

Tourism Digital READI Playbook



About the Tourism Industry Association of Canada



Founded in 1930 to encourage the development of tourism in Canada, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada serves today as the national private-sector advocate for this \$109 billion sector.

Based in Ottawa, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada acts on behalf of Canadian tourism businesses and promotes positive measures that help the industry grow and prosper.

The Tourism Industry Association of Canada is responsible for representing tourism interests at the national level, and its advocacy work involves promoting and supporting policies, programs and activities that will benefit the sector's growth and development.

The Tourism Industry Association of Canada's membership reflects partnerships among all sectors of the industry, and provincial, territorial and regional tourism associations, enabling the association to address the full range of issues facing Canadian tourism.

TOURISM CAN

**RISE
REGAIN
REIMAGINE**

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An Overview

Are you Digital READI?

The Digital READI Playbook and Program is part of the READI Platform, an initiative Powered by the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) to propel the growth and positive evolution of Canada's vibrant tourism industry.

Funded by the
Government
of Canada

Canada

Our goal is to deliver capacity-building measures that empower businesses and organizations to innovate, grow sustainably, and contribute to the flourishing landscape of Canadian tourism. TIAC's READI program equips the industry with the information and tools needed to stay competitive and succeed!

- R** Reach out to a breadth and diversity of tourism businesses and organizations
- E** Engage businesses and organizations in interactive and highly participatory capacity development workshops and/or events.
- A** Empower businesses and organizations to **A**ctivate their growth potential.
- D** Support businesses and organizations in **D**eveloping business models, products, and services
- I** Provide a one-stop shop of **I**nformation and resources needed to drive innovation

The Tourism Digital READI Playbook has been designed with the help of Digital Main Street. It would not be possible without the generous support of the Government of Canada through the Tourism Relief Fund. All cases have been used with permission from the team at Digital Main Street.

By completing the Assessment, you will have a better understanding of your organization's Digital READIness, determined your areas of strength and opportunities for growth. Now, armed with this knowledge, we ask you to review this Playbook so that you can innovate your organization and prepare your team for the progress that awaits you. We look forward to helping you on your digital transformation journey.

**READI,
SET,
GROW!**

Bookings and Reservation Systems



Understanding the Vital Role of Booking and Reservation Systems

Booking and reservation systems are essential tools that facilitate the efficient management of customer bookings for accommodations, tours, activities, and other services. These systems automate the process of scheduling, payment processing, and resource allocation, enabling operators to streamline operations, minimize errors, and maximize revenue potential.

Implementing booking and reservation systems is a crucial component of an e-commerce strategy for tourism operators as it enables them to effectively sell their products and services online, reach a wider audience, and capitalize on the growing trend of online booking.

Smooth and efficient booking and reservation systems are the backbone of any successful tourism business. Implementing the right tools and strategies can help you manage bookings effectively, minimize errors, and provide a seamless experience for your guests.

Customers support businesses exploring ways to automate.

76%

of restaurant customers prefer that businesses use automation over live staff in at least one area – particularly for repetitive admin tasks like making reservations or checking product inventory.

Source

Key Considerations for Implementation Success

Online Booking Platforms: Utilize user-friendly online booking platforms that allow customers to easily generate price quotes, view booking availability, and make reservations from anywhere, at any time.

Reservation Management Software: Invest in reservation management software to streamline the booking process, manage availability, and track reservations efficiently.

Integration with Other Systems: Ensure seamless integration between your booking system, online travel agencies, and other software solutions such as customer relationship management (CRM) systems, payment gateways, reporting and email marketing platforms. Ensuring your tech stack integrates well, will translate to a seamless journey for your customers, while also streamlining your business operations.

Bookings and Reservation Systems

Essential Resources for Optimizing Booking and Reservation Systems

If you have an existing website or e-commerce store, visit their app or plugin store for integrations that will complement your existing system. [For example, Shopify App Store, WordPress Plugins, Wix App Market, Square App Marketplace.](#)

Learn about how your booking and reservation system can integrate with popular online travel agencies, such as: Expedia, Booking.com, Viator, Get Your Guide, and TripAdvisor.

- Start by choosing your preferred agency and then research their integration partners. For example, Get Your Guide has listed their integration partners [on this page](#), and you can filter by region, language, system type, and more.
- Ask for a free demo of the platform to see how it may work for your business. For example, you can book a demo with [Fareharbor here](#).

Inspiring Case Studies of Effective Implementation



Small Business Online Booking

[Click here to learn more about Forget-me-not Alpacas.](#)



TripAdvisor Integration

[Learn more about Alberta Food Tours, integrated with TripAdvisor](#)



Using a booking system plugin for an existing website

[Click here to learn more about Warrior Women.](#)



Implementing E-Commerce Solutions



Exploring the Importance of E-Commerce Solutions

An e-commerce solution is a platform that enables the online selling of products, services, and experiences directly to your customers. Whether you offer tours, accommodations, or merchandise, implementing an e-commerce system can expand your reach and increase revenue.

Having an e-commerce platform will provide your customers with a convenient and seamless way to research, book, and pay for their experiences, thereby enhancing overall customer satisfaction.

According to Square's Future of Commerce Report, in 2024, customers not only expect businesses to incorporate technology but may even prioritize spending at businesses using AI or automation that makes their experiences more seamless.

More than

3/4

of total revenue in the global tourism and travel sector will be generated through online sales by 2028.

Source

Practical Tips for Successful Implementation

Choosing the right e-commerce platform: Prioritize scalability, integration with essential tools, customization options, and user experience. Also consider which level of platform offering will suit your business needs, to ensure your budget aligns with the functionality offered at that price point.

Gathering your assets: To build an e-commerce site, essential assets include high-quality visual content, detailed product information, secure payment gateways, booking engine integration, customer support infrastructure, SEO optimization, marketing materials, and analytics tools.

Choosing your custom domain name: Purchasing a custom domain name will help establish a unique and memorable online identity, enhance brand recognition, build credibility with customers, and improve search engine visibility.

Upselling and Cross-selling: Implement upselling and cross-selling strategies to encourage customers to purchase additional products or services during the booking process. Leverage an app integration to automate personalized product or experience recommendations on your e-commerce site.

Customer Service Chatbot: Provide 24/7 customer support, personalized recommendations, efficient booking processes, and lead generation. You can also gain insights into customer behaviour and leverage this for your marketing strategy.

Digital Waiver System: Streamline workflow and simplify release of liability forms for guests. Digital waivers integrated into your e-commerce and online booking system will help guests arrive prepared, improving their experience and saving your staff time.



Implementing E-Commerce Solutions

Point of Sale Programs: Efficient point of sale (POS) programs are essential for managing transactions, inventory, and customer data effectively. Whether you operate a gift shop, restaurant, or ticket booth, choosing the right POS system can streamline operations and improve customer service. Consider the following:

- **Mobile POS Solutions:** Utilize mobile POS solutions to process transactions anywhere on your property, reducing wait times and improving guest satisfaction.
- **Inventory Management:** Implement POS systems with robust inventory management features to track stock levels, automate reordering, and prevent stockouts. An e-commerce solution is a platform that enables the online selling of products, services, and experiences directly to your customers. Whether you offer tours, accommodations, or merchandise, implementing an e-commerce system can expand your reach and increase revenue.

Essential Resources for Building a Thriving E-Commerce Presence

[Digital Waiver Solutions](#)

source: jotform

[Web Design & Usability](#)

source: HubSpot

[Travel Chatbots in 2024](#)

source: HubSpot

Inspiring Examples of E-Commerce Success Stories

Small Business E-Commerce



[Click here to learn more about Paglione Estate Winery.](#)



[Read about the Ocean Sports case study here.](#)



[Read about the Rocky Mountaineer case study here.](#)



Marketing Strategies

Unveiling the Significance of Digital Marketing in Tourism

A marketing strategy is a comprehensive plan outlining how you will attract, engage, and retain customers through various marketing channels and tactics.

Effective marketing strategies are essential for attracting new customers and retaining existing ones, increasing brand awareness, and differentiating your offerings from competitors.

72%

of Canadians say that increased social media presence helped them become more aware of what small and local businesses had to offer

Source

30%

conversion rate through shop-able videos as they lower shopping barriers and bring the look and feel of the online store to social media

Source

Essential Considerations for Implementation

Content Marketing: Create compelling content such as blogs, videos, and infographics to engage your audience and provide valuable information about your destination or services.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO): Optimize your website and content for search engines to improve visibility and attract organic traffic.

Email Marketing: Build an email list and regularly send targeted newsletters, promotions, and updates to keep your audience informed and engaged.

Paid advertising: Increase visibility with a target audience outside of your existing customer base, drive immediate results, and measurable outcomes.



Marketing Strategies

Leveraging Social Media: Social media platforms offer excellent opportunities for tourism businesses to connect with potential customers, showcase their offerings, and build brand awareness. Consider the following strategies:

- **Active Presence:** Maintain an active presence on popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn.
- **Engagement and Interaction:** Interact with your audience by responding to comments, messages, and reviews promptly. Encourage user-generated content by running contests or featuring customer photos and reviews.
- **Visual Content:** Share visually appealing content such as photos and videos to showcase your destination, accommodations, and activities.
- **Shop-able Posts:** Connected with your e-commerce store and inventory, enable customers to purchase your products or experiences directly from their feed.

Resources to Fuel Your Digital Marketing Strategy



Digital Main Street Courses: free, on-demand, online courses that provide education and practical application tips for marketing your business.

- **Marketing Your Business:** creating a marketing plan and engaging content and driving online traffic.
- **Digital Transformation Training:** SEO, social media, email marketing, content marketing, and Google Insights.

Inspiring Case Studies of Digital Marketing Triumphs

Small Business Example



[The Studio Art Gallery](#),
check out [their Instagram Page](#)

Email Marketing & Customer Segmentation



[Read this case study from MailChimp.](#)



Cybersecurity Measures

Understanding the Imperative of Cybersecurity in Tourism

Protecting sensitive customer data and maintaining cybersecurity is paramount in today's digital landscape. A data breach or security incident can damage your reputation and lead to financial losses.

Cyber security awareness for small businesses is essential to protect their sensitive data, reduce risks and costs, maintain their reputation, and stay compliant to privacy regulations such as The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act ("PIPEDA").

With the increasing frequency and sophistication of cyber threats, cyber security awareness training is becoming a critical aspect of every small business's operation.

Protecting sensitive customer data and maintaining cybersecurity is paramount in today's digital landscape. A data breach or security incident can damage your reputation and lead to financial losses. Your business can also incur significant reputational damage if a breach is to take place.

Key stats

94%

of cyber breaches are caused by human error.

70%

of cyberattack victims are small businesses.

91%

of the cyber-crimes are initiated via an email.

600%

increase in cyber crimes since the pandemic.

8.1%

increase in cybercrime in e-commerce space since the year 2018.

\$5.64 million

average cost of data breach in Canada (compared to the world average of \$4.34 million).



Cybersecurity Measures

Essential Considerations for Implementation

Secure Payment Processing: Use encrypted payment gateways and comply with Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) requirements to ensure secure online transactions.
Regular Security Audits: Conduct regular security audits and vulnerability assessments to identify and address potential security risks proactively.

Employee Training: Train your staff on cybersecurity best practices, including password management, phishing awareness, and data handling procedures.

Cyber Liability Insurance: Protect your business and get help with managing losses associated with cybercrime, such as a data breach, cyber extortion, or technology disruptions. Many standard business liability insurance policies do not cover cyber incidents, so investing in cyber liability insurance can help cover many costs including legal representation, notifying affected parties, hiring a firm to investigate the cause of the breach, and restoring damaged or corrupted data.

Resources to Strengthen Your Cybersecurity Strategy

Digital Main Street’s Cybersecurity Course: free, on-demand, online courses that provide education and practical application tips for marketing your business.

Mastercard’s Trust Center is designed for varying levels of cybersecurity awareness and adoption.

Cyber-Readiness Starter Kit: This no-cost cyber-readiness starter kit provides essential first steps to protecting your business and training materials for employees.

Inspiring Case Studies of Cybersecurity Success

NATIONAL
CYBERSECURITY
ALLIANCE

Case Studies

Case
4

NATIONAL
CYBERSECURITY
ALLIANCE

SMALL BUSINESS CYBERSECURITY CASE STUDY SERIES

Hotel CEO Finds Unwelcome Guests in Email Account

SCENARIO:

The CEO of a boutique hotel realized their business had become the victim of wire fraud when the bookkeeper began to receive insufficient fund notifications for regularly recurring bills. A review of the accounting records exposed a serious problem. At some point a few weeks before, the CEO had clicked on a link in an email that they thought was from the IRS. It wasn't. When they clicked the link and entered their credentials, the cyber criminals captured the CEO's login information, giving them full access to intimate business and personal details.

ATTACK:

Social engineering, phishing attack.
A phishing attack is a form of social engineering by which cyber criminals attempt to trick individuals by creating and sending fake emails that appear to be from an authentic source, such as a business or colleague. The email might ask you to confirm personal account information such as a password or prompt you to open a malicious attachment that infects your computer with malware.

[Read this case and others here.](#)

Insurance

BUSINESS

Edmonton Non-Profit
files lawsuit over
phishing scam

Organization was stung by a hacker
who impersonated a vendor

[Read the full article here.](#)

A white icon of a computer monitor with a green base. The screen of the monitor displays a black and white QR code.

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Next Steps

ADOPT NEW DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES.

CANADA DIGITAL ADOPTION PROGRAM



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Canada

Now that you have completed your assessment and reviewed this playbook, are you wondering what your next step should be?

[**APPLY NOW**](#)

We recommend that you investigate **CDAP's Grow Your Business Online** grant.

Access up to **\$2,400** to setup e-commerce

Access to a network of **more than 11,000 e-commerce advisors**





DIGITAL READINESS

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

TIAC is grateful to have such accomplished professionals who bring a wealth of experience, expertise, and passion to the table, making them an integral part of our organization's success.

The **DIGITAL READI Advisory Committee** supports TIAC in providing education and training opportunities for Canadian tourism businesses and organizations to be certified as DIGITAL READI.

Brenden Branscombe

Industry Development Consultant,
Tourism Saskatchewan

Carol Alderdice

President of Board of Directors,
New Brunswick Aviation Museum

Jessica Ng

Director, Research & Government Affairs,
TIAO - Tourism Industry Association of Ontario

Sushant Trivedi

CEO, Fresh Tracks Canada

Tanya Bennett

Owner, Vancouver Mysteries Inc.



Digital Main Street is a program that helps main street businesses achieve digital transformation. The program is built around an online learning platform, structured training programs, and the Digital Service Squad, a team of street-level team members who help main street businesses grow and manage their operations through technology.

Digital Main Street was created by the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA) with direct support from the City of Toronto. DMS is also supported by a group of strategic business partners, including Mastercard, Google, Shopify, Microsoft, Facebook, Intuit QuickBooks, Square, and Lightspeed.

The program is delivered Pan Canada in support of small business thanks to the support of all three levels of government. www.digitalmainstreet.ca



About Our Membership

We represent:

- Thousands of members
- 1.8 million Canadian jobs that depend on tourism
- Enterprises ranging from small to large national and multinationals
- All sectors of Tourism, including: Airports, attractions, concert halls, convention centres, duty-free shops, festivals & events, restaurants & food services, arenas, transportation, travel services, travel trade, destination and provincial/territorial marketing organizations, suppliers, travel media, and educational institutions



**TOURISM
INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION OF
CANADA**



SCAN TO

**Become a
member!**

[LEARN MORE](#)

Interested in learning more?
TIAC is here to help.

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