South Eastern
ONTARIO

Regional Tourism Organization 9 - South Eastern Ontario

Digital Marketing Plan

Overall Digital Marketing Approach 2019-2020

1. Focus on South Eastern Ontario with visitor first strategy - Leverage passions (provided by OTMPC) and our content pillars.
2. Drive meaningful partnerships with DMO's and OTMPC - Strengthen the South Eastern Ontario brand though collaborative campaigns with our DMO's to align with Destination Ontario.
3. Market unique products in South Eastern Ontario - Profile key products to increase tourism visitation.

Vision

Build recognition of South Eastern Ontario and its destinations as tourism destinations throughout all four seasons.

Mission

To concentrate on destination marketing initiatives to attract visitors outside of the region in booking overnight stays and build advocacy of South Eastern Ontario amongst locals.

Guiding Principles

1. Visitor First: Put the visitor at the centre so we can better understand their needs and provide a valuable experience
2. Cross Functional Teams: Implement integrated teams with our DMO's and Destination Ontario to increase knowledge-sharing and leverage expertise
3. Storytelling: Sell South Eastern Ontario and its destination's' story by creating and curating great, discoverable, and valuable content
4. Testing: Test, iterate, optimize
5. Measurement: Focus on clear and specific metrics that can be optimized and regularly share learnings with partners

Measurement

Increase visitor growth throughout all destinations in South Eastern Ontario.
Build and nurture relationships with our audience and target market.
Connect our audience to specific operators in the region to close the buying cycle.

We will continuously analyze our efforts through monthly and quarterly reporting, progressing based on our findings to evolve our online identity and position.

- Increase number of referrals to partner websites by 20%
- Increase Social Media Engagement by 5%
- Increase number of video views by 5% (including YouTube and Facebook Videos)
- Increase Email Newsletter Database by adding in 8,000 new subscribers
- Increase Social Traffic to website by 5%
- Add 7,000 Followers to our Social Media Channels
- Increase Total Reach by 5%
- Increase Total Engagement by 10%
- Increase Website Traffic by 5%
- Add 40 new Blogs to our Website

Target Market

Up and Coming Explores
Age: 25-34
Kids: Does not travel with kids
Travel Motivations: Explore and learn new things.

Family Memory Builders
Age: 35-54
Kids:Yes
Travel Motivations: Bonding through playful activities, while building lasting memories.

Outgoing Mature Couples
Age: 55+
Kids: Grown up, do not travel with them
Travel Motivations: Enjoying the company of each other, creating new connections with other travelers, and locals.

West of South Eastern Ontario - Strongly targeted to core destinations and attractions within the West of South Eastern Ontario as well as the GTA target.

Central of South Eastern Ontario - Strongly targeted to core destinations and attractions within the Central region as well as RTO8, GTA/ Ottawa/ Montreal.

East of South Eastern Ontario - Strongly targeted to core destinations and attractions within Quebec, East of South Eastern Ontario, including Ottawa and Montreal.

South of South Eastern Ontario - Strongly targeted to core destinations and attractions in Northern New York State in coordination with 1000 Islands International Tourism Council.

The following is the passion pillars provided by Destination Ontario. We will align these “passion” buckets with our content pillars to help create various types of content.

FOODIES	CULTURATI	WELLNESS ADVOCATES	NATURE LOVERS	FAMILY SOCIAL DIRECTORS
Food and wine lovers, who might consider themselves connoisseurs. They are always on the look-out for a hidden gem.	Knowledge seekers who are looking for new and innovative art, theatre, film and music.	Serenity now! These travellers are interested in personal wellness, in its many forms (whether that's yoga, meditation, fitness, or even a day at the spa).	Ontario is known for its natural beauty and these travellers want to cycle, hike and canoe it all.	These travelers are looking to make the most of family vacations. They want looking for family friendly activities that will create long-lasting memories.

NIGHT OWLS	ADRENALINE SEEKERS	FESTIVAL SQUAD	OUTDOORS AVIDS	TRUE FANS
These travellers like to watch the sun come up after a night of dancing, sipping cocktails and taking in live entertainment.	A black diamond slope, a tough mountain bike course, an open road on a motorcycle. These travellers live for thrills.	To them a music festival isn't just about the bands, it's a euphoric experience to connect others. They don't mind spending too much on water and rainy weekends outdoors.	The call of the wild takes these travellers outdoors. Angling and hunting, they love the challenge for their sport.	These fans aren't discouraged by a few decades of Stanley Cup drought. Whether it's an annual roadtrip, or just another Thursday, these travelers look for any opportunity to cheer their team on.

Social Media Marketing Approach 2019-2020

1. Continue in building a strong awareness of the South Eastern Ontario brand and its destinations.
2. Build a community of advocates for the South Eastern Ontario region.
3. Educate and engage our audience on things to do in the region.

Social Media Best Practices

- Share relevant content that our DMO’s are posting.
- Post authentic, relevant, and valuable content that our audience will enjoy.
- Boost content to our audience to increase Engagement (Facebook and Instagram).
- Mention DMO’s, tourism partners, and tourism operators whenever possible to show our continued commitment to tourism organizations in the region.
- Use Emojis in copy to capture more attention, emotion and ideas
- Listen and respond to relevant conversations to build Engagement and industry thought leadership. After all, social media is about being social.
- Follow new and interesting accounts to connect with.
- Anytime a post is made on Instagram, it should be linked to Twitter and Facebook as well.

- Respond to comments & questions in posts and inbox messages in a timely manner.

Tactical Plan

Below is a tactical plan of how we will be using our Social Media channels including: the frequency of posts, high-level types of content, objectives, key metrics, and tasks.

Twitter @SouthEast_Ont

Frequency: 1 - 5x Daily
Content: Retweets from our DMO's and mentions, blog content, Instagram post, website and landing pages.

Objectives

- Increase Reach/Impressions by 10%
- Add 500 followers to the total count by the end of Q4 2020

Key metrics

- New Followers
- Mentions
- RTs, Likes, Hashtag usage
- Referral traffic to website

Task & Strategy

- Continue to curate and retweet posts from DMO's to help boost our partners social media accounts.
- Continue curating local news and events that are relevant to the area.
- Pin best performing posts to the top of the profile (blogs etc).
- Post blog post multiple times throughout the day and week at different times.
    - Make each post uniquely engaging and exciting with focus on effort of copy. "Did you see our recent post on" Quote an interesting line.
- Be Active on the Right #Hashtags.
    - Use Hashtagify to find hashtags related to the one you're trying to target.
- Post GIFs.
    - Source existing GIFs or create new ones on GIPHY (you can also customize them with captions).
    - Turn existing videos into GIFs and compress them for sharing.
- Engage with followers by asking the audience to participate in a 'Twitter Poll' similar to what Destination Ontario has been doing.
- Connect and share more post from Destination Ontario's Twitter Ambassador for our region (@OntarioBrittny).

Instagram @southeast.ontario

Frequency: 4 x Per Week

Content: Intriguing locations, hidden gems, unique accommodations, experiences, beautiful nature,and latest blog content.

Objectives

- Increase Reach by 15%
- Increase Engagement by 20%
- Add 3500 followers to the total count by the end of Q4 2020. Obtain the 10,000 Follower count for the “swipe up” action in Instagram Stories
- 4000 Hashtag usuage

Key metrics

- New Follower
- Reach and Impressions
- Likes and Comments
- Mentions (@ and #)
- Total Post “Saved” and “Sent”
- Average number of accounts Reached through Instagram Stories

Task & Strategy

- Utilize photo library and continue using Crowdriff and Later to share User Generated Content (UGC).
- Continue to post unique, off the beaten path or out of the ordinary content.
- Develop a series of short video assets for use on social media channels.
- Continue to develop positive interaction with key Instagram influencers.
- Engage with followers, accounts tagging @southeast.ontario in post, and mentioning the #greatwaterway by leaving Likes and Comments.
- Tag people and businesses in photos and include them in the copy for captions. Continue to incorporate the “hashtag list” Make sure to tag @ontariotravel @natgeotravel @explorecanada @weathernetwork in post.
- Post more during off-work hours instead of during the day (lunchtime from 11am-1pm was their best time to post on Instagram, followed by evenings from 7-9pm)
- If you’re writing a blog post that covers several different points or topics (like destinations, listicles), you can use carousel posts to tease content and give readers a reason to click the link in the bio

Instagram Stories

Frequency: 1 - 3x a month

Content: Highlight blogs, behind the scenes, events and new attractions, contest & giveaways,

polls/feedback, Q&A, interviews, guest takeovers.

Objectives

- Share our experiences and expertise.
- Answer questions our audience might be wondering about.
- Delight our audience with quick surveys and an opportunity to provide feedback.
- Gain 10,000 Followers to enable the “swipe up” motion.

Key metrics

- Taps on Location, Mentions, Hashtags
- Replies on IG Stories
- Completion of IG Stories

Task & Strategy

- Add Mention, Location, and Hashtag stickers for a potential to be featured on that users account.
- Add a call to action to encourage Engagement.
- Broadcast on Instagram Live - Have a plan, decide format (live stream event, demo, interview) pre promote before going live, introduce yourself, be authentic. * It doesn’t have to be perfect.

YouTube South Eastern Ontario

Frequency: Monthly/Quarter (as needed)
Content: Longer length videos showcasing destinations, experience blogs.

Objectives

- Establish Brand Awareness for destinations on Youtube channel with an increase in video views by 15%
- Gain 30 New Subscribers by the end of Q4 2020

Key Metrics

- Subscribers
- Total # of Videos on Channel
- Total Views
- Ave. View Duration
- Likes
- Dislikes
- Shares

Tasks & Strategy

- Provide videos descriptive names to support SEO.

- Meta Tags are important because they categorize your video for search engines. Use accurate keywords that are relevant to the content of your video.
- Include relevant hyperlinks after description.
- Link videos to Social Media accounts.
- Add seasonal videos onto our Facebook cover.
- Use end screens and cards to entice viewers (increase engagement, acquire more subscribers,encourage CTA).
- Add a watermark “subscribe.”

Facebook @South Eastern Ontario

Frequency: 1-3x Daily

Content: Reshare of our DMO’s content, event listings, blog posts, contest announcements, and website landing pages.

Objectives

- Increase Reach by 3%
- Add 3,500 Likes/Followers to the total count
- Increase Total Engagement by 10%

Key metrics

- Page Follows + Likes
- Comments, Likes and Shares
- Industry partner participation
- Referral Traffic to Website (Link Clicks)

Tasks & Strategy

- Continue sharing local news and events that are relevant to the area.
- Continue to monitor our DMO’s pages through Hootsuite streams and curate post from their content.
- Content posted should be streamlined from the DMO’s page or tourism partner, and not from influencers, content writers, operators or local businesses.
- Continue to promote blog content through Boosted Post and Facebook Ads.
- Target Boosted Post towards our Followers and their friends. Target Facebook Ads to outside of our region.
- Use the Facebook PIN function to pin the most recent events blog to the top of our page.
- We will continue to add events to our Facebook page from DMO’s, tourism partners, and tourism operators. We will still encourage people to upload their events onto our event page of our website.

*New Channel - Pinterest

Frequency:

Content: Highlight best performing blogs and destinations.

Objectives

- Increase in Referral Traffic/ Social Media Traffic on Google Analytics. *Note: 3 months is the average lifespan of a pin and can build SEO with Referral Traffic.

Key metrics

- Increase in Page Views on our Website.
- Reach
- Repins of our content

Task & Strategy

- Create boards based off of our content pillars and destinations.
- Pin best performing blog content and Landing Pages.
- Include a “Weekend Trips” board for experience blogs.
- Hyperlink to DMO’s website and our website.

Social Media Measurement and Reporting

All efforts will be measured and reported on a monthly basis from our **Google Spreadsheet: SEO Social Media Monthly Reporting and our Quarterly Slide Deck using Google Slides.** At the end of each month, we will reflect, re-prioritize our efforts and ensure that we are continually improving the impact, engagement and effectiveness of our Social Media efforts.

All Social Media Marketing efforts will be measured using these four key metrics:

- **Reach** - What is the total number of people we can reach across different channels?
- **Engagement** - What is the total number of people that are engaging with our content across different channels?
- **Followers by Channel** - How many people are following us. Have we grown our follower count?
- **Reach by Channel** - How many people are seeing our content?
- **Engagement by Channel** - How often do people engage with our content? Is there a discussion and advocacy happening? (Likes, Comments, Shares, Link Clicks)
- **Social Traffic Visits**- How often do our Social Media tactics bring people to our Website?

Content Marketing Approach 2019-2020

1. Establish a voice for South Eastern Ontario amongst our channels and target audience.
2. Drive deeper Engagement with our partners and target audience.
3. Position South Eastern Ontario as an industry thought leader within Destination Ontario and an indispensable industry player.
4. Increase Traffic to the Website.
5. Increase time spent on our Website.
6. Increase Newsletter Signups.
7. Increase Referral Traffic to Websites.

- Smart content (and search engine ranking) will be the driving force to bring our target audience to the website.
- Great content will help industry partners understand the value of our content on the website and will share it with their audiences.
- Amazing content will serve to engage our target audience and fuel brand advocacy with South Eastern Ontario.

Content Marketing Pillars

Outdoor Activities -Winter Trails -Skating -Ice Fishing/ Fishing -Hiking & Cycling -On the Water -Motorcycling -Parks and Camping	**Sightseeing and Tours** -Boat Cruises -Guided Tours -Adventure Tours -Sightseeing Day Tours
Entertainment, Heritage & Culture -Heritage & Museums -Theatre -Arts & Culture -Retail & Shopping	**Food & Drink** -Dining -Wineries & Distilleries -Farm Fresh
Events and Festivals - Events and festivals happening each season in South Eastern Ontario	**Things To Do** - Weekend itinerary trips - Things to do each season in each destination

Content Tactics

Blogs

Re-Sharing Older Blog Posts

When it comes to resharing content, we have a plethora of older blog content to choose from. We should repost older content that is relevant to see if there is an increase in engagement the second time around. Before sharing content we will need to go through the post and update the content including adding relevant links and updating images. An added bonus of this is that you can experiment with different copy text or images when sharing the content and compare performance to help with our strategy going forward.

Blog Inventory

The following link **19/20 Blog Inventory** will provide you with a list of new blog topic ideas and our blog inventory for 2013-2019. We will aim to have 40 new blogs created for this year.

At the end of 2020 we will go through all of the new blogs created for that year and look at the # of Page Views for that content on Google Analytics. Based on our findings, this will help us in determining our blog topics and direction for the next fiscal year.

New Blogs

Our blogs aim to inspire our readers to travel to South Eastern Ontario region and visit extraordinary places and do extraordinary things. We will strive to write experiential stories that inspire our readers to go beyond just reading a blog. In the end, we want our readers to be thinking: I want to do this and go there!

Our Blogs will fall into three main categories:

1. **Listicle blogs** will highlight the best of each destination. The purpose of of listicle blogs is to provide inspiration, recommendations, visitation ideas, and connect our audience to our destinations.
2. **Mini-blogs: Similar to Listicle blogs,** these will be guides to the region. We will highlight festivals and events and top tourism products/ attractions in South Eastern Ontario.
3. **Experience Blogs** will cover one destination per blog. Experience blogs are meant to show an itinerary of things to do on a weekend trip or overnight stay in the destination. The blog post will highlight the DMO's top tourism attractions as mentioned in our

seasonal “at it’s best” list to showcase what makes the destination unique. Experience blogs provide an authentic voice and intimate level of knowledge of travel experiences.

Blog Best Practices

- In-depth stories, stronger visuals, hidden gems and living experiences resonate better and attract a bigger audience.
- For new blog topics - Google the keyword and topic and see what is already ranked
- Build a spreadsheet based on this, analyze the top ten search results
    - Rank
    - Page Title
    - URL
    - List of Notes
- Check current popular keyword searches through Adwords Keyword Planner.
- Include a long tail keyword in the title.
- Optimize the blog post around the long tail keyword.
- Campaign URL Builder - Create UTM Parameters. UTM is short for “Urchin Tracking Module”. To put it in easier terms, a UTM is the piece of unique code you’ll add on to the end of your URL. With UTM tagging, you can make sure Google Analytics is tracking your Instagram traffic with complete accuracy.
    - Needs to include:
      Your website
      Campaign Source
      Campaign Medium
      Campaign Name
- Generate content ideas by using Buzzsumo to see what our target personas are searching
- Use Google Search Console which will provide a list of actual keywords people are using
- Look into auto complex and related searches in Google

****Biggest takeaway of 2018-2019:** Don’t try to be everything to everyone. Attractions, accommodations, and other businesses mentioned throughout our blogs are mentioned because they are market ready. We will still respect local favourites but the choice for mention is decided by the writers personal preference, discussions with our DMO’s, and if the tourism operator is active with us on social media.

Video Series

We would like to create more short videos that our audience will consume from start to finish (15-30 secs long) Our videos will be focused on being inspirational and telling the story of each destination. We hope by showcasing this through video it will move the audience down the

buyer funnel from the awareness stage to the consideration stage.Our videos will be used on our YouTube channel as video ads, social media, and our newsletter.

Where Am I Videos
We will be connecting with Alphabet Creative in March 2018 to create a strategy for launching video ads on YouTube and Facebook. Our goal is to increase our reach of these videos (in New York, GTA, Montreal, and Ottawa), to encourage visitation, and reduce the drop off time. Our destination videos will be cut down to 15 seconds long and will also feature a South Eastern Ontario video

Photography

After organizing our photo library content and submitting tagged photos to Ontario Travel, we will be able to see which photos we are missing to better represent our region. We will continue to utilize the platform CrowdRiff, to source and own UGC that we can feature on our social media channels, website, and share with our DMO's and partners.

E-Newsletter

The monthly newsletter will feature blog content (new and old) videos, and UGC. This will help drive traffic to our website to encourage our subscribers to engage with our content. We will use this list of subscribers to survey at a later date using Twenty31.

Content Calendar

Using our blogs, we will plan our editorial calendar based off of themes during the season that will be promoted on our social media channels. We will do our best to create destination theme weeks to highlight each of our 11 destinations. By doing this we hope to give our target audience a deeper view of the destination and the opportunity to plan a longer trip when visiting.

Example of our Q1 Content/ Editorial Calendar

Content Marketing Measurement of Metrics

Initial Metrics for Success

- Social Media accounts are linking people towards our Website.
- Content created proves to be successful in creating Awareness of the destination and Engagement from the audience.
- Growing database of emails and e-newsletter subscriptions resulting in lead generated for future surveying by Twenty31.

- Increase in the number of visits and time spent on the Website
- Increase the number of referrals to destination Websites.
- Content is linking our audience to our destination landing pages or our destinations websites.

Campaign & Contest

**** Digital Marketing Budget will not be used for Campaigns and Contest**

Influencer Campaign - Earned Media

- Meeting with Open Door Media in March 2018 to launch a summer Influencer Campaign using 15 Influencers in the GTA, Ottawa, and Montreal region.
- Attractions will be preplanned with all parties involved.
- Itinerary will be paid by RTO9 with buy in from our DMO's and tourism partners.
- DMO's will have granted pemission to reshare UGC of the influencer. If DMO wants to use any photography outside of social media, then they must connect with the influencer.

***Update**
Due to the cut in our budget we have decided tohold off on the Influencer Campaign. We will relook at our FAM Tour budget in August, and if we have enough money we will look at launching an Influencer Campaign for the Fall.

Social Media Contest (est 8 @ $300)

**The goal with our all of our contest is to build a list of qualified newsletter subscribers (Leads) who we can then survey at a later time.

"Win This Trip"
Development of Social Media giveaways/ contests for accompanying Experience Blogs (see it, now live it approach) This will help us in gaining Followers, creating awareness for our destination, tourism operators involved, and the South Eastern Ontario brand. From doing this we can utilize (or Retarget) this audience with future seasonal contest campaigns.

We will utilize our larger seasonal contesting (featuring two destinations) to encourage signup for our newsletter and eventually surveying purposes. Larger contest will be finished shortly before the release of a survey by Twenty31 to avoid unsubscribers.

Based off of the success of our Winter Ultimate Road Trip Contest (New Email Subscribers = 4,282, New Followers = 3,471,CPA= 0.25) we will use kickofflabs.com for another seasonal contest.

Website

- Quarterly/ seasonal content and photo switch outs. Connect with DMO's prior to find out which 5 attractions and events they would like help with.
- Enhance content and backend for greater SEO optimization
- Continue with consideration on the user's experience and simplify navigation to valuable content and resources.

Content Development Tools

**** Digital Marketing Budget will not be used for Social Media Services, Software, and Content Development Tools**

Social Media Services

Hootsuite $$

Hootsuite is a social media management tool designed to help you keep track and manage multiple social media networks from one centralized hub.Hootsuite will allow us to take advantage of better scheduling features and optimize out time. It will help manage the attention between all eight channels (industry included.) It can enable us to keep track and manage what people are saying about your brand and help respond accordingly.
Keep track of post created by DMO's

Later $$

Visually plan and schedule posts on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter
Engage with users who use the #greatwaterway hashtag and repost content into our feed.
Advanced analytics on Instagram and Instagram Stories
Utilize the "Link In Bio" feature to attract Instagram accounts to visit our website

Crowdriff $$

- Allows you to source UGC from users, hashtags, and business accounts.
- Engage with other accounts on our Instagram channels.
- Create Galleries for our blogs and websites.
- Share albums with our DMOs.

Content Development Tools

Photo and Video Editing Tools

- Quick- GoPro Video Editor
- InShot
- Camera Kingston
- Whitagram
- A Colour Story
- Adobe Premier $$
- Adobe Cloud

Grammarly $$

- **Grammarly automatically detects grammar, spelling, punctuation, word choice, and style mistakes in your writing.**

Canva $$

Targeted Media Strategy

Paid: Social and Native Ads
Earned: Traditional, Experiential, Influencers,
Owned: Social Platforms, Website, and Blogs

Media Mix

- Social Media Continue with a paid presence
- Digital Ads (Carousels, Sponsored Post, Boosted Post, Ads)
- Sponsored Video
- Retargeting

Our chosen channels for ad delivery

- YouTube - Paid Video
- Facebook and Instagram - Paid Social and Retargeting

Media Spend will be managed in our 19/20 - RTO 9 - Digital Marketing Budget spreadsheet and our Quarterly Content Calendars

Measurement and Reporting Tools

In order to acquire the data necessary to measure the success of our efforts, we will utilize key reporting and measurement tools and platforms. These include:

Google Analytics

Google Analytics will be used not only for measuring overall website performance for thegreatwaterway.com, but also measuring social media success beyond fan growth and social sharing.

Destination Goals
Using Google Analytics goal tracking, we will be utilizing URL Destination Goals. These goals tell Google that a goal has been completed when a visitor lands on a specific landing page on our website (contest page etc)

Social Media Analytics
We will continue to utilize Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and Youtube analytics to measure engagement and interaction on posts.

At the end of Q4, our reporting metrics will help us determine where we have the most active social presence, where we see the most potential for growth, how many people are aware of us and interacting with us and our content. Understanding these measurements will assist in determining our next moves and how much we need to increase our spending for Digital Marketing in 2020.

Measurement and Reporting will be managed in our 19/20 SEO Digital Marketing Reporting S/S

Budget/ Cost Projections

Our detailed 2019-2020 Digital Marketing Budget

Strategy	Resources	Implementation/ Budget Date	Cost of Tools/ Services	Total
Experience Blog Expenses	Accomodation, tourism operators/ businesses, food and drink	May 2019- March 2020	$2,500	2,500
Writers & Contributors Expenses	Hiring freelance writers	April 2019- March 2020	$5,000	$5,000
Advertising Cost	Facebook, Instagram,and YouTube	May 2019-March 2020	$11,500	$11,500

Contingency Budget		March 2020	$2,000	$2,000
Grand Total				**$21,000**

Next Year

Priority Experiences: Indigenous, Francophone, LGBTQ tourism, Dark Tourism, Culinary Tourism, Accessibility, Multicultural, Ontario Signature Experiences