

Annual Public Meeting | Questions & Answers from the Session

Destination Canada's New Strategy

Can you expand on the statement about looking at today but planning for tomorrow - what does that look like? What is the balance of effort?

- We are currently planning for the next five years (2020-2025). We need a foundation in place to support the future resilience of the sector, but also need to support the recovery steps that will get us there.
Our strategy looks at how Destination Canada will evolve, or key shifts we will make in the various areas of focus: corporate; marketing (domestic and international); business events; business intelligence; innovation R+D; and destination development to deliver on all aspects of our mandate. The balance of how much time will be dedicated to each phase/focus will be determined by several factors, including what is already in place (versus what are newer ventures); collaboration and consultation required; budget considerations, etc.

Investment

How can Destination Canada ensure their investments are more aligned with where our airlines are actually flying?

- Our executive team are in close contact with the executive teams at our major and regional carriers to ensure we know where they are going, where their priority markets are and what city pairs they feel have the most potential.
Our CEO, Marsha Walden spoke recently to the incoming President and CEO of Air Canada to understand their priorities moving forward. Marsha has also had one-on-one meetings with Air Transat and WestJet to understand their plans.
This is a priority for Destination Canada, we want to support the routes and places where travellers can gain access most readily and where we will have the lift to bring travellers en masse back to Canada, when the time is right.
We are aware of the importance of this and we are doing everything we can to remain aligned and ensure we have the best possible restart for our sector.

Has consideration been given to how we approach rebuilding confidence to attract future tourism investors much needed to help rebuild our sector?

- We are active in looking at strategies to do just that. We will have a new emphasis on destination development such as having cluster-based strategies and working with regional development agencies across the country, as well as, working with communities to develop strategies that strengthen their tourism offering.
- Destination development will be critical to our future. Working with organizations like Invest Canada to understand where the marketplace is going and what investors are looking for is critical. We have many new tentacles going into various parts of our

industry to understand the investment side. We will be ready to attract investment when the time is right.

Building Confidence in Travel

With the announcement of the Calgary Hub City for curling and other planned sport events, how can we collaborate in telling the stories that will help to build confidence and inspire people to plan to travel again?

- We work closely with our partners at both the Provincial Marketing Organization (PMO) and Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), they connect us to amazing local storytellers. We encourage you to connect with your local PMO and DMO.

Marketing

When will we hear more specific details about Destination Canada's 2021 plans and market focus?

- One of the things we know is that our partners are holding budget to understand what we are doing.
- Our business events 2021 plans will be shared with Canadian business events partners this week (Week of December 14) that will include details of the events and sales activations that Destination Canada will be supporting next year.
- Domestically, we will continue to have a role in the Canadian market. We are working closely with our partners to understand the best role we can play, as we know many of our partners are focusing on domestic.
- For our other international markets, a lot of what we are waiting to understand affects our tactical plan. We have allocated our budget based on regions, but it is not as detailed as we have done in the past. It will be published in January.

What specific ideas are you working on to stimulate inter-provincial travel for 2021 - mindful of the fact that some provinces/territories still do not want anyone to visit?

- We are developing programs that stimulate pride in Canadians to explore their country and connect with locals, when the time is right. For example, we are leveraging our relationship with Air Canada and EnRoute to place inflight and print content. We are also looking to play a role that our partners cannot play on their own. This means we work with national partners to promote the entire country. In December, for example, RBC Rewards launched their new loyalty program site, which promotes travel in Canada, and we were instrumental in ensuring they had travel content for the entire country. We will also continue to publish our research for industry, which in part, monitors changes in community sentiment as well as demand.

With the current travel restrictions across the country – why are you still marketing?

- We look to our health authorities to understand whether we can travel or not. What we are talking about is planning for the future. As you saw in the research, Canadians and international residents are continuing to plan travel and there is pent up demand.
- We want to have stories about what is so great to do in our country available now for people to access and be inspired to use in the future.

Can you clarify what you mean by "high value" segments for 2021?

- Our high value customers change depending on what we are referencing. In business events, those high value customers are c-suite decision makers in sectors that have been resilient through COVID and are a priority for the Government for investment and where Canada differentiates itself internationally.
- When it comes to domestic, which is new for us, we saw that many Canadians do not know their country. In Canada, our high value customers are Canadians, and we need to get Canadians travelling up North and across the country.
- For International, we are focusing on the segments that have the means to travel. We are working with publications like Virtuoso or other travel promoters who help bring high dollar values back to Canada.

How can industry help you with your efforts to get residents to understand and embrace tourism in their communities?

- Industry can help residents understand and embrace tourism in their communities.
- First, it is critical to restore confidence in travel. That means that travellers must not only understand the health and safety precautions that our industry has invested in so heavily to make sure their staff and guests can enjoy a happy and safe travel experience. We also need tourism businesses and Destination Marketing Organizations to help communities understand the contributions that tourism makes. Not only the direct jobs that we see and understand, such as front-line servers and fishing guides, but the tourism dependent roles, like florists, chefs and service station attendants – all these jobs have a tourism dependency and contribute to our quality of life. Industry can help us in connecting the dots for residents that tourism provides a lot to their quality of life.
- It is a priority for Destination Canada, and it will help residents to understand how important it is to support the restart of our industry.

Canadian Tourism Product

Do you have any concerns about Canada not having the products and experiences available to sell, given the significant risk of closure that many of our tourism operators are facing?

- We are potentially facing this reality across Canada and around the world. It is concerning to see businesses closing. We continue to work closely with Provincial, Territorial and Regional Marketing Organizations to ensure our in-market teams

communicate with operators and ensure they can promote and sell Canadian product and experiences as soon as the borders open-up and travel resumes.

International Marketing

Post-vaccine, which specific markets will you be looking at in 2021?

- We will concentrate our resources on the key international markets of the UK, US, France, Germany, Japan, China, Australia, Mexico and we will continue to work domestically in Canada. We have made the hard decision to stop marketing in India and South Korea at the end of December.

What international markets do you see coming back first? How will you handle local residents nervous about welcoming back international travellers?

- We are planning for all scenarios, we have a scenario A, B and C and many more, which look at different combinations of how international markets may return. No one is ready to make firm projections on any of the scenarios. We talk to our tourism partners, airlines, travel operators across the country, and gather their insights as well as our government leaders about what is happening internationally. There is no precise answer to this right now. Our scenario A is predicting that the US will be the first market to open followed by Europe. We also have other scenarios, ensuring we are ready for any eventuality. We await word from our health authorities and political leaders on this and we are ready to go as soon as we hear direction from them.
- On the second part of the question, how do we handle local residents' nervousness about welcoming international travellers, there are a number of things we can do.
- Firstly, we need to make sure that they feel their communities are safe. The more our industry can do to showcase the health and safety protocols that are in place, the more comfortable your friends and neighbours in our communities will be.
- There are several pilots across the country to assess different methods of testing and different protocols for people coming into our airports and coming across our borders to ensure Canada has the appropriate mechanisms in place to protect and sustain Canadians safety. While Destination Canada is not involved with these pilots, they are examples of safety measures that can help support recovery and build confidence.
- We have confidence in our Canadian leadership to make science-based decisions to give us the reassurance we need, when the time is right.

Travel Trade

Do you plan to ramp up marketing to the Canadian travel trade, given travel professionals can act as a highly educated and safer option than direct consumer bookings at the moment?

- As opportunities grow to move from hyper-local to interprovincial travel, we will look for ways to develop partnerships with Canadian Tour Operators. Besides doing marketing with Canadian Travel Trade, we have chosen to develop tools to help Canadian travel professionals; during the spring and summer 2020, we launched a series of webinars to

help Canadian Travel Professionals learn about the different part of Canada through www.canadaspecialist.com. We have connected Canadian Travel Professionals with Tour Operators that can help them book.

What ways will you be working with the Travel Trade, the Tour Operators and Receptive Tour Operators, in rebuilding packaged travel, and how do you see this part of Tourism changing?

- Throughout this summer, we have already begun work with our tour operators and receptive tour operators, in our core international markets we have been determining how we can start to shift how we sell Canada as a destination, particularly through our packaged tours.
- Our focus has been on how we can create a broader range of products, introducing more nature, more urban experiences that get people out exploring communities.
- We are also looking at how we can accommodate the shift from large coach tours to more Free Independent Traveller tours, which we're expecting to see the biggest change in.

When will Destination Canada start the process of selecting high-value trade partners? What will that process look like?

- We've already begun this process. The definition of high value will vary market by market. Currently, we are working with our in-market team and our research team to define high value in each market and then begin the selection process, together with our industry partners.

Will the Signature Experience Collection continued to be marketed, once the COVID-19 pandemic is under control?

- We are presently looking at what the future of the Canadian Signature Experience will look like; we want to ensure these parameters are what the industry need. We want the best return possible for all partners.

Events

Given the ebb and flow and constant changes to restrictions on a national and regional level, do you foresee large events such as RVC taking place in 2021?

- Rendez-Vous Canada is an important opportunity for our industry to connect with domestic and international tour operators and is critical for our sector. It is also key for us to think long term about how we can move forward.
- What I can say is that it will look different.
- Considering all health, safety and travel restrictions, we are introducing Rendez-vous Canada + (RVC+), a new virtual event format. RVC+ is a shift in thinking about the potential of RVC. We are embracing a more expansive and inclusive mindset that allows us to take the event to new platforms and new audiences. No matter the changes, RVC+

is still an invitation to share our love for Canada and foster a strong and vibrant visitor economy in Canada. This year's event will be taking place from May 17 to 20, 2021.

- Regarding some of the other international events, both ones that DC hosts and events we participate in, we are keeping a close eye on these events, as we know industry participates in these with us. As more information comes through, we will share it with industry.

Opening borders

When will borders reopen?

- Like all Canadians, we await word from health authorities and political leaders to give us guidance. No one can foretell when that day will come yet. We are ready for whenever borders reopen to help our tourism industry immediately.

As small tourism operators, what can we do to prepare for a staged border opening, where we can welcome intra provincial and territorial visitors first, followed by USA and then international?

- This is an area that Tourism Industry Associations (TIA) have done a lot of work on related to industry preparedness. Consider visiting your local TIA website to see what resources are available. A few examples include [TIABC's: Hospitality Best Practice Protocols](#) and [TIAO's Protocol and Resource Centre](#).
- Additionally, Destination Canada has published [Rebuilding Traveller Confidence](#) - a guide and case studies including safety measures implemented by tourism businesses across the country.

COVID-19 – Vaccine, Testing & Quarantine

How does the vaccine play into the tourism recovery plan?

- The availability and rollout of a vaccine is integrated into the various scenarios we are using to plan our activities and coordinate with industry – both for the leisure and business events sectors.

Does DC work with the government on implementing quick COVID-19 test procedures upon arrival to Canada/travel to Canada with negative test results, to encourage recovery of international travel?

- Destination Canada is not involved in implementing testing programs for travel. There are several testing pilots led by our partners including the rapid testing pilot by YVR and WestJet, as well as the testing pilot at Calgary International Airport, which looks at the feasibility of a shorter quarantine period. Pilots like this are important. They look at evolved approaches to keeping safety top of mind while allowing travel to take place in a way that is approved at a federal and provincial level.

Research

To support the work at the community level, does DC have the research/data at that level to help tell the story?

- One of the key tenants for Destination Canada and our partners is that we make decisions based on the best available data. We have been working with communities, provinces, cities and municipalities across the country to better understand tourism and the impacts.
- We have data at the granular level, down to the community level, that we have been using to help understand what is going on with tourism. We have also been working with our partners to identify the stories about our different communities that we can highlight so that when travel is restarting and restrictions are lifted, we can come back quickly to where we need to be.

Does the visitor economy scenario modeling consider the loss of product/experiences?

- This is of course a difficult and new area of data accumulation trying to understand the health of the sector on the supply side. Our research team is working closely with statistics Canada and other entities to look at what the status of businesses are. We are looking for real time indicators as to what is happening on the supply side. We are also trying to find new sources of data that give us more insight.
- We've also done a lot of work to inventory our key attractions and understand the health of our hotel sector by working closely with our sector associations. We are also working to understand the passion space tourism experiences whether it is ski or fishing etc.
- Our efforts are to make sure we have the right data to make informed decisions. Our modeling, while nascent in trying to understand the impacts of the supply side, is considering this.

Working with Destination Canada

How does a business work with Destinations Canada on Co-op advertising programs?

- Currently, there are no co-op marketing programs. Destination Canada collaborates with the Provincial and Territorial Marketing Organizations, as well as the Destination Marketing Organizations to promote Canada to Canadians, and when the time is right, to international travellers.

How can independent operators best get involved in DC's efforts, in order to share our travel stories and messages with your wider audience?

- We work closely with our provincial counterparts as well as our cities and regional partners. They make sure that the stories and content bubbles up to us.
- The other way is to get on to our social channels, on Twitter for our seasonal Canada Chat and Instagram. In particular, if you are posting for us, use our hashtag

#ExploreCanada, this helps pull your content in to our channels and we also share back content with our provincial and regional partners.

As a Canadian based land operator, with full service, booking centre, how can we and other Canadian wholesalers be part of the call-to-action in your Canadian efforts in 2021, and internationally when the time comes?

- As we move in to 2021, this will be built into our program. One example is Rendez-Vous Canada; we will continue to work to link our Canadian industry partners with international tour operators. When it comes to our marketing campaigns, we will work with our provincial partners to help reach out to as many industry partners across Canada to ensure we tell your story through our marketing efforts.

Funding

How can I get a grant from DC to apply towards my website geared to US travellers?

- Destination Canada does not offer grants. There may be other funding and resources available to you through other government departments.