latter would benefit from the material as well. It was produced by a consortium of B.C. tourism associations and does a very good job of covering:

- Why tourism is a good opportunity for rural economic development
- Understanding the tourism industry
- Analyzing your tourism situation
- How to create and implement a community tourism plan
- How to maintain momentum on your plan
- The characteristics of a "tourism champion"

One of the strengths of this handbook is its many B.C. case studies and success stories.

Experience Nova Scotia: A Toolkit

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/tch/pubs/ExperienceToolkitApril2011.pdf>

Nova Scotia.com

Accessed July 2011

Although it focuses on Nova Scotia, this toolkit contains much that is relevant to other places because it is about the thought processes necessary to develop rural tourism, including assessing opportunities, developing experiences, and understanding the desires of different traveller demographics. The Top Ten Tips on page 31 are excellent.

This handbook is worth a look just for the stunning photos (especially the captivating pictures of children enjoying themselves)—this is the quality of promotional photographs any tourism venture should aim for.

There is a good section on collaborating with other tourism operators to create local itineraries and complementary clusters of experiences for your guests.

Fulfilling Travellers' Dreams Through Experiences (Video)

Canadian Tourism Commission

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NvBSOwQsTo>

Accessed September 2011

This video does a good job of explaining the concept of creating experiences that “engage visitors in a series of memorable travel experiences, revealed over time, that are inherently personal, engage the senses, and make connections on an emotional, physical, spiritual or intellectual level.”

Connecting Travellers to Culture, Community, and Cuisine (Video)

Canadian Tourism Commission

<http://tinyurl.com/3lpa6tw>

[Accessed September 2011](#)

This video illustrates how “...communities are creating memorable travel experiences by sequencing and staging activities, personal encounters, and authentic experiences that engage the local community with travellers.”

New Age of Tourism

Roger Brooks

<http://www.destinationdevelopment.com/2011/06/02/the-new-age-of-tourism/>

Accessed August 2011

This article is about how the internet has made the destination second to the activity. It also discusses how rural communities can take advantage of the high price of gas by luring tourists from close at hand. Brooks also discusses the art of differentiation, because tourists will ask “What have you got that I can’t get closer to home?”

Regional Flavour Strategies for Rural Tourism Development

Rural Tourism Marketing

<http://ruraltourismmarketing.com/2010/10/regional-flavor-strategies-for-rural-area-tourism-development/>

Accessed July 2011

This article is about creating regional themes in tourism. It is just one of many good articles on this useful site.

B.C. Tourism Statistics

Government of B.C.

http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/bus_stat/busind/tourism.asp

Accessed July 2011

Information on who’s coming to tourism destinations in B.C. (hint: most of them are from within B.C.), where they’re staying, and what they’re paying.

Tourism Research Innovation Project (TRIP)

<http://www.trip.ca/>

This is a joint project of several B.C. universities, colleges, and government departments. It contains descriptions of innovative practices, how-to-manuals, case studies, and notices of upcoming tourism conferences.

First Impressions Community Exchange

Governments of Alberta and Ontario

http://www.auma.ca/live/AUMA/Toolkits+%26+Initiatives/First_Impressions_Community_Exchange

<http://www.reddi.gov.on.ca/firstimpressions.htm>

Both accessed July 2011

“It has been said that you never get a second chance to make a first impression. This first impression can be the deciding factor on how a community is seen and remembered by newcomers, potential business

investors and visitors.” (Alberta)

“Volunteer ‘visiting teams’ from two exchange communities do unannounced, *incognito* visits, record their observations, and give constructive feedback to their exchange community. The knowledge gained through a First Impressions Community Exchange can be the basis for positive community action, focused on downtown revitalization, tourism development, investment attraction, quality service improvement, or broader community strategic planning efforts.” (Ontario)

Regional Tourism Strategic Planning Manual

Government of Alberta

<http://www.linkbc.ca/torc/downs1/RegionalTourismStrategicPlanning.pdf>

Accessed July 2011

This is a step-by-step guide to planning.

Aboriginal Tourism Association of B.C.

<http://www.aboriginalbc.com/>

<http://www.aboriginalbc.com/corporate/>

Accessed July 2011

The approach to tourism on this site fully embodies the concepts of experiential tourism. Aboriginal tourism is a growth area.

Agricultural Tourism Resources

Alberta and Ontario governments

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/facts/10-027.htm>

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/apa547/\\$FILE/SustainableEcoAgTourismFinal.pdf](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/apa547/$FILE/SustainableEcoAgTourismFinal.pdf)

Agricultural tourism is a growth area. These sites give guidelines and resources for development.

Agritourism: Cultivating Tourists on the Farm

Washington State University

<http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/eb2020/eb2020.pdf>

Accessed July, 2011

This is a very good overview, covering rationale, economics, benefits, drawbacks, and trends. It has some extensive lists of potential activities that could be offered to tourists.

Welcome: A Manual to Improve Community Signage and Visitor Experience

(TRIP)

<http://trip-project.ca/uploaded/how-to-manuals/Community%20signage%20new.pdf>

Accessed July 2011

The characteristics of good signage with examples.

Tourism Best Practices

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

<http://tourismbestpractices.com/about-our-program>

Accessed July 2011

This funded program sponsors “missions” by teams of members of local tourism associations to other tourist destinations outside their area to observe and learn. It is a structured experience with a reporting back mechanism, similar to First Impressions.

Experiential Travel

Tourism Café

<http://www.tourismcafe.ca/>

Accessed July 2011

Experiential Travel is one of the tabs on the Tourism Café site. It is frequently updated with useful articles.

Community Tourism Foundations Program

Government of B.C.

http://www.tti.gov.bc.ca/industryprograms/BuildingAndGrowingYourBusiness/Community_Tourism_Programs/CommunityTourismFoundations.htm

Accessed July 2011

This B.C. provincial government program assists communities with tourism destination planning.

APPENDIX E: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM—RESOURCES

This list of resources is divided into two sections: *How-To Manuals*, and *General Resources*

HOW-TO MANUALS

Green Your Business: A Toolkit for Tourism Operators

Tourism Industry Association of Canada, Parks Canada, and the Canadian Tourism Commission

http://www.marrcc.com/PDF/Green_Your_Business.pdf

Accessed July 2011

The first part of this practical how-to manual is organized by **business sector**:

- Food services
- Accommodation
- Bus Tour Operators
- Adventure/Ecotourism
- Travel Agents
- Hunting and Fishing Outfitters
- Attractions and Venues

Each section has case studies, facts and figures, practical advice, and links to other resources.

A second part of the manual is organized by **business process**: product development, marketing, training and education, administration, purchasing, operations, technology and strategic planning.

And the third part addresses issues of **business need**: Energy, waste, water and wastewater, transportation, outdoor environment, indoor air quality, socio-cultural issues, and carbon neutrality.

Keep it Real

Visit England

http://nowemagine.viewpages.net/?id=VisitEngland_KeepItReal

Accessed July 2011

This manual is packed with practical, creative ideas. Its premise is: “If you are already working hard to be more sustainable, it’s time to find out how to make your customers know about it—and enjoy it.”

This means gaining the confidence to talk to customers about it and knowing what to say and how to market it. The manual has a good dos

and don'ts sections on how to communicate your sustainability efforts. It also discusses how to avoid both the reality and the customer perception of "greenwashing."

Made in BC: Innovation in Sustainable Tourism

Vancouver Island University

<http://web.viu.ca/sustainabletourism/Innovation%20manual%20Final%20%20June%2022.pdf>

Accessed July 2011

Twenty very enlightening and well-written case studies describe innovations in sustainable tourism in British Columbia undertaken by tour guides, wilderness lodges, breweries, guest ranches, restaurants, a yoga ashram, and more. Each profile contains at least one innovation that is truly unique.

The Guardian Sustainable Business Best Practice Exchange

The Guardian

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/sustainable-business/page/2011/may/25/1>

Accessed July 2011

Britain's Guardian newspaper is highly committed to sustainability in its own operations, but goes much further by sponsoring awards for other businesses in an array of areas including energy, social impact, supply chain, waste and recycling, water, and more. The stories of the winners of these awards are very instructive.

Saving Energy Dollars in Hotels, Motels, and Restaurants

Natural Resources Canada

http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/publications/infosource/pub/hospitality_sector/english/hosp_eng.pdf

Accessed July 2011

Calculate your facility's current energy use, compare your operation with others in Canada, adopt measures that could lead to both cost and energy savings; and calculate those potential savings.

The Office of Energy Efficiency

Natural Resources Canada

<http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/english/index.cfm?attr=20>

Accessed July 2011

Under the *For Business Use* tab, the information is divided into residential, commercial and institutional buildings, industrial facilities and equipment, and communities and government. This site has information about government programs to assist with an energy efficiency upgrade.

Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria

Global Sustainable Tourism Council

<http://new.gstcouncil.org/page/adopt-the-criteria>

Accessed July 2011

These criteria were developed by a group of more than 40 organizations led by the Rainforest Alliance, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Foundation, and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

They are a good start in figuring out what sustainable tourism actually means, by providing a set of 37 voluntary standards.

Your Visitors Are Taking Environmental Action? Reward them!

The Quebec Source

<http://tourismintelligence.ca/2010/04/23/your-visitors-are-taking-environmental-action-reward-them/>

Accessed July 2011

This article advocates the use of financial and other incentives for green behaviour.

Greening American Hotels: Some Practical Measures Implemented So Far by the Lodging Sector

The Quebec Source

<http://tourismintelligence.ca/2008/10/24/greening-american-hotels-some-practical-measures-implemented-so-far-by-the-lodging-sector/>

Accessed July 2011

This article discusses towel and linen re-use programs, liquid soap dispensers, in-room energy management sensors, recycling programs, energy efficient lighting, and water saving programs. It gives some good stats on the level of waste in hotels and the amount of saving to be gained by going green.

The RCBC Recyclopedia and Recycling Fact Sheets

Recycling Council of British Columbia

<http://rcbc.bc.ca/>
Accessed July 2011

In B.C., enter your community and the material you want to recycle, and the Recyclopedia will indicate the nearest place to take it.

The Buy Smart Network

Fraser Basin Council
<http://www.buysmartbc.com/>
Accessed July 2011

This is an exhaustive resource on sustainable purchasing: sources, research, case studies, resources, certification programs, and more.

Built Green Checklist 2010

Built Green Canada
www.builtgreencanada.ca
Accessed July 2011

This is from an industry-driven initiative to promote Green Building practices. The practical checklist shows how far your building project is along the road to sustainability.

Experiences Toolkit

Canadian Tourism Commission
<http://en-corporate.canada.travel/Corporate/Flyout.page?id=313&fid=385>
Accessed July 2011

Click the *Experiences Toolkit* link. You have to register and log in, but it is simple and worth it.

For three very good Canadian case studies in sustainable tourism, see pages 42-47.

Tourism and Climate Change—How to Adapt (Slideshow)

Sustainable Futures Blog
Accessed September 2011-09-27

This hard-hitting, easy-to-understand slideshow explains how tourism contributes to climate change, how climate change hurts tourism, and how to mitigate its effects.

Why Sustainable Tourism Makes Both Dollars And Sense (Slideshow)

Sustainable Futures Blog
Accessed September 2011

This slideshow analyzes the public's perception of green tourism and divides the public into several categories of awareness.

GENERAL RESOURCES

The Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism (GMIST)

<http://www.gmist.ca/>
Accessed July 2011

This is an excellent site designed for tourism operators in Atlantic Canada, but most of its material is relevant across the country. The Institute is located in Rocky Harbour, Newfoundland. They offer courses, but it is the resources section of their website that is useful here.

The site contains an impressive array of links with the headings sustainable tourism, marketing and research, web/internet, and experiential tourism.

The GMIST TV page includes some very good videos of the international sustainable tourism expert and travel writer Costas Christ speaking at the institute last year.

Tourism Online Resource Centre (Sustainability Section)

British Columbia

http://www.linkbc.ca/main/index.php?torc_show&wid=6&sid=25
Accessed July 2011

A very good compendium of the best articles on sustainable tourism

Adoption of Sustainable Tourism Practices: A Study of Rural Tourism Operators in BC

Vancouver Island University

<http://www.linkbc.ca/torc/downs1/FISTRResearchMay2309.pdf>
Accessed July 2011

This is the study of B.C. tourism operators and their attitudes about adopting sustainable practices. It includes their beliefs, the barriers they see, and their recommendations. Ninety-six percent of them agreed that

customers prefer businesses that use sustainable practices, and 81% thought governments should be providing incentives.

GreenBiz.com

<http://www.greenbiz.com/business>

A rich assortment of up-to-the minute news and features about green business practices and issues.

Centre for Sustainable Destinations

(National Geographic)

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/professionals.html>

News and resources from around the world for tourism operators.

Tourism Program and Guide for Sustainable Tourism Practices

Rainforest Alliance

<http://rainforest-alliance.org/work/tourism>

http://rainforest-alliance.org/sites/default/files/site-documents/tourism/documents/tourism_practices_guide.pdf

Accessed July 2011

Resources, strategies, and education.

Sustaining Tourism

Rachel Dodd

<http://www.sustainabletourism.net/>

Accessed July 2011

Dr. Rachel Dodd is an educator who recently started an online sustainable tourism course at the University of B.C. Her website is a wealth of information and resources.

Costas Christ interview (video)

(World Travel and Tourism Council)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uffspfrldeo>

Costas Christ is a foremost authority on, and advocate of, sustainable practices in tourism.

Tourism Café

<http://www.tourismcafe.ca/category/sustainability/>

The sustainability tab of this website often has interesting Canadian sustainable tourism news.

APPENDIX E1: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM—STUDIES AND STATISTICS ON CONSUMER DEMAND AND ATTITUDES

TNS Canadian Facts 2007

In a 2007 study of 1,050 travellers, TNS Canadian Facts found that:

- 12% of travellers were familiar with the term “sustainable tourism.” They were similarly unfamiliar with the terms “volunteer tourism” and “home exchange tourism” and only somewhat more familiar with “adventure tourism.”
- Once familiar with the definition, 49% of travellers said they would choose to participate in activities that have sustainable benefits while travelling and 42% would use travel agencies that follow sustainable tourism guidelines.
- 25% of travellers say they would pay a premium for a sustainable trip.
- Over 75% of respondents believe that tourism businesses and mass media should distribute information on sustainable tourism.

Source: <http://www.tnscanada.ca/conferences/ttra/ttra-2007.pdf>
Accessed July 2011

PhoCusWright Market Research 2008

In a 2008 study of travellers and tourism operators, this company found:

- 44% consider environmental impact to be important while travelling.
- 56% are sceptical of what companies tell them about their green practices.
- Just under a third indicate a willingness to pay a premium for green travel.
- 8% believe it is easy to find green travel options.

Source: <http://www.phocuswright.com/store/580>
Accessed July 2011

National Geographic Traveller 2003

According to National Geographic Traveller in 2003:

- There are 55 million “geotourists” in the United States who are environmentally and socially responsible. Geotourists are defined as having “ceaseless expectations for unique and culturally authentic travel experiences that protect and preserve the ecological and cultural environment.”
- Of these travellers, 38% would be willing to pay a premium to patronize travel companies that use sustainable environmental practices.

Source:

<http://www.egret.us/clinton/Geotourism%20The%20New%20Trend%20in%20Travel.pdf>

Accessed July 2011

TripAdvisor 2007

TripAdvisor conducted a study of 1,000 travellers in 2007 that concluded:

- 38% said that environmentally-friendly tourism is a consideration when travelling,
- 38% had stayed at an environmentally-friendly hotel,
- 9% specifically seek out such hotels,
- 34% are willing to pay more to stay in environmentally-friendly hotels, and
- 37% are willing to pay a premium of at least 5-10%.
-

Source: http://www.TripAdvisor.co.uk/PressCenter-i120-c1-Press_Releases.html

Accessed July 2011

In a survey of 3000 travellers by TripAdvisor in 2009,

- 32% of those surveyed said they will be more environmentally conscious in their travel decisions this year, up from 26% in the previous year.

Source: http://www.traveldailynews.com/pages/show_page/27288

Accessed July 2011

Canadian Tourism Council 2010

In the Canadian Tourism Commission's Global Tourism Watch Survey of travellers from nine countries in 2010:

- 60% of travellers are willing to pay a one percent to 10% premium for environmentally friendly travel products.

Source: <http://theontarioecotourismsociety.blogspot.com/2010/01/market-survey-finds-demand-for.html>

Accessed July 2011

Tourism Intelligence 2008

In a study of 400 visitors to Toronto in 2008, Dodds, Antonov, Babkina & Gordon found that younger and less affluent travellers expressed the most interest in sustainable tourism. The study found that:

- 11% were willing to pay 11-25% more for a sustainable tourism experience,
- 59% of respondents were willing to pay 1-10% more
- 72% of respondents said they were likely to use sustainable tourism products in the future
- 33% of the travellers who had never purchased sustainable tourism products said that this was because they were not aware of them

Source: <http://tourismintelligence.ca/2010/03/31/younger-less-affluent-travellers-willing-to-pay-more-for-sustainable-tourism/>

Accessed July 2011

Travelocity 2010

In a study of 1000 travellers in 2010:

- 60% reported that a green rating with no price increase influenced their decision
- 10.8% reported that a green rating influenced their decision despite a price increase
- Green hotels receive higher ratings from travellers following their stay

Source: <http://www.foxbusiness.com/travel/2011/06/03/green-travel-satisfaction/>

Accessed July 2011

APPENDIX F: COMMUNITY VITALITY—RESOURCES

Beyond Economic Survival: 97 Ways Small Communities Can Thrive—a Guide to Community Vitality

Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership (CIEL)

<http://www.theciel.com/publications/beyondeconomicsurvivalguidetocommunityvitalitycielstoltemetcalfejuly2009.pdf>

This is a guide to the principals and research behind CIEL's Community Vitality Initiative (CVI), a tool/process that measures and improves community vitality. It embodies the ideas expressed in the introduction above. Also, see more on the CVI at: <http://www.theciel.com/cvi.php>

Destination Development

Roger Brooks

<http://www.destinationdevelopment.com/>

This is the website of tourism destination development expert Roger Brooks, who has useful advice on all areas of tourism marketing but particularly on how visitors of all kinds experience your town.

For most towns to improve their appeal as a destination, they need go no further than Brooks' advice on the series of short videos on this site.

Brooks' advice is not just about tourism. If you want to attract new families, new businesses, or new investors, his advice applies.

First Impressions Community Exchange

Governments of Ontario and Alberta

[http://www.auma.ca/live/AUMA/Toolkits+%26+Initiatives/First Impressions Community Exchange](http://www.auma.ca/live/AUMA/Toolkits+%26+Initiatives/First_Impressions_Community_Exchange)

<http://www.reddi.gov.on.ca/firstimpressions.htm>

"It has been said that you never get a second chance to make a first impression. This first impression can be the deciding factor on how a community is seen and remembered by newcomers, potential business investors and visitors." (Alberta)

"Volunteer 'visiting teams' from two exchange communities do unannounced, incognito visits, record their observations, and give constructive feedback to their exchange community. The knowledge

gained through a First Impressions Community Exchange can be the basis for positive community action, focused on downtown revitalization, tourism development, investment attraction, quality service improvement, or broader community strategic planning efforts.” (Ontario)

Creating Healthy Communities: Tools and Actions to Foster Environments for Healthy Living

Smart Growth BC

<http://www.bchealthycommunities.ca/Groups/2009%20Website%20Tools%20Resources/CreatingHealthyCommunitiesGuide.pdf>

Accessed July 2011

Tourists, new residents, and new businesses are attracted to communities that convey an aura of strength and vibrancy. Mixed land use, well-designed neighbourhoods, transportation choices, green spaces, natural beauty, protection of sensitive areas, all contribute to that “vibe” that is not just about signage and sidewalk planters.

A community that is socially, culturally, and economically sustainable will attract a variety of different kinds of visitors who will be pleasantly surprised by the feeling of well-being in the community, and they’ll tell their friends. This site provides principles, strategies, and case studies.

How Mountain View Revived Its Downtown

<http://newurbannetwork.com/news-opinion/blogs/bruce-liedstrand/14395/how-mountain-view-revived-its-downtown>

Accessed July 2011

Wise advice and principles for successful downtown revitalization.

Planning Tool Exchange

Orton Family Foundation 2011

<http://www.planningtoolexchange.org/node>

Accessed July 2011

This site provides a wealth of tools for community engagement and planning. It’s a true information bank.

Rues Principales Foundation

<http://www.fondationruesprincipales.qc.ca/en/>

Accessed July 2011

From Quebec, strategies from a successful revitalization program for small towns.

Engaging Youth in Heart and Soul Community Planning

Orton Family Foundation

http://www.orton.org/sites/default/files/resource/1667/Handbook%20YOUTH_041411_FINAL_0.pdf

Accessed July 2011

How to create a youth-friendly civic environment. Young people are community members with their own needs, they have unique insights, they constitute a talent pool, their idealism is infectious, and they can change the conversation.

Managing Downtown Revitalization

(Government of Ontario)

<http://www.reddi.gov.on.ca/dr.htm>

Accessed July 2011

This Ontario site has good advice and many links to international resource materials.

Big Box Evaluator

Orton Family Foundation

http://www.orton.org/content/big_box_evaluator

Accessed June 2011

This is a systematic method for a community to decide whether not it wants that proposed big box store.

Small Towns, Big Ideas: Strategies for Tourism and Downtown Development

University of North Carolina

http://www.sog.unc.edu/programs/cednc/stbi/pdfs/stbi_final.pdf

Accessed July 2011

The main feature of this site is a number of interesting case studies of development successes from the southeastern U.S. where unemployment in industrial sectors has hit small towns hard.

Civic Engagement and the Restoration of Community: Changing the Nature of the Conversation

Peter Block

http://www.bchealthycommunities.ca/Groups/2009%20Website%20Tools%20Resources/Peter%20Block_CES_jan2007.pdf

Accessed July 2011

Some stimulating thoughts on what constitutes community leadership.

About CIEL

Our Story

Since 2003, the Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership (CIEL – www.theCIEL.com) based in Nelson, BC Canada, has successfully helped communities in Canada, the US and Australia solve economic, social and environmental challenges. CIEL uses strategic and creative tools and training, custom-tailored to ensure each community reaches its full potential, realizing a 90% + success rate assisting communities making change. Our work has been featured on the CBC, in the Globe & Mail, in Profit Magazine and by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

We are the developers of the Business Vitality Initiative (BVI), the Community Vitality Initiative (CVI), the Communities Matrix (a tool used in more than 15 countries) and other innovative tools and processes. We use these tools to measure and facilitate business friendliness and quality of life in rural communities. Our work is practical and action-oriented.

Not only do we provide effective tools and custom solutions, we also offer keynotes, workshops and certification for many of our tools.

Also ask us about our NEW productivity tools and assessment for organizations.

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About the Authors

Mike Stolte - Mike Stolte is CIEL's Executive Director. He is the originator and co-creator of the [Business Vitality Initiative](#), the [Community Vitality Initiative](#), the [Communities Matrix](#), the [Community Check-up](#), and the [Green Light Check-Up](#), all tools and processes to assess and strengthen communities. Mike has spent many years working in the field of community and business development. He has facilitated several national conferences and think-tanks, and has written many articles and publications in the field.

Over the past few years Mike has made presentations in Australia, the United States, New Zealand and in many parts of Canada. His subject matter most often centres around the need and the method for creating entrepreneurial and vital communities. His work has been featured in *Canadian Living* magazine, on CBC Radio's *Sounds Like Canada*, and on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Mike is the past president of the [Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation \(CRRF\)](#). He serves on the steering committee of the [Canadian Rural Research Network](#) and is a past member of the Co-operative Development Initiative of Canada. He holds degrees from Carleton University (MA in Public Administration) and the University of Western Ontario (Economics).

Mike also writes and presents as the [Happy Economist](#), trying to bring community, quality of life, and well-being (genuine wealth) back into economics. Mike enjoys photography, videography, kayaking, running, cross country skiing, hockey, road and mountain biking, and spending time with his family.

Bill Metcalfe - Bill Metcalfe is a writer and researcher for CIEL. In addition, he works as a broadcaster and freelance writer. He has managed a number of Nelson-area enterprises including the Corazon Choir and [Kootenay Co-op Radio](#), and is the producer of that station's award-winning public affairs show *Nelson Before Nine*. In 2004 he wrote and produced *Live Here, Work Everywhere*, a series of radio documentaries about the unique social and small business climate in Nelson. Bill also produces pieces for CBC radio and writes freelance articles. He is a published fiction writer.