



Local Communications Guide

What is the purpose of this guide?

The purpose of this local communications template is to assist communities participating in Tourism B.C.'s Community Tourism Foundations program to convey key messages to their target audiences in an effective and memorable way using a variety of readily available delivery vehicles.

Why worry about effective local communication?

Tourism is the business of delivering experiences – to individuals, families and corporate groups who come from all over the world to explore, interact, learn and make memories. The most memorable experiences are those that foster connections among the visitor, other people, and the physical surroundings. Communities wishing to compete in the tourism industry must excel in offering their unique experience – to excel requires that community residents interact with visitors understand that they are an important part of the authentic local experience. Such understanding can only be fostered through effective local communication.

As well, the support of local government, financially and philosophically, is often important, particularly for communities that are just beginning to develop their tourism economy. Understandably, the support of local government will be far more readily available if community residents understand the value of tourism, its potential in economic development, and are supportive of local government involvement in tourism.

Some members of communities that are involved in tourism may consider potential new tourism developments (such as a destination marketing organization or the introduction of taxes or levies to fund tourism marketing), with great hesitancy unless the rationale and benefits of these new concepts are fully communicated and explained.

There are many reasons to invest time and attention to effective local communication. Choose the audiences, messages and vehicles that fit best with your community and remember that effective communications are two-way – listen to concerns and address them honestly and openly. Tourism BC can help in this regard.

Which target audiences should be considered?

Each community's situation is unique; however, the following local target audiences are typically important:

1. Local government/elected officials
2. Other land/water based industries and their employees
3. Existing business associations e.g. Chamber of Commerce
4. Existing tourism businesses
5. Local educational institutions
6. Community at large

What key messages should be considered?

1. Local government/elected officials
 - a. Value of tourism – provincially, regionally, and locally.



- b. Value of tourism potential
 - c. Need for a community tourism vision
 - d. Need to incorporate this vision in the Official Community Plan
 - e. Importance of local government in infrastructure development and policies that affect tourism development, planning and the visitor experience
2. Other land/water based industries and their employees
 - a. Tourism, as a land based industry, can cooperate with other industries
 - b. There are opportunities for co-promotion regionally, nationally and internationally
 - c. You may be in the tourism industry and not even realize it e.g. retail, restaurants, contractors, trades, banks
 3. Existing business associations e.g. Chamber of Commerce
 - a. The development of a strong tourism economy will offer significant benefits to all Chamber members
 - b. There are opportunities for the Chamber itself to participate in tourism promotion either directly or in partnership with a Destination Marketing Organization
 4. Existing tourism businesses
 - a. Opportunities to work collaboratively to generate greater returns for all. Why invest in destination marketing in addition to individual event/activity marketing? Opportunities to increase investment in destination marketing – revenue sources, leveraging opportunities. Results of collaborative programs
 - b. Best practices in tourism marketing, operations
 - c. How to grow visitation and yield
 - d. Who is the competition? What are they doing to protect and grow market share?
 - e. Upcoming tourism workshops and opportunities to enhance skills
 5. Local Educational Institutions
 - a. Opportunities to work in partnership with the local tourism industry
 - b. Province wide cooperative opportunities with other educational institutions, including the Centre for Tourism Leadership (www.bctli.ca)
 6. Community at large
 - a. Tourism provides economic and employment opportunities, including opportunities for the next generation to stay and build careers
 - b. Tourism jobs offer all ranges of wages and career opportunities
 - c. Tourism can support community infrastructure and provide amenities that may not otherwise be available to a community of a certain size
 - d. Tourism doesn't have to mean more 'outsiders' degrading the quality of local life or the environment – sustainability is key
 - e. Everyone is in the tourism industry – you are an integral part of the guest experience
 - f. Upcoming events, festivals, conferences
 - g. Economic impact of recent events, festivals, conferences
 - h. Local achievements, awards, milestones

Which communication delivery vehicles should be considered?

Readily available communication delivery vehicles that should be considered include:

One Way vehicles:



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- Local newspaper – regular weekly tourism column
- Local radio station – regular spot – ‘What’s New’
- Chamber of Commerce distribution lists/newsletters
- Local government assessment lists
- E-newsletters
- Mail drops

Two Way vehicles:

- Chamber of Commerce lunches
- Town Hall meetings
- Phone In talk shows
- Open houses sponsored by various community organizations

What are some story ideas to be considered? Below is a list of topics that could be used for local media activities. They can be used to educate the stakeholders and community members. Some of the story ideas are specific to certain audiences.

1. The global tourism economy and projected growth rates
2. Trends in tourism – ecotourism, cultural tourism, experiential/learning vacations
3. Economic impact of tourism in BC
4. Economic impact of tourism in the region
5. Economic impact of tourism locally (if known)
6. Who are our visitors today?
7. What markets offer the greatest opportunities for growth?
8. Tourism product opportunities
9. Stories from other, similar communities who have seen successes in developing their tourism industry
10. Upcoming events, exhibits, conferences
11. Economic impact of recent event, exhibit or conference
12. Who is in the tourism industry – story of a local business that is benefiting from tourism e.g. the local plumber or electrician
13. Local tourism success stories – local operators who are successful – how they got started
14. A brand is ‘not the promise you make, but rather the promise you keep’ – how individuals in the community contribute to the guest experience – local feel good stories about how visitors have been helped on the street
15. Favorable letters, comments from guests – what our visitors say about us
16. Did you know – Canada’s brand identity?
17. Did you know – BC’s brand identity?
18. Did you know – local brand identity (if one exists)?
19. Tourism and forestry working together – local success stories and/or stories from other communities
20. Tourism and mining working together – local success stories and/or stories from other communities
21. Tourism and environmental organizations working together – local success stories and/or stories from other communities
22. Upcoming marketing and sales promotions, advertising and sales trips
23. Results of previous marketing and sales promotions, advertising and sales trips
24. Comparisons to other communities – size of marketing budget, number of visitors – where do we stand?
25. Write in or call in opportunity – what makes our community unique?



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26. Financial support available to those wishing to start a tourism business e.g. Community Futures, Initiatives Trusts etc.
27. Role of the Visitor Information Centre – recent trends and number of walk-ins
28. Training and improvement opportunities e.g. SuperHost® programs
29. If local representative attends the BC Tourism Industry Conference (TIC), write about their experience, key learnings, who won the tourism awards, etc.
30. If a local representative attends a trade or consumer show (e.g. Canada's West Marketplace), write about the number of appointments, key learnings, etc.
31. If a local representative has been involved in hosting travel media, write about the experience, what was involved, how it works, what to expect
32. Interview a local B&B operator about the variety of guests they host (e.g. what countries they are from)

Where can more help be found to assist in local communications?

Please contact Tourism BC for general communications advice, sample copies/templates of news releases and comprehensive data about tourism performance in BC to support local stories.

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