

Value of Tourism

PACKAGE OVERVIEW



WHAT IS THE NORTHERN BC VALUE OF TOURISM TOOLKIT?

The Northern BC Tourism Value of Tourism Toolkit has been developed to support regional destination marketing organizations in their efforts to communicate the vital role that tourism plays in our collective communities. This toolkit is intended to provide communities with all the foundational elements needed to execute a local advocacy campaign.

The kit strives to help CDMOs provide residents, business leaders and elected officials with the information needed to understand the importance of tourism in your community, as well as the tools you need to help empower you to share your support for a thriving tourism economy.

WHY ADVOCATE FOR THE VALUE OF TOURISM IN NORTHERN BC?

Simply put, a strong tourism industry is a vital contributor to a vibrant community and a strong local economy. The impacts of tourism go well beyond the direct economic impact seen through the lens of the hospitality industry and tourism operators. The indirect impact of tourism in Northern BC communities supports small businesses across sectors, generating one of the province's most important economic catalysts. on their own channels as well.

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF A VALUE OF TOURISM CAMPAIGN?

As small businesses and tourism operators continue down the path to economic recovery following the global pandemic, we must advocate on their behalf, demonstrating their essential value in our communities to regional governments. The Value of Tourism Toolkit is an instrument for sharing their stories and experiences with those who need to hear them most. This tool kit will target elected officials, community organizations and leaders, media, and regional residents.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE NORTHERN BC VALUE OF TOURISM CAMPAIGN KIT?

This toolkit provides an outline for implementing a 3-step value of tourism campaign that includes:

- 1. Engagement**
- 2. Education**
- 3. Advocacy**

When used effectively, the Northern BC Value of Tourism Toolkit will provide the assets and materials required to successfully generate awareness, gain support, and motivate action in your community.

THE VALUE OF TOURISM TOOLKIT INCLUDES:

- Media release templates to help communities share their stories.
- Suggested social media posts to support digital marketing and awareness.
- Resident polling results to inform marketing and advocacy efforts moving forward.
- Tools for sharing the stories of tourism champions and tourism operators.
- Templated government letters to assist in advocating to regional elected officials.
- Templated value of tourism presentations.
- Key message templates to arm your supporters with critical information.
- Templated government proclamations that can be shared with regional elected officials.
- Designed postcards and social media badges to share with supporters.

Northern BC Tourism looks forward to supporting your community as you advocate on behalf of our collective tourism industry.

Step 1: Engagement



The first step when implementing an effective value of tourism campaign is engaging with stakeholders. The engagement phase is the initial priority because it will ensure that you have established a foundation on which to build your campaign. By engaging with stakeholders, you will have identified interested parties, contacted tourism champions, and discovered gaps in your outreach potential. By executing on step one of this campaign you will be better positioned for the education and advocacy phases that follow.

A. TOURISM CHAMPIONS

This document is a guide to thinking critically about community outreach and advocacy in partnership with your tourism champions! By reflecting on and implementing the series of questions in this document, you are building a foundation for your local advocacy campaign.

NAME THREE TOURISM CHAMPIONS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Why? By identifying three local tourism champions in your community, you can begin to engage with local tourism industry leaders who can support and inform your advocacy efforts moving forward. These three champions can also serve to help you spread messages and educational information – these individuals will become your ‘Value of Tourism’ stars. Make sure they are comfortable sharing their story publicly – including how the pandemic has affected their livelihood.

How to Get Started? Think of individuals in your community with great personal stories and immense passion. They might be tourism operators – or they might have a job that someone outside of our industry might not associate with tourism. These individuals will play an important role in helping you tell your ‘Value of Tourism’ story. They will help encompass social media stories and local marketing initiatives.

Ask friends and family – who are the first people that come to their minds? Ask elected officials and business leaders – who do they look at as community leaders in your area? Think outside the box – are there individuals who are not in the industry but who might be directly impacted?

CREATE YOUR LIST OF LOCAL LEADERS AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE INFLUENCE

Why? There are a lot more leaders in the community than just elected officials. You will want to ensure that your advocacy efforts include and inform a variety of individuals. Some examples might be, municipal leaders, Chambers, business groups, service clubs like Rotary and elected officials. Building this list now ensures you have all the information you need in the next steps. Building your list makes setting up meetings and presentations easy and it also gives you a direct distribution channel for some of your next local advocacy materials.

How? All elected officials are publicly listed, along with their contact information. When identifying organizations that will be important to your advocacy efforts, begin by identifying their leadership and build from there. Ensure that you are identifying a variety of individuals with different perspectives.

This does not have to be fancy. Open a spreadsheet on your computer and capture the organization's name, the individual's name, the address, the email, and make a few notes when applicable (i.e. - do they have a meeting or event coming up? Are there board members or other strong tourism advocates already a part of the team there? Have they partnered with you on initiatives in the past?)



B. CALCULATE YOUR LOCAL IMPACT NUMBERS AROUND TOURISM

Why? Simply put, nothing proves a point more effectively than data and numbers. By beginning the process of gathering local economic impact numbers you will be better prepared to advocate for your local tourism businesses and operators. These numbers will be more impactful than provincial and regional numbers.

How? Begin by identifying the categories that are important or impactful for your specific community. These might include:

- **Tourism's economic contribution**
- **Number of jobs tourism provides in your community**
- **Number of visitors per year**
- **Pre-pandemic and present comparisons of vacancy, open businesses, and visitors**

NBCTA'S Research program can provide you with some regional and sub-regional data and analysis through travelinbc.com

C. TITLE

[NBCTA's research page](#) is a great resource and can provide you with regional and subregional data and analytics.

Additionally, NBCTA completed Value of Tourism resident sentiment polling in your community in June of 2022. The results of this survey are included in this Value of Tourism package and are a great tool for communicating the impact and value of tourism with your stakeholders.

If you do not have this data directly, try using the provincial and regional metrics and localize them. Use your best estimations if you do not have the capacity to find and research the actual numbers.

We look forward to hearing more about the tourism champions in your community!

Step 2: Education



By using the information gathered through your community engagement and tourism champions process, you can now leverage these stories and inputs to develop an educational campaign.

WHY IS EDUCATION IMPORTANT?

The tourism industry is far reaching and most individuals in your community are not aware of how it impacts them. Before someone buys into how valuable something is, they need to have all the facts. Your education campaign should be about presenting facts and human stories to your community.

Using your key messages and the tools within this Value of Tourism (VOT) package, you will empower residents to share their own ties to the tourism sector, while at the same time reminding elected officials and community leaders how impactful tourism is in the community.

Education lays the foundation for advocacy. Once your community is more aware of tourism (almost as aware as you are) you can then give them the call to action to advocate for it.

YOUR EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

As you plan out your Value of Tourism campaign, consider using this checklist as your guide to execution.

- Reach out and interview your tourism champions
- Create your tourism champion content (use the step by step guide included in this update)
- Send your government officials the government letter after you have filled it in with community specific information
- Follow-up with government officials and present your tourism facts to them by using the completed presentation template

- **Find other opportunities to present the tourism presentation**
 - Can you have a webinar in your community?
 - Is a local group meeting and looking for an interesting speaker?
 - Can you give a presentation on Facebook Live?
 - Are there other associations that benefit from tourism that could host a webinar or event for you?
- **Fill in your press release template and send it to your local media**
 - Follow up with media and ask if they would be willing to interview you and your tourism champions
- **Encourage locals on social media to share their connections to the tourism space by posting the social media badge on their profiles or by utilizing the Instagram Story templates**
 - Make sure you remind them to tag you and use the #BCTourismCounts hashtag so you can keep track of all the posts
- **Encourage locals to get their kids involved through the dissemination of the activity sheet**
 - You could turn this into a contest – asking people to submit by tagging you
 - You could ask your local newspaper to publish it or you could simply post on your website and ask people to download
- **Make connections and continue to make education around tourism your key focus – talk about it and utilize your key messages in your newsletter, social media posts, and in your meetings**

These activities are paving the way for initiatives that will have more robust calls to action. You are laying the foundation for advocacy by spending time educating and sharing all the information you collected in the first week.



How to Tell Your Tourism Champions' Stories



Congratulations! You have identified three distinct tourism champions in your community. Now it is time to engage with them and start to tell their stories. Set up a time you can chat with them and use this document to guide your conversation with them.

YOUR DELIVERABLES WILL BE:

- 1 blog post per champion
- 3-5 social media posts per champion
- 1 quote per champion that can be used for media releases and government correspondence
- Solidified agreement that the champion can speak to their story should they need to in the media

TELLING THEIR STORY INTERVIEW

Ask these questions to the champion and either record the conversation or take detailed notes so you have everything you need to pull it together. Some questions may not be applicable to all champions.

- What is your name?
- How long have you resided in this community?
- What is your business?
- How long has your business been in operation?
- Who is your target audience? How do you serve them?
- Tell us about the evolution of your business (from start to your plans for the future)
- How many community members do you employ – directly and indirectly?
- How are you tied to the tourism economy?
- What does a thriving tourism economy mean to your business?
- How do you champion tourism in the community?

- **Do people know how tied your business is to the tourism economy? Why or why not?**
- **Tell us a few stories about tourists that you have interacted with**
- **Tell us a time you went above and beyond for tourists**
- **Tell us how you give back to the community**
- **How do you support our local community?**
- **How does our DMO/CDMO support you and ensure your business thrives?**
- **If you were educating our community about tourism, what would you tell them?**

VISUALS YOU NEED TO COLLECT

VIDEO

You have two options here – take your own or leverage what they already have:

1. If you have the capacity, plan to video a 1-2 minute video of your champion – the video should highlight the champion in their element. Have them answer a few of the questions you asked in your interview. Keep in mind you will potentially want to share portions of the video on social media so each question should be able to be cut and featured on its own if needed.
2. If you do not have the capacity, ask your champion if they have an overview video of their business that you can leverage when you publish the blog.

PHOTOS

You have two options here – take your own or leverage what they already have:

1. If you have the capacity, plan to take 3-5 photos of your champion – mostly action shots of them at work in the community, and at least one of them that is more of a headshot in their natural environment.
2. If you do not have the capacity for photos, approach the champion and ask them to send you 3-5 high resolution photos (action shots, and headshots in their environment) that you can use to accompany the blog and social media posts.

LOGOS

Ensure that the champion sends you their company's logo and any rules and restrictions around using it. You will want to leverage this in your blog and in the social media content.

OTHER INFORMATION YOU NEED

- What are their social media handles (company and individual) that you can tag once you post the story?
- Does their website have a place for a blog? Would they be willing to post the blog (or a portion of it) once complete?
- Do they require you to brand or mention anything specific in your posts and blog?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. Use your interview to create a captivating blog.
2. Publish the blog on your website and highlight it in an upcoming newsletter alongside the video and photos.
3. Draft several social media posts with the information and plan to have the schedule roll out over the coming weeks. You could tell these stories quickly, back-to-back on social media, or you could take a more staggered approach and slowly unveil them over the course of the summer.
 - a. As the social media posts that push to your longer story (blog) are published ensure your champion is sharing on their own social media channels as well.
4. Weave quotes and points from the champion's story into your key messages, government presentation, and news release.

Step 3: Advocacy



The third step in an effective value of tourism campaign is advocacy. You have engaged with your community, identifying champions and stories that will resonate, and gathered their input through public opinion polling. You have educated your community leaders and residents regarding the economic and human impact of tourism in your region. Now is the time to take action, activating your audiences. As you take the third step towards advocacy, reflect on these three questions:

- **Why is the tourism industry important?**
- **What value does the tourism industry have in our community?**
- **How can we empower residents to show they value tourism?**

PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATES

The Northern BC Tourism Value of Tourism Campaign Kit includes two unique media release templates for advocacy. These media release templates are designed to set you up for two interesting media stories as you continue to advocate for the value of tourism in your community.

The goal of the first media release is to share with your residents the results of the recently completed polling. By sharing these results, you also allow them to be part of the ongoing conversation. They get to see where the community is aligned and can start to understand what that means for your destination organization.

The second news release is to be used after you have solidified a date for a 'local tourism' proclamation with your local elected officials. It will educate the media and community about the important decision and help them to understand how they can be part of the important community initiative.

Fill in the templates with information specific to your destination. Post it to your website, share it on your social channels, and send it with your local media outlets via email.

KEY MESSAGE TEMPLATE

Key messages allow you to align your organization and stakeholders as they speak with elected officials, neighbours, and other community leaders. These key messages will guide your conversations throughout the next few weeks.

Fill in the template with information specific to your destination. These numbers will be what you collected during your research as well as what Northern BC Tourism's resident sentiment poll found. Your goal is to start to engage and empower your community about the value of tourism – the key messages give you the soundbites to help you do that.

OP-ED TEMPLATE

The op-ed template is an opinion editorial piece that can be submitted to local media, local organizations' monthly or quarterly publications, and other newsletters throughout your community.

The piece is to include your president or executive director in the byline. The aim is to increase your value of tourism message and share recent results of the resident sentiment poll and what the community needs to do in order to support tourism moving into the future.

GOVERNMENT SPECIFIC RESOURCES

LETTER TEMPLATE

Use this letter template with the information uncovered in the resident sentiment poll as well as any local polling/research you completed and send this to local elected officials as well as provincial and federal elected officials.

Your job is to solidify that tourism matters to the community – you want your research to help inform the decisions they will make about tourism in the area.



POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

You should also strive to meet with your elected officials to give them more information about tourism. These meetings could be informal over a coffee or they could be a more formal presentation to a larger group at your local Council Chambers.

This presentation is mostly complete. You can change or fill in the presentation with additional slides specific to your DMO/CDMO.

The presentation is based off the key messages and the Northern BC Tourism resident sentiment polling. Your goal is to ensure your local elected officials understand the results and what the next step for tourism-based businesses in the community could be.

PROCLAMATION TEMPLATE

One of your goals in the advocacy step will be for the government to proclaim a week – a month – or a year – local tourism focused. This proclamation template can be filled in with your community specific information and used to assist your elected officials with their announcement. Having the proclamation ready makes your ask easy!

RESIDENT SPECIFIC RESOURCES

POSTCARD TEMPLATE

When you can amplify your own voice, it will always assist you get your message across. This postcard campaign is for you to empower your locals to tell the local elected officials that tourism is important to them.

Fill in the template with your own DMO/CDMO information – including the mailing address of your municipal government office. Share the postcards on your website, newsletters, and social channels encouraging your residents to print and send the postcards in.

The postcard is a bit different than last time – now it has a specific ask. You want residents to tell their elected officials that a good decision for tourism is a good decision for the community.



SOCIAL MEDIA BADGE

This badge should be distributed through your social media channels, website, and newsletter. Encourage people to share the badge in their social media feeds including your social media handles and the hashtag [#BCTourismMatters](#).

The badge signals that the individual posting believes tourism is valuable to the community.

All your board and staff should be the first people to post this. They should then encourage their networks to do the same. The uptake of the badge should feel like a grassroots initiative.

INSTAGRAM STORIES TEMPLATE

This Instagram Story template can be rebranded, or you can use what is provided. The goal is to give residents an interesting way to engage with you on the topic of local advocacy. These types of templates are quite trendy and should serve to boost your social media reach while at the same time continuing your advocacy campaign around how far valuable tourism is to your community.

Your destination organization should post from your own account first. Staff and board members should be the first to participate tagging individuals from their own network that will participate. With some encouragement you will see the story go viral within your community. Share all the completed stories through your own Instagram channel.

