DESTINATION ONTARIO

An Agency of the Government of Ontario

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

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ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The past year was a pivotal period for Ontario's tourism industry. Our collective efforts have shown promising results, indicating a gradual recovery from the pandemic's challenges.

I am proud of the resilience and dedication of my colleagues on the Board and the exceptional team at Destination Ontario. Together, we have adapted our strategies to support the industry and inspire travelers to explore our province.

I am grateful for the support of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Gaming as well as our Board members for their commitment and invaluable contributions.

A special acknowledgment goes to Vincenza Ronaldi, our President and CEO (A), and her team, whose tireless efforts have been crucial in showcasing Ontario's beauty and experiences to consumers at home and abroad.

Looking ahead, Destination Ontario remains committed to collaboration and innovation. We will continue to strengthen the tourism sector, inviting visitors to immerse themselves in our province.

With optimism and determination, we embrace the opportunities ahead, confident in our ability to help shape a vibrant and resilient future for Ontario's tourism industry. Thank you for your ongoing support as we embark on this journey together.

Todd Halpern
Chair, Destination Ontario

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

It is with great pleasure that I present Destination Ontario’s 2023-24 Annual Report.

This past year marked a period of progress and recovery for Ontario’s tourism sector - a testament to the resilience, adaptation, and unwavering commitment of the industry and our team.

Key performance indicators show a promising upward trend in tourism recovery, with some surpassing 2022 levels across all regions of our province. While we celebrate these achievements, it's important to acknowledge that there is more work to be done to fully restore Ontario’s pre-pandemic vibrancy.

I am proud to report that throughout the year, Destination Ontario remained steadfast in its dedication to support the industry. We were flexible and continued to adapt our marketing strategies to showcase the rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and unique attractions that define our province.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to our Board of Directors for its strategic guidance under the leadership of Todd Halpern, Board Chair, in helping to achieve our successes. And to our colleagues at the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming for their invaluable support and collaboration.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to helping revitalize Ontario's tourism industry. We will continue to leverage our expertise and resources to showcase the wonders of Ontario to audiences across Canada, the United States, and internationally. Together with our partners and stakeholders, we will work collaboratively to help strengthen the tourism sector.

As we embark on the journey ahead, I am filled with optimism and determination. Together, we will overcome challenges, seize opportunities, and pave the way for a brighter, more vibrant future for Ontario's tourism industry and economy.

Vincenza Ronaldi
President & CEO (A), Destination Ontario

CORPORATE OVERVIEW

Vision
To position Ontario as a preferred global destination.

Mission
To generate increased visitation by Ontario, Canadian and international tourists, enhance tourism expenditures in Ontario, and contribute to provincial economic prosperity through impactful marketing and results oriented investment partnerships.

Mandate
Destination Ontario is governed by Ontario Regulation 618/98 under the *Development Corporations Act*. Its mandate, as provided for in the regulation, is:

(a) to market Ontario as a travel destination;
(b) to undertake joint marketing initiatives with the tourism industry;
(c) to support and assist the marketing efforts of the tourism industry; and
(d) in cooperation with the tourism industry, the Government of Ontario, other governments and other agencies of governments, to promote Ontario as a travel destination.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Destination Ontario is a dynamic organization that collaborated across all areas of the organization to deliver on its mandate of positioning Ontario as a renowned tourism destination while fostering economic growth for tourism businesses. Our structure includes the following key areas: President's Office; Marketing, Strategy and Insights; Industry Relations and International Marketing; and, Corporate Services and Operations. By leveraging the collective resources and expertise of these areas, Destination Ontario strives to optimize the impact of our activities and programs.

As an agency of the government, Destination Ontario worked closely with the Ministry to align agency goals, objectives, and strategic direction with government priorities and direction, including those outlined in the 2023-24 Letter of Direction. The agency remained focused on opportunities to assist stakeholders to recover and rebuild.

President’s Office
The President’s Office provides executive support to the President and CEO in operational planning, management, and implementation of the agency’s initiatives, including management of the Board and industry committees. Additionally, as an agency of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming (MTCG), Destination Ontario regularly liaises with the Ministry and collaborates across Ministerial portfolios where applicable.

Marketing

Destination Ontario's primary mandate, as the lead provincial tourism marketing organization, is to market Ontario as a preferred tourism destination. Destination Ontario builds integrated marketing campaigns to position Ontario as a desirable travel destination and to increase overnight travel intention in key global markets. Destination Ontario leverages media and content strategies to connect with potential travellers through channels like connected TV, radio, sponsored content, digital and social media.

The organization's consumer website (DestinationOntario.com) uses a data-centric approach to deliver qualified travel leads to Ontario tourism partners and operators by making the website discoverable, engaging and conversion efficient, ensuring the user experience is as frictionless as possible. The corporate website (DestinationOntario.com/corporate) provides the tourism industry with research highlights, marketing opportunities and information on Destination Ontario's plans, programs, partnership opportunities and the ability to submit content and story ideas.

The Destination Ontario Creative Services team manages in-house creative work, including creating video content, photography, graphic design and campaign asset development. The team also manages the Destination Ontario Media Hub (DestinationOntario.com/image) and provides assistance to stakeholders interested in using rights-managed Ontario visual assets for promotional purposes.

Ontario, Canada & United States

Destination Ontario's integrated marketing communications efforts in 2023-24 built on the success of 2022-23 collaborative campaigns.

In Ontario, Destination Ontario continued to focus on the marketing system that leverages partner and operators' content across three seasonal campaigns that encouraged overnight domestic travel. This marketing system allows destination partners to align their regional priorities with Destination Ontario's marketing campaigns and consumer insights.

The agency continued to prioritize the U.S. market as a key driver to incremental revenue into the province partnering with gateway cities and regional partners. Seasonal campaigns encouraged U.S. drive and fly markets to consider Ontario with a goal of increased visitation and expenditure to Ontario.

Northern Marketing and Partnerships

Destination Ontario has a specific focus on increasing visitation to Northern Ontario. Destination Ontario worked with northern tourism partners to market the North's unique experiences and natural landscapes. While the North, as a destination, is promoted and integrated across all the agency's work, there is a specific concentration on avid consumers, focusing on powersports and touring, angling and hunting and outdoor adventure.

Destination Ontario's northern marketing efforts were supported and undertaken in collaboration with northern partners, including Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) 13 and 12, Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs), sector associations and individual tourism operators.

A significant segment of Northern Ontario's tourism industry relies heavily on the U.S. traveller. Destination Ontario's northern marketing programs and activities continued to focus on both avid American travellers, while continuing efforts in Ontario and other source Canadian markets. Collaboration with northern partners is critical to leverage marketing plans that target consumers to return to Ontario and welcome new visitors.

Marketing Intelligence and Business Strategy
Destination Ontario conducted tourism research and data analysis that provided market intelligence and consumer behaviour insights to enable the agency and its tourism partners. This data helps Destination Ontario and its partners to make more informed business decisions, be flexible to changing landscapes and deliver results for tourism businesses. Destination Ontario continues to build on its campaign analysis and media performance data to ensure a sound return on investment (ROI) and learnings for future campaigns with a view of maximizing value-for-money.

International Marketing
The international traveller is important to Ontario's tourism economy as they typically stay longer and spend more than a domestic visitor. In 2019, international travellers accounted for 2.8% of visits to Ontario, and contributed 19.8% of overall visitor expenditures.

International leisure travel continued to resume in phases, and competition for travellers is fierce. Destination Ontario continued to use an integrated approach to ensure that international travellers choose Ontario. All of the agency's International Marketing work is undertaken with research and insights supporting decision making:

- Business Development – Worked closely with travel companies (tour operators, wholesalers, and travel agents) to increase awareness of the province and drive sales of Ontario's market-ready tourism products and experiences.

- Media and Public Relations – Worked closely with media representatives (journalists, editors, and influencers) to garner positive third-party editorial coverage to increase awareness of the province and inspire travel to Ontario.

- Consumer Marketing – promoted Ontario directly to consumers through digital and social tactics to drive awareness, consideration, and travel intent for Ontario spending.

Destination Ontario’s international markets of priority for 2023-2024 were the United Kingdom (U.K.), Germany, France, Japan, China, South Korea, Mexico, and Australia.

Destination Ontario collaborated with RTOs, DMOs, sector associations, Ministry sister agencies, Destination Canada, and in-market agencies to support the industry.

Partnerships

As the lead provincial tourism marketing organization, Destination Ontario is uniquely positioned to offer industry stakeholders the opportunity to leverage the agency’s programs and activities to market their experiences and products.

The agency continued to partner with RTOs, DMOs, sector associations, Ministry sister agencies, Destination Canada and private stakeholders to build upon collaboration to date and use established relationships to assist with recovery efforts across the province. Destination Ontario stewarded its role as the lead marketing organization, taking a customized approach to supporting partners, with a focus on driving direct results to local tourism businesses.

Destination Ontario continued to lend expertise directly to partners by sharing insights, research, communications tools, and marketing support to help the industry regenerate business and bolster economic activity.

Corporate Services and Operations

Finance and Corporate Services

The Finance and Corporate Services team oversees business operations, financial controllership and administration, procurement and contract management, human resources, facilities and administrative services, and information technology services management. The team provided strategic direction and leadership in the planning, delivery and evaluation of all corporate service strategies, systems and controls to support the ongoing business operations of Destination Ontario, including financial planning and reporting, and executing agreements efficiently and effectively to support industry partners. This program area was also responsible for business continuity planning in the event of an emergency.

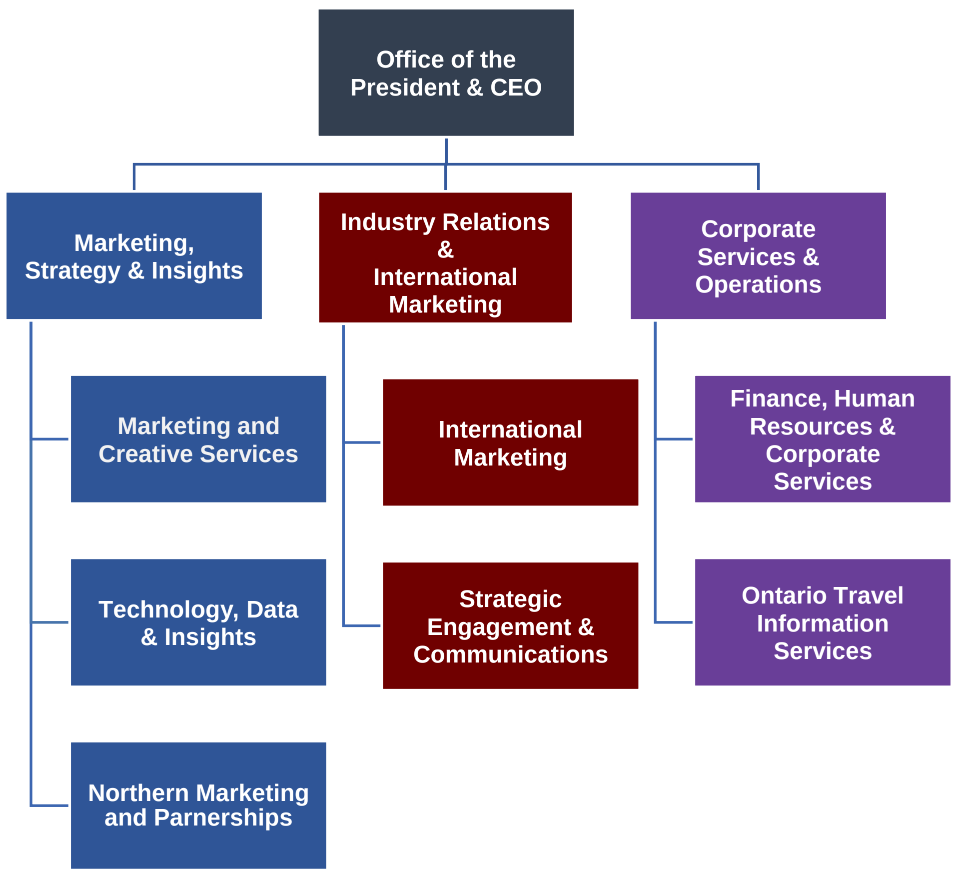
Ontario Travel Information Services

Ontario Travel Information Services (OTIS) provides visitor information services across multi-channel visitor touchpoints including in-person, by phone, by email and virtually. Destination Ontario’s experienced and knowledgeable Travel Counsellors offer visitors valuable trip planning inspiration and information on travel ideas and itineraries in Ontario to help them discover the variety of tourism products and experiences available in Ontario.

Destination Ontario continues to evolve its modernization initiatives through a ‘visitor care’ approach to enhance the delivery of tourism information services to visitors and industry beyond the traditional bricks-and-mortar model, meet changing consumer expectations, and support tourism recovery through modern, digitized services.

Providing visitor services through the lens of 'visitor care' leverages the opportunity to create more trip plans, drive bookings of Ontario tourism products and experiences to extend and influence travel purchase decisions and impact incremental spend.

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Board of Directors

Destination Ontario is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of business leaders who are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, based on recommendations from the Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Gaming. The Minister receives advice on Board membership from the Chair and other interested parties. The volunteer Board of Directors do not receive remuneration, though they are eligible to claim allowable expenses under Ontario's Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive.

Board of Directors (for fiscal year April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024)

Todd Halpern, Chair
President
Halpern Enterprises
Toronto, ON
Oct 1, 2023-Sep 30, 2026

Sumeeta Kohli
Owner
GLocal Marketing
Mississauga, ON
Apr 16, 2023-April 15, 2026

Jesse Hamilton
Vice President, Hospitality
Blue Mountain
Port Carling, ON
May 21, 2020-May 20, 2026

Cathy Kirkpatrick
Partner
Alphabet
Ottawa, ON
June 29, 2023-Jun 28, 2026

Andrew Galloro
Global Senior Director of Corporate Communication
Four Season Hotel and Resorts
Toronto ON
Aug 31, 2023 – Aug 30, 2026

Jasveen Rattan
JKR Consulting
Mississauga, ON
June 29, 2023-June 28, 2026

Dennis Matthews
Vice President
Enterprise Canada
Toronto, ON
Mar 11, 2024-Mar 10, 2027

Danielle Chretien
Owner/Manager
Lake on the Mountain Resort
Prince Edward County, ON
May 9, 2024-May 8, 2027

Robert Taylor
Director of Policy and Government Relations, Wine Growers Canada
Toronto, ON
June 10, 2021-June 09, 2024

Benjamin Purkiss
Owner Ben Purkiss Design
Creative Director
Grimsby, ON
Oct 07, 2021-Oct 6, 2024

Jerry Pribil
President
Marienbad Hospitality
London, Ontario
Jan 19, 2023-Jan 18, 2026

Lacey Rigg
Coordinator of Meetings, Conventions and Sports Tourism
City of Timmins
Jun 22, 2023 – Jun 21, 2026

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Destination Ontario relied on its strategic playbook, using its corporate priorities as the backbone to focus on key areas, including Collaboration, Modernization, Research, and Growth, to guide the agency's marketing strategies to support increased visitation and generate expenditures. Throughout this year, Destination Ontario also focused on developing a new three-year strategic plan for 2024-27. This new three-year strategic plan will take effect starting in the 2024-25 fiscal year.

For this annual report, Destination Ontario relied on its previous *Strategic Playbook 2018-2021*. Key objectives of the plan include to:

- Grow visitor volume and expenditures from Ontario’s priority markets
- Work across the industry through content and partnerships
- Build a strong Ontario brand and regularly measure its impact
- Provide content that visitors want and need

Four strategic priorities are identified:

Visitor First Marketing focused on anchoring marketing campaigns in consumer insights, search interest data and product segmentation information to help reduce friction and provide value to potential travellers; inspiring consumers through passions and interests to travel to and around Ontario while focusing investment on highest return markets.

Re-defining Partnerships focused on leading collaboration with industry partners for mutual success, and strong ROI. In the international markets, Destination Ontario to leverage the Canada brand and Destination Canada’s work to place Ontario top of mind in key, high potential markets and measure results driving increased visitation and spend across Ontario.

Strong Research, Strong Outcomes focused on a holistic research approach to improve how data are mined to incorporate insights into strategic planning and marketing activities across the agency. And, to further enhance understanding of the consumers’ path to purchase.

Dynamic Organization focused on connecting, leading and inspiring through a team approach within the organization and across the industry. To nurture a nimble culture of ongoing program evaluation and personal and program performance.

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Throughout the 2023-24 fiscal year, Destination Ontario demonstrated a steadfast commitment to supporting Ontario's tourism industry, embracing a tone of recovery and optimism. With most COVID-19 pandemic restrictions lifted, the industry began its journey towards pre-pandemic levels. While challenges persisted, such as lower border crossings and hotel occupancy rates, our focus remained on revitalization and growth.

As we look to the future, our organization remains dedicated to fostering recovery and driving growth within Ontario's tourism sector. We are committed to working collaboratively with stakeholders to shape a prosperous path forward.

President’s Office

The President’s Office provided executive support to the President and CEO in the operational planning, management, and implementation of the agency’s initiatives, including management of the Board and industry committees. As an agency of the Ministry, Destination Ontario regularly liaised with the Ministry. The President’s Office continued to work closely with the Ministry to collaborate on government communications and programs to support the industry. Destination Ontario’s goals, objectives, and strategic direction continued to align with the government’s priorities and direction.

Board of Directors

Destination Ontario’s Board of Directors met four times throughout the year to provide advice, strategic direction and oversight related to agency activities.

Marketing

Destination Ontario’s annual goals for all markets were to generate 764K in incremental visitation and $243.6M in incremental spend along with 8.9M leads to industry.

Destination Ontario achieved over 1.6M total incremental visits and $574.6M in incremental expenditures, including 14.1M leads to partners and industry – exceeding the target by 57% (Ontario, Canada, U.S., International markets of focus). It should be noted that new data is being added to the forecasting model to update reliability and effectiveness of modelling and will be more refined for fiscal year 2024-25.

Additionally, Destination Ontario’s partnered marketing systems are getting more effective and efficient in reaching target audiences in each market of focus as more campaigns are delivered, data is analyzed, and performance is optimized.

Ontario Market Plan

The annual plan for the Ontario market focuses on seasonality and product experiences to encourage Ontarians to plan a getaway in Ontario. It was anchored by a collaborative, partnerable marketing system that leveraged partner content and connected consumers with trip ideas and tourism business operators.

Destination Ontario delivered three partnered seasonal campaigns and a holiday campaign in 2023-24, as outlined in its business plan. The seasonal Ontario marketing plans for spring, fall and winter with a collective media investment of $2.3M (including $750K partner investment) delivered 832K in incremental visits and $130.5M in incremental expenditures against the targets of 221K in incremental visitation and

$31.4M in incremental expenditures. Based on the revenue modelling, the three seasonal campaigns generated a combined ROI of $1 : $46.17. It should be noted that the forecast model is based on historical data and needs to be refreshed with new post-pandemic data sets and will be updated in 2024-25. Additionally, in the on-going push to learn and improve, Destination Ontario issued surveys to capture partner feedback on buy-in programs. For the three Ontario seasonal campaigns, 30 partnerships invested $750K with a Destination Ontario-Led Partner Program score of 96.4%.

A key driver for Destination Ontario's Ontario market advertising is driving qualified leads to partners. The Ontario market plan had a target of 3.2M leads to industry, and Destination Ontario achieved a total of 5.9M leads from all Ontario marketing activities. The significant performance is due to a strong indicator of interest, efficient media channels and the strong performance, effectiveness and relevance of creative, media and content strategies.

Campaigns for the year:

1. Ontario Market – Spring Campaign
2. Ontario Market – Fall campaign
3. Holiday Campaign
4. Ontario Market – Winter campaign

The marketing objectives for the Ontario Market Plan are to:

- Encourage Ontarians to plan at least one domestic overnight trip in Ontario
- Activate a Destination Ontario-led marketing system with industry partners that leverages and aligns Destination Ontario and partner sites and connects qualified consumers directly with tourism business operators
- Engage travellers with value-driven content that includes planning and social content and broadcast and media relations coverage to further drive consideration of Ontario travel experiences

Ontario Market Plan – Spring Campaign
Destination Ontario launched a spring campaign to encourage domestic overnight travel. This plan focuses on Ontario-wide seasonal content and tourism product experiences to encourage Ontarians to plan a getaway. It is anchored by a collaborative, partnerable marketing system that levers partner content and connects consumers with trip ideas and operators.

The media strategy had two primary strategic media pillars. The first is destination awareness which focused on high reach media channels to keep domestic travel top of mind for Ontarians. The second is prospecting leads to Ontario tourism partners and operators through a marketing system supporting seasonally relevant industry and operator content focused on the following product categories, Food and Drink, Outdoor Adventures, Family Attractions, and Arts and Culture. For this campaign, 11 partners participated and contributed $275K to the campaign media spend.

The campaign targeted adult Ontarians aged 21 – 64, through digital and social video, display, static ads and sponsored content from April 25 – June 4, 2023. With a media investment of $865.4K, Destination Ontario was able to generate over 314K DestinationOntario.com web sessions with a 36% engagement rate and 1.8M leads to partners and operators from campaign and Destination Ontario planning content. Additionally, 93% of ad recallers think of Ontario when asked about a destination for short getaways – compared to 82% of non-ad recallers. Further, 48% of ad recallers looked for information on Ontario related travel – a 21% lift over non-viewers. This campaign generated 309K incremental visits and $47M in incremental expenditure. The campaign generated an ROI of $1 : $55.21. This revenue model will be refined in the new fiscal year as more data points are available.

Ontario Market Plan – Fall Campaign

The fall campaign continued the annual strategy for the Ontario market, encouraging overnight stays and connecting Ontarians with destination content and operators. The campaign showcased the product spotlights of Outdoor Adventures, Food and Drink, and Arts and Culture. This campaign leveraged partner content and operators to encourage trip planning in Ontario this fall. Ten partners participated in the fall campaign and contributed $250K to the campaign media spend.

The campaign targeted adult Ontarians aged 21 – 64, through digital display, social, sponsored content and content creators running from August 28 – October 8, 2023. With a media investment of $700K, Destination Ontario was able to generate 124.4K incremental trips and $49.1M in incremental expenditures with a campaign ROI of $1 : $51.64. The campaign drove 1.3M leads to partners and operators from the campaign and Destination Ontario planning content – slightly exceeding our leads target and a slight increase from 2022-23 fall campaign. Additionally, over 60K web visits to Destination Ontario website planning content. The ad tracking study found that 82% of all respondents are planning to make an overnight pleasure trip in Ontario over the next three months and 89% of respondents had a 31% ad recall of the campaign. Further, 54% of ad recallers looked for info on Ontario related travel – a 30% lift over non-viewers. The campaign generated a 4% lift in overnight travel intention to Ontario – which increased to 49% post campaign showing strong interest in a fall getaway.

Holiday Campaign

This campaign was designed to encourage Ontarians to support local during the holiday season. The campaign had a modest budget of $100K. The campaign’s focus was to help encourage support for local businesses and experiences during the holiday season by buying local experiences, packages and gift cards for future use. Additionally, the campaign also encouraged Ontarians to experience local holiday festive experiences and events.

The campaign targeted adult Ontarians aged 21 – 64, through social and digital planning content from November to December. With a media investment of $100K, Destination Ontario was able to generate over 260K web visits to dedicated content about local businesses leading up to the holiday season with consumer's spending an average of 50-seconds with the content.

Ontario Market Plan - Winter Campaign
The winter campaign continued to build on the annual strategy for the Ontario market, encouraging overnight stays and supporting partners and operators through a marketing system. The campaign showcased the product spotlights of Outdoor Adventures, Family Attractions and Wellness Experiences. This campaign leverages partner content and operators to encourage trip planning in Ontario this winter. Nine partners participated in the winter campaign and contributed $225K to the campaign media spend.

The campaign targeted adult Ontarians aged 21 – 64, through digital display, social, sponsored content and content creators running from January 15 – February 18, 2024. With a media investment of $725K, Destination Ontario was able to generate 150K incremental trips and $22M in incremental expenditures with a campaign ROI of $1 : $31.67. The campaign drove 1.7M leads to partners and operators and Destination Ontario.com planning content – slightly exceeding our 1.5M target. Additionally, over 271K web visits to Destination Ontario website planning content. The ad tracking study found that 84% of all respondents are planning to make an overnight pleasure trip In Ontario over the next twelve months – a decrease of 4% from winter 2023 (Ontario experienced an unseasonably warmer winter season in 2024 with limited snow). Further, 54% of all respondents searched for information on Ontario travel – a 32% lift over non-campaign viewers indicating the campaign sparked search intent and interest.

Canada Market
Destination Ontario targeted key Canadian markets that research shows as markets of highest potential. Visitation data shows that Ontario receives about 7M visits from Canadian provinces per year spending $3.3B. These travellers stay an average of 2.8 nights and spend about $465 per visit – compared to an Ontarian who spends about $141 per visit. Destination Ontario targeted Manitoba, Quebec, and the Atlantic provinces with a content market strategy to better understand the motivators of these travellers and drive leads to destination partners. These markets will continue to be evaluated over time to ensure higher-yield target traveller market availability and help support future campaign planning with partners in 2024-25.

Destination Ontario set a target of 144K leads from the content strategy in Canadian markets. This year, the content strategy efforts in the Canadian market generated 152K leads to partners. Top performing organic keywords that drove the most traffic to the agency's website from Google include glamping, boating license in Ontario, Manitoulin Island, Prince Edward County, Northern Lights, beaches and Michelin-star restaurants in Toronto. Quebec dominates the organic traffic to Destination Ontario's website outside of Ontario, followed by British Columbia, Alberta and Nova Scotia.

U.S. Market
The U.S. market is critically important to the Ontario tourism economy. Data from Statistics Canada indicates that Ontario welcomed over 13M U.S. travellers spending

$5B in 2019. The U.S. traveller spends an average of 2.2 nights and spends almost $400 per visit, and advertising tracking data shows a higher average spend particularly with high value U.S. fly markets. Destination Ontario's strategy took a targeted approach with the rubber tire drive markets followed by a focus on key fly markets. Destination Ontario, working with partners, focused on a tiered approach to U.S. markets in 2023-24. Tier one targeted the drive markets of Michigan, Northern Ohio and New York State. Tier two targeted the high value fly markets of New York City and Chicago. Tier three targeted California with a pilot working with Destination Toronto and Destination Canada.

The goals of the marketing strategy were to:

- Engage drive market U.S. travellers with motivational messaging that matches our product offering, including iconic experiences in collaboration with our destination partners
- Leverage a marketing model with key partners to leverage a coordinated investment and drive direct leads
- Engage travellers with valuable channel strategy including content, broadcast and media relations coverage to further drive consideration of Ontario travel experiences

Destination Ontario delivered three partnered U.S. campaigns in 2023-24, as outlined in its business plan. Targeting the drive market with a spring/summer and fall partnered campaign and a focused U.S. fly campaign with a collective media investment of $4.9M (including $1.35M partner investment) delivered 790K in incremental visits and $444.1M in incremental expenditures against the targets of 543K in incremental visitation and $212.2M in incremental expenditures. Based on the revenue modelling, the three campaigns generated a combined ROI of $1 : $61.23. It should be noted that the forecast model is based on historical data and needs to be refreshed with new post-pandemic data sets and new data from fly markets including arrivals data. This forecast model will be updated in 2024-25. Additionally, Destination Ontario issued surveys to capture partner feedback on buy-in programs. For the three U.S. campaigns, 10 partnerships invested $1.35M with a Destination Ontario-Led Partner Program score of 100%.

U.S. Market Plan – Spring Drive Campaign

Destination Ontario launched a spring drive campaign to encourage high value travellers from the border states of Michigan, Ohio and New York State. This plan is anchored by gateway city partners' destination content.

The media strategy had two primary media pillars. The first is destination awareness which focused on high reach media channels to help build a positive impression of Ontario as a desirable travel destination. The second is prospecting high value travellers to partner destination content. For this campaign, there were six partners participating – an increase of two additional partners from 2022-23. Partners contributed $300K to the campaign media spend.

The campaign targeted high value travellers, adults aged 25 – 55 geo-fenced around key cities, interests and affinities. The media tactics were Connected TV, digital and social video and Destination Ontario planning content running from May 15 – July 9, 2023. With a media investment of $1.45M, Destination Ontario was able to generate 125.8K incremental visitors and $47.9M in incremental expenditures resulting in an ROI of $1 : $33.07. Additionally, the campaign generated 14.3M completed video views with a video completion rate (VCR) of 71.46%. The prospecting tactics drove 2.55M leads to the six partners. The Destination Ontario ad tracking study showed that 47% of respondents plan to take an overnight trip to Ontario in the next 12 months – a 4% lift from 2022-23. About 30% of ad recallers think of Ontario when asked about a short getaway compared to 19% of non-ad recallers. About 1 in 5 recalled seeing the Ontario summer campaign and, of those, approximately 2 in 3 who took a trip or are planning to take a trip to Ontario this summer said that Ontario travel ads influenced their decision to book.

For those who took a trip to Ontario, the average was 2.6 nights for overnight trips spending an average of $2.2K for the trip. The Toronto and Niagara regions were the most popular destinations for both overnight and day trips. Those who took a day trip to Southwestern Ontario were most likely from Michigan (58%). Most overnight trips were travelled in groups of two. From the respondents that took a trip to Ontario, perceptions are quite positive - 97% rate their experience as good (21%) or very good (76%).

U.S. Market Plan – Fall Drive Campaign
Destination Ontario continued encouraging travel from the U.S. drive market through a fall campaign. The campaign focused on encouraging high value travellers from the border states of Michigan, Ohio and New York State. This plan was also anchored by gateway city partners' destination content.

The media strategy remained consistent with the spring campaign with a focus on applying the spring media and creative learnings. For this campaign, there were three partners participating – two repeat partners from the spring campaign and one new partner to the U.S. campaign. Partners contributed $150K to the campaign media spend.

The campaign targeted high value travellers; adults aged 25 – 55, geo-fenced around key cities. The media tactics were Connected TV, digital radio, digital and social video, social, Pinterest and Destination Ontario planning content running from August 15 – September 25, 2023. With a media investment of $1.15M, Destination Ontario generated 124.4K incremental visitors and $49.1M in incremental expenditures resulting in an ROI of $1 : $51.64. Additionally, the campaign generated 15.4M completed video views with a video completion rate (VCR) of 71.2%. The prospecting tactics drove 621KM leads to the three partners at half the investment of the spring campaign. The ad tracking study showed that 49% of all respondents are planning to take an overnight trip to Ontario in the next 12 months – a 2% lift from the spring ad tracking. About 21% of respondents recalled seeing a campaign ad and 59% of all respondents searched for information on Ontario travel – a 45% lift in search from non-campaign recallers. Around

7 in 10 of those who took a trip or are planning to take a trip to Ontario this fall said that Ontario travel ads influenced their decision to book. Food and drink activities were the primary drivers for the trip followed by outdoors and visiting friends and family. For those who took a trip to Ontario, the average length of stay was 2.8 nights with spending being about $1.9K. The Toronto region was the most popular destination for both overnight and day trips, followed by the Niagara Region for day trips and Southwest Ontario for overnight trips - typically in groups of two. From the respondents that took a trip to Ontario, perceptions are quite positive - 98% rate their experience as good (31%) or very good (66%).

U.S. Market Plan – Fall Fly Campaign

Destination Ontario re-entered the high-value markets of Chicago and New York City with our key partners Destination Canada and Destination Toronto to encourage fall travel.

To best impact these competitive markets, Destination Ontario invested in a strong awareness campaign focused on two major media objectives:

- Build awareness of Ontario as a desirable travel destination
- Increase overnight travel intention for high yield New Yorkers & Chicagoans

The co-investment model with Destination Canada and Destination Toronto allowed Destination Ontario to align efforts and leverage shared dollars to maximize market impact. Destination Ontario invested $2.8M into these two key cities including a $500K investment from Destination Canada and $50K from Destination Toronto.

The campaign targeted high value travellers; adults aged 25 – 55, geo-fenced around key cities. The media strategy was built to raise positive destination awareness for a fall getaway to Ontario with Toronto as the gateway city. The media strategy included cinema (the launch of the ad was booked with the release of blockbuster hits Barbie and Oppenheimer), connected TV, digital and social video, high impact out-of-home and social prospecting ads to drive to Destination Ontario and Destination Toronto web planning content. The campaign ran from July 10 – August 31, 2023.

With a media investment of $2.8M, Destination Ontario generated 540K incremental visitors and $347M in incremental expenditures resulting in an ROI of $1 : $98.99. It should be noted that this is a very new ad tracking modelling and d in the new fiscal year, Destination Ontario will be working to add additional variables like border crossings and flight data to strengthen the forecasting and ad tracking modelling. Additionally, the campaign generated 1.9M cinema impressions, 3.5M out-of-home impressions, 42.7M completed video views with a video completion rate (VCR) of 71%. The prospecting tactics drove 884K sessions on Destination Ontario's web planning content and 456K leads to partner planning content. The ad tracking study showed that 44% of respondents are planning to take an overnight trip to Ontario in the next 12 months. About 25% of respondents recalled seeing a campaign ad, 63% of all respondents searched for information on Ontario travel – a 50% lift in search from non-campaign recallers. Around 33% of respondents say they have booked or are planning to book a trip as a result of seeing the ad campaign. A Zeta brand lift study showed that the campaign increased consideration for a fall trip to Ontario by 20% and decreased consideration for a fall trip to New York State by 22%. For those who took a trip to Ontario, the average stay was 3.3 nights with an average spend of $3.3K. Toronto was the most popular destination. About 50% of trip takers came as a party of two and the top three areas of spend for overnight trips are accommodations, airfare and food and drink experiences. From the respondents that took a trip to Ontario, perceptions are quite positive - 98% rate their experience as good (28%) or very good (70%).

International Marketing
International Marketing focussed its efforts on activities that drove strong awareness in a global competitive landscape. With the support of in-market representatives in the U.K., Germany, Japan and China, Destination Ontario used an integrated approach to inspire the global traveller and convert interest into travel bookings:

1. Business Development – Working closely with travel companies (tour operators, wholesalers, and travel agents) to increase awareness of the province and drive sales of Ontario's market-ready tourism products and experiences.

2. Media Relations and Public Relations – Working closely with media representatives (journalists, editors and influencers) to garner positive third-party editorial coverage to increase awareness of the province and inspire travel to Ontario.

3. Consumer Marketing – Promoting Ontario directly to consumers through digital and social tactics to drive awareness, consideration and travel intent for Ontario.

Destination Ontario's international markets of priority for 2023-24 were the U.K., Germany, France, Japan, China, South Korea, Mexico, and Australia; and Canada and the U.S. (Business Development, and Media Relations and Public Relations only).

Destination Ontario worked in partnership with Destination Canada to leverage the global recognition of the Canada brand and Destination Canada's investments and resources in key markets internationally while ensuring that Ontario is recognized as a renowned travel destination within Canada.

Business Development
Destination Ontario worked with the travel trade, including tour operators and travel planners who focus on packaging, promoting and selling leisure travel to escorted groups and individual travellers.

Rendez-vous Canada (RVC) 2023 returned to a fully in-person format and took place in Quebec City. Canada's annual international tourism marketplace, led by Destination Canada and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, is a forum through which international travel companies connect with Canada's trade-ready tourism industry partners through a series of business meetings and networking opportunities.

Destination Ontario ensured a strong presence for Ontario by conducting over 300 meetings with tour operators, airlines, and receptive tour operators to help inform and advance recovery strategies in order to rebuild visitation and expenditures to Ontario, including current market intelligence, travel trends, product updates and potential promotions through trade channels.

In addition to RVC, Destination Ontario participated in several tradeshows and sales missions to ensure a strong presence for Ontario and that the province is kept top-of-mind. Examples include:

- U.K., Germany and France: Showcase Canada (Destination Canada led)
- Australia: Focus Canada tradeshow and media event (Destination Canada led) and Helloworld road show (travel trade training, in partnership with Destination Canada)
- Japan and South Korea: Sales mission to Tokyo and Seoul (Destination Canada led)
- Mexico: Sales Mission to Mexico City and Monterrey (Destination Ontario led)
- China: Virtuoso on Tour and Destination Canada led sales calls/events in Southern China and Hong Kong (in-market representative participated)

Destination Ontario conducted a survey to gather feedback from partners who participated in Destination Ontario's sales mission to Mexico (November 20-24, 2023) to support future program success. All respondents reported benefits for their organization, such as fostering relationships and generating new business opportunities. Significantly, all respondents anticipated that the program would lead to new international visitation for their business or region. Partners highly valued the program, with 83% considering it extremely important as part of their travel trade strategy, and all expressing interest in future participation. As a result, Destination Ontario achieved an impressive Net Promoter Score of 83.3.

<u>International Trade Partnership Programs</u> (ITTPs)
ITPPs with targeted travel companies were delivered across our priority overseas markets, resulting in an additional 18.3K trips to Ontario being directly booked with trade company partners, generating over $38.4M in estimated incremental expenditures in Ontario. There were also 22 new products developed as a result of the ITPPs. Examples include:

- A trade partnership with a key Australian travel company increased awareness of Ontario through a variety of trade and consumer facing tactics, including prominent coverage in Australian Geographic. Destination Ontario's $18K investment was matched by the tour operator, resulting in 167 passengers booked, with estimated expenditures of more than $215K.

- A joint marketing promotion across two key markets, the U.K. and Germany, in partnership with Destination Toronto and Niagara Parks Commission and six key travel companies (three in each country) added the Niagara Parks Attractions Passport to their portfolio and encouraged new bookings to Ontario (Toronto, Niagara and other regions across Ontario). The promotion included out-of-hHome digital boards, digital advertising on high traffic lifestyle and news websites, social media posts, e-newsletters, digital radio and digital TV. The campaign concluded at the end of March 2024, and the final number of bookings as a result of this promotion are still being collected.

Brand Partnerships

In Germany, Destination Ontario undertook a non-traditional marketing partnership with Klingenberg, a furniture retailer in Hanover (brick and mortar and online) as well as manufacturer, for high end products, and America Unlimited. Klingenberg also rents furniture for marquee consumer events in Germany, like the Berlinale (film festival), and corporate events with well known car companies like Mercedes Benz, BMW, Volkswagen and Porsche, the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) Tennis events and Ritz-Carlton Hotels. They work with high end designers in the furniture industry and are soon opening new signature stores on the luxury island of Sylt as well as in Berlin. The company has a business sales volume of 20M Euros per year. As part of the Ontario promotion, some furniture pieces were branded Toronto and Ontario (lamp shades, outdoor pillows and hammocks) by Fatboy.

This gave us special exhibit space in the point of sale stores, and promotions across their website, on social media, the Klingenberg database and their customer magazine. This promotion was done in partnership with Destination Toronto and America Unlimited. This resulted in a total of 8.5M contacts in total. It is estimated that the campaign resulted in 182 passenger bookings, yielding estimated expenditures of $479K.

Familiarization (Fam) tours

Destination Ontario welcomed 217 travel trade partners on 19 familiarization tours from the U.K., Germany, France, Mexico, Australia, South Korea, and Japan, as well as the Netherlands (as a market of opportunity).

Travel Trade Training

Training continues to be a crucial method of increasing awareness among travel trade, which strengthens their ability to close the sale to consumers. Training is delivered in-person and virtually; more than 6.1K travel trade from our priority international markets were trained on Ontario products in 2023-24.

Media Relations and Public Relations

Destination Ontario continued to take a strategic and flexible approach (where needed) to media relations activities. Destination Ontario resumed traditional earned media activities like press trips and overseas events to keep Ontario top-of-mind as a beautiful and safe destination.

Monitoring the travel landscape and industry changes remains an ongoing part of Destination Ontario's planning, along with important partnerships with Provincial Marketing Organizations, DMOs and Destination Canada. As a contributing member of Destination Canada's Communications Working Group, Destination Ontario's earned media team collaborated on story telling, media pitches, themed content, creative assets, and media events to leverage the Canada brand and help Ontario stand out in today's extremely competitive market.

Media Events

Destination Ontario participated in several key media events to ensure a strong presence for Ontario. Highlights include:

- Travel Media Association of Canada (TMAC) Conference – In June 2023, Destination Ontario participated in the TMAC's annual conference in Sudbury, Ontario. The conference connects top Canadian travel/lifestyle media and travel destination/brands. It is comprised of networking sessions, professional development seminars, and the all-important one-to-one meeting appointment sessions. Destination Ontario met with 24 media representatives and was a key supporter of the event.

- Canada Connect – In March 2023, Destination Ontario participated in Destination Canada's "Canada Connect" virtual media event. The virtual event provided an opportunity for Canadian provincial partners to connect with more than 75 editors, writers, freelancers and producers in the U.K., Germany, and France. Destination Ontario successfully pitched Ontario story ideas and in-person familiarization/press trip opportunities.

- Showcase Canada – In November 2023, Destination Canada hosted its inaugural trade and media event for its three European markets. Showcase Canada was a comprehensive trade and media event. Destination Ontario's in-market representative attended the event and met with over 30 media representatives.

- International Media Marketplace (IMM) North America – In January 2024, Destination Ontario attended IMM North America connecting U.S. media and content creators with destination media relations representatives to exchange ideas for collaboration and pitch stories. Destination Ontario met with 24 media representatives.

- International Media Marketplace (IMM) London – In March 2024, Destination Ontario attended IMM London connecting U.K. media and content creators with destination media relations representatives to exchange ideas for collaboration and pitch stories. Destination Ontario met with 40 media representatives.

- International Media Marketplace (IMM) Germany – In March 2024, Destination Ontario attended IMM Germany connecting German media with destination media relations representatives to exchange ideas for collaboration and pitch stories. Destination Ontario met with 24 media representatives.

- In February 2024, Destination Ontario hosted an exclusive media event in Munich, Germany, targeting top tier outlets. Sixteen media representatives attended and the expectation is future media coverage stemming from noteworthy pitches and conversations at the event.

Print and Digital

Destination Ontario, with the support of in-market representatives, leveraged its strong relationships with print and digital media to ensure that Ontario remained top-of-mind through proactive pitches and responding to more than 120 queries from Canadian media alone.

Global earned media relations performance targets were exceeded, with an estimated Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE) of $58M. Achievements include:

- Ontario-based China influencer – Partnered with Hugo Kong, a Toronto-based Chinese Key Opinion Leader (KOL) (@旅游酒店控) with 10M followers on Weibo. The posts of his travels through Toronto, Niagara and Kingston in September showcased nature, luxury and unique accommodation and gourmet experiences in Ontario.
  Reach: 200M, AVE: $225K

- Pavone, Saison Express, Rurubu, Japan – Extensive Northern Ontario coverage ranging from Agawa Canyon Train to Wawa to Cochrane.
  Reach: 8M, AVE: $223K

- Toronto Star, Canada – Article on family fun and activities in St, Lawrence Parks Commission. Coverage was also picked up by the Peterborough Examiner, Niagara Falls Review and 11 other news outlets.
  Reach: 1.5M, AVE: $61K

- Vogue.com, U.S. – Destination Ontario's media relations team worked with partners resulting in a Toronto destination feature in this acclaimed outlet.
  Reach: 20.8M, AVE: $520K

- Forbes.com, U.S. – Destination Ontario's media relations team worked with a freelance writer and partners to facilitate a wellness story on Toronto
  Reach: 59.5M, AVE: $1.4M

- Germany – As a result of a press trip to Temagami and Haliburton, the writer published in 152 Germany daily newspapers, as well as in 88 online outlets.

  Combined Reach: 6.5M, AVE: $2.6M

- Germany – As a result of a press trip to Northern Ontario, the writer published a piece in Stern, a leading German publication. Story appeared both in print and online.
  Combined Reach: 14.8M, AVE: $1M

- The Telegraph, U.K. – Travel section cover feature on Muskoka, as a result of a Destination Ontario-led media fam trip in 2023.
  Reach: 32.2M, AVE: $120K

- Evening Standard, U.K. - Feature article on Toronto's culinary scene and MICHELIN 2023 announcement, as a result of a Destination Ontario-led media fam trip in 2023.
  Reach: 17.4M, AVE: $71K

- IDEAT, France – Feature article on Toronto in France's leading design magazine, as a result of a Destination Ontario-led media fam trip in 2023.
  Reach: 600K, AVE: $52K

- Food & Travel, Mexico – Feature article on Toronto's culinary scene and MICHELIN 2023 announcement, as a result of a Destination Ontario-led media fam trip in 2023.

Consumer Marketing

National Geographic – Voices of the Lakes Content Partnership

Destination Ontario partnered with National Geographic on a multi-market campaign to grow awareness of the province and stand out amongst competitors in key priority markets. The concept *Voices of the Lakes, Ontario's Waterkeepers*, invited international travellers to test the waters in Ontario through a compelling digital content experience positioning Ontario as the world's premier freshwater destination. DMO and association partners were engaged on the creative selection process including bodies of water, storytellers, personalities, and key messages to portray. The campaign targeted high value guests in the U.K., Germany, Australia, Mexico and France, and included a sponsored image gallery, article, long form video with cutdowns along with social posts and display banners.

The campaign ran from March to July 2023 and generated 84.9M impressions, 2.4M video views, 416K clicks, 534K engagements, 127.9K landing page views, and an average page dwell time of 4 minutes 31 seconds. Pre and post campaign studies were conducted across each market: 74% of respondents recalled seeing the campaign, 94% of respondents said they learnt something new about Ontario, 35% have researched Ontario since seeing the campaign, and 18% say they have started planning a trip to Ontario.

Spectacular Ontario – China social media campaign

Despite a slower recovery pace compared to other priority markets, Destination Ontario has remained active and present in the China market. This is important to maintain momentum from long term/historic investment in the country and to ensure the province is well positioned to capture back a significant share of potential visitors to Canada in the years ahead.

In addition to ongoing organic social media and website activities, Destination Ontario launched a digital campaign in 2023 called #spectacularontario to promote high quality customized video content. The goal of the campaign was to increase awareness of Ontario and increase followers and engagement on Destination Ontario's dedicated China social media accounts and website. Deliverables included: a four-themed series with 12 videos displayed on WeChat Channel, Weibo and website; promotion of each video through four interactive online activities as well as 12 warm up articles on WeChat Subscription Account, WeChat Channel and Weibo; a pre-recorded livestream on WeChat Channel and Weibo; and a Wechat Moments Ad campaign to help further amplify content. The 12-month campaign resulted in: 16.9M video and post views, 262K engagements with videos and related posts, and 71K new followers across Destination Ontario's owned social media channels.

<u>U.K. Fall Campaign – Partnership with Destination Canada</u>
Destination Ontario partnered with Destination Canada on a multi-channel summer/fall campaign in the U.K. targeting high value guests to drive interest and bookings for travel to Canada in summer/fall 2024. Destination Ontario was able to leverage audience pools who had engaged with Destination Canada's pan-Canada content, and retarget them with Ontario video awareness placements, driving directly to Destination Ontario owned channels. The video amplification campaign ran from mid-September through end of October 2023. Results included: 2.9M impressions, 2.1M video views, a 7.25% lift in the ad recall metric, and a 4.7% lift in the awareness metric (exceeding all targets and benchmarks).

Northern Marketing And Partnerships
Destination Ontario continued to work with northern partners and industry across Northern Ontario this fiscal year. Given the significant impact the U.S. border restrictions have had on Ontario's northern tourism industry, it was vital to continue investment and engagement with the return of American visitors, as well as encouraged domestic travellers aligned with northern access corridors. The agency continued to invest in Ontario's avid tourism industries of angling and hunting, powersports and touring and outdoor adventure. Additionally, Destination Ontario promoted the region as a unique destination to experience leisure outdoors, arts, culture, and heritage.

Overall, the northern portfolio levers targeted marketing tactics to connect with avid and passionate travellers with contextually relevant content. The overall results across avid portfolios generated:

- Supported 33 television media partnerships produced and broadcast – slightly under the target of 44 media partnerships due to budget constraints

- Created and optimized 191 stories for northernontario.travel and destinationontario.com that generated 2.5M page views and 463K leads to partners – slightly exceeding the target of 163 stories
- Created and supported 25 campaign and product tour videos generated over 10M views – exceeding the target of 16 videos sharing Northern Ontario content
- Hosted 57 product, creator and media tours through 79 partnerships resulting in 45 articles written, 24 videos with over 350K views to date
- Participated in six consumer shows with an estimated 115K attendance and over 4K in information package distribution

In 2023-24, there were 30 partnerships with a partner investment of $180K and collectively generated a net promotor score of 84%.

Angling And Hunting Program

Avid Angling and Hunting Media Program

Destination Ontario's Angling and Hunting program leveraged leading angling and hunting influencers in Ontario and the U.S. to ensure Ontario was kept top-of-mind for future avid travel. The program generated 33 television shows with an average of 237K viewers per show featuring 33 lodge and resort properties. Tracking is ongoing with the first 14 lodges reporting $493K in business, and additional reporting of revenue should be complete by mid-2023. Each show will be aired a minimum of twice before going into a re-run format and then posted online. The remaining shows and second airings will continue to generate further sales into the new year.

Content developed through the media partnerships also leverages their social channels and written content for the dedicated northern website. These efforts resulted in over 550 social posts with over 130K social engagements about Northern Ontario fishing and hunting experiences. New this year, Destination Ontario worked with a content creator with a younger demographic following as part of a growth strategy. This partnership rendered some encouraging results including 10 short and long-form videos generating 574K video views, 14K social engagements and 628 comments.

Part of Destination Ontario's marketing tactics include generating key avid content in partnership with Destination Northern Ontario's industry northern website. This year, Destination Ontario created 52 new angling and hunting articles and optimized over 600 articles as part of the website content migration. This content represents over 1K partners and avid experiences. For 2023-24, this content resulted in 253K web sessions, 297K page views and 23K leads to partners. These results were comparable to the 2022-23 results.

Destination Ontario continued supporting the GoFish and GoHunt social channels dedicated to an avid following. The channels saw over 860 posts this year with over 1.6M in reach, over 25.7K social engagements and drove 12K leads to partners. Facebook numbers showed growth in some areas, but organic numbers continue to be an issue as Facebook algorithms are soft on organic reach. Further strategic refinement on social engagement will be a priority in 2024-25.

Family Fishing Spring Campaign
As traditional avid anglers are slowly aging out of the sport, Destination Ontario has implemented a marketing program to help contribute to ensuring the sustainability of the angling industry in Ontario. The digital marketing program is focused on promoting family travel activities anchored at fishing lodges and resorts targeting Ontario, Manitoba and key U.S. border states. Destination Ontario worked with Destination Northern Ontario (DNO) and the four sub-regions in Northern Ontario. The campaign was in market from May 23 – June 23 with a media strategy focused on prospecting tactics to drive consumers to regional planning content. With an investment of $198.1K, key results included 42M impressions, a cost-per-click of $0.29, 4.4M completed video views and 587K leads to partners.

Fly Fishing Campaign
Fly fishing is a niche angling product that saw a surge of interest during the COVID-19 pandemic. This sport is heavily skills-based, and the anglers tend to be much younger than the traditional avid gear angler. Destination Ontario targeted fly anglers to travel North during the fall shoulder season – the ideal time of year for fish to be feeding at the surface to the water. Target markets included Southern Ontario, targeting 35 – 64-year-olds in both French and English. Destination Ontario prioritized urban centres with active fly fishing clubs.

This campaign was in-market from August 1 – September 5, 2023 targeting Ontario and U.S. border states. With an investment of $180K, the media strategy allocated a small investment to destination awareness and most of the media investment was allocated to prospecting media tactics. The campaign leveraged a 15-second video, social and digital ads driving to Destination Ontario's web content and direct to partners. Results for this program included 41M impressions, 158K completed videos views and 639K leads to partners.

Avid Angling Campaign
Destination Ontario has continued to build on the success of this program over the last three years. In 2023-24, Destination Ontario secured financial partnerships with Sunset Country and Destination Northern Ontario (RTO13) which increased the overall budget of the program. The marketing program drove directly to the sub-regional partner websites which showcased lodges and operators in respective catchment areas. This campaign targeted the avid gear angler in Southern Ontario, Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota, Illinois and Wisconsin. The targeted demographic was adults 35-65 with an affinity for angling and hunting. The media buy focused solely on prospecting media tactics to drive as much traffic as possible to partner planning content at this critical booking season period. The campaign ran from January 8 – March 17, 2024.

The campaign's $317K media investment resulted in 109M impressions, a cost-per-click of $0.17, and 1.6M leads to partner websites – overdelivering on the target by 14%. This program had two partners contributing $40K in media investment.

Powersports And Touring Program

Snowmobile Campaign
Snowmobiling in Ontario is a premier experience with over 30,000 kilometres of maintained trails across the province. Destination Ontario intended to run a two-phased snowmobile campaign in 2023-24 with the first phase focusing on purchasing the early bird snowmobile trail permits from the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) and a second phase dedicated to encouraging snowmobilers to book a vacation during winter 2024. Unfortunately, due to the unseasonably warm winter coupled with very limited snow, most trails were closed or opened quite late in the season. Due to the weather, phase two was not able to proceed as planned.

Phase one of the campaign focused on the Ontario market and ran from October 16 – November 30, 2023. The campaign encouraged riders to buy the early bird permit and start planning for winter using digital and social traffic driving ads. With a media investment of about $100K, Destination Ontario was able to generate over 25.7M impressions and 38K leads directly to the OFSC snowmobile permit purchase page**.**

Motorcycle Campaign
Destination Ontario re-entered the motorcycle market with a dedicated campaign this year. The primary objective was to encourage U.S. motorcycle riders to plan a ride to Northern Ontario in summer, and to increase travel intent for U.S. motorcycle riders to consider Ontario for their next trip. Target markets included U.S. border states, targeting 35 – 64-year-olds with an affinity to ride.

This campaign was in-market from February 20 – March 20, 2024 to capitalize on the spring/summer booking season. With an investment of $292K, the media strategy balanced positive destination awareness assets with prospecting investment driving directly to the four Northern sub-regions, Ontario's Highlands (RTO11) and Explorers' Edge (RTO12). The campaign leveraged a 15-second video, social and digital traffic driving ads driving to partner content, Destination Ontario's web planning content and direct to partners. Results for this program included 55M impressions, 6.6M completed videos views, a cost-per-click of $0.26 and 639K leads to partners.

Avid Powersports and Touring Display Ad Campaign
Destination Ontario works with a few niche online media outlets to target powersports avid enthusiasts (snowmobiling, motorcycling, RVing, boating and ATVing). The display and content partnership generated 17 new powersports stories on these highly read media sites, 9.6M impressions and 211K pageviews.

Avid Powersports and Touring Content Acquisition and Distribution

Destination Ontario's Powersports Touring program represents motorcycle, snowmobile, all-terrain vehicles (ATV), boating and recreational vehicle (RV) touring. This program has successfully focused on the development of online content and social engagement. In 2023-24, 50 stories were published (on NorthernOntario.travel), and 40 resource articles were updated, resulting in 1.13M page views to the powersports areas on the Northern website (boat, RV, motorcycle, snowmobile, and ATV sub-portals). The output of these visits resulted in 237K leads to partners – a conversion rate of 21%. This exceeds last year's results of 180K leads to partners with a 14% conversion rate.

Seven media and influencer and content acquisition fam tours took place, and 8 partnered co-operative media fam tours (2 postponed due to weather) were completed with 11 partners, including RTOs, DMOs and operators. The reach of all campaign elements was an audience of over 1.3M riders with social engagement of over 150K, and over 400K digital video views.

Outdoor Adventure Program

The Outdoor Adventure program effectively promoted fully outfitted, guided and/or lodge-based paddling, bicycling and trail experiences through a content-based strategy. Through the development of quality content, social media engagement, an influencer program, and Ontario product tours, Destination Ontario targeted consumers that will grow visitor volume and expenditures from priority markets.

Through Destination Ontario campaigns, the program generated results in qualified leads focused on overnight guided, fully outfitted and/or lodge-based adventures. Further, the program generated leads directly to Destination Ontario, partners and/or operator websites, phone enquiries, use of trip planning tools, and other channels that demonstrated an intent to book in the future.

Ontario Market Plan – Seasonal Northern Outdoor Collaboration

To complement the overall Ontario Market Plan, the outdoor adventure program was part of the seasonal Ontario market campaigns.

Integrated into the Ontario Market Plan, Northern outdoor content was featured through digital channels in spring/summer, fall and winter spotlights, which resulted in 45.4M impressions, 638K sessions on outdoor planning content and 42.5K leads to partners. Each season featured a mix of articles created to highlight avid outdoor experiences and operators across Northern Ontario.

U.S. Paddling Campaign

Destination Ontario invited U.S. paddlers to visit Ontario to experience the premier paddling destinations Ontario has to offer. This campaign focused on awareness media and encouraged U.S. avid paddlers to book their paddling adventure in Ontario.

Building on the paddling campaign from winter 2023, the campaign also expanded to include cycling due to its organic growth in popularity. A mix of prospecting and awareness ads were promoted to a U.S. audience from February 20 – March 20, 2024. Previous campaigns showed that the in-market dates were a little early, so to right size the campaign timing, this campaign is focused on destination awareness for phase one in Q4 and phase two driving leads to partner planning content will go to market early in Q1 of the new fiscal year. Phase one results include 22M impressions, 10.5M completed video views and 1K leads to partners.

Outdoor Adventure Content Development
On NorthernOntario.travel, the outdoor adventures, paddling, and bicycling pages published 23 resource articles, 22 new story articles, as well as updating 57 top-performing articles and writing five new articles for DestinationOntario.com. The outdoor sub-portal on NorthernOntario.travel had over 1.3M page visits. These results generated an output of over 228K leads to operators, which is an increase from the 164K leads in 2022-23. The outdoor program, working with the content team, was able to create 10 new outdoor pieces of content for destinationontario.com to continue to fill in gaps of outdoor content.

Outdoor Adventure Fam Program
The outdoor program completed 15 fam tours and influencer programs which spanned across RTO12 and RTO13. The outdoor program worked alongside 10 partners resulting in 21 trip planning articles and 7 videos highlighting Northern Ontario outdoor content. The fam tours included a variety of avid outdoor experiences such as epic guided paddling adventures in Wabakimi, Pilot Annie flying into Killarney, discovering unforgettable hikes, paddling several routes along Lake Superior and discovering Haliburton County as a winter destination highlighting ice climbing, skiing and dogsledding.

Leisure, Indigenous, Arts and Culture Experiences
Northern Ontario offers many Indigenous experiences and this year, a cross-function Destination Ontario team worked together to co-collaborate with Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO) to deliver on priorities, learnings and content acquisition gained through the agency's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ITO, and further amplify Indigenous experiences, businesses and operators. This year, the MOU deliverables focused on content creation to secure needed assets, video and photography. Together, the teams captured footage across four dedicated shoots capturing Indigenous businesses and experiences in Ottawa, Sault Ste. Marie, Little Native Hockey League and profiles from the SKODE program. These assets will help to market Indigenous businesses and experiences into the new fiscal year and beyond.

Destination Ontario also continued to build on engaging an art lover target with the distinct Group of Seven art experience. Destination Ontario partnered with DNO and Northeastern Ontario Tourism, Sudbury Tourism, Algoma Country, Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, the Ottawa Art Gallery and the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, on a spring Group of Seven campaign. This campaign connected the art consumers see on the wall in galleries to the actual landscapes that inspired the art. This campaign was in-market from June 5 – July 8, 2023 targeting the Ontario market. With an investment of $208K (including $60K of partner investment), the media strategy was split between awareness and prospecting media tactics. The campaign leveraged a 15-second video, social and digital ads driving to Destination Ontario's web content and direct to partners. Results for this program included 46M impressions, 2.9M completed videos views and 541K leads to partners.

Website Reporting and Operations
To improve the visitor experience, Destination Ontario conducted user experience testing on sitewide components to inform new interface improvements for 2024-25. Destination Ontario also kept a focus on accessibility performing user testing with visitors who relied on assistive devices, ensuring non-visible navigation was more user-friendly. As a result of various user experience improvements, Destination Ontario has seen its System Usability Score improve from 67 in the previous fiscal year to 79.

Destination Ontario newly published or refreshed 439 articles in 2023-24, up 64% from the previous fiscal year, to provide visitors with more content on tourism in Ontario.

The website continues to be a reliable source of non-paid leads for tourism partners and operators with 4.3Mn non-paid sessions and delivering over 1M million non-paid leads in 2023-24.

Destination Ontario continued to build on the success of taking ownership over its own marketing and technology stack, with 2023-24's focus being on data automation, where Destination Ontario successfully streamlined core data-related processes, eliminating manual tasks, which reduced errors and increased unit efficiency.

Social Strategy
Destination Ontario's social channels, play an essential role in the agency's integrated marketing strategy. Social platforms allow us to connect with customers, increase awareness about the brand, and boost leads to interest to Ontario's tourism industry.

The primary objectives of the organic social media program are:

1. Community growth: which is the overall increase of followers on owned Destination Ontario social channels
2. Advocacy actions: which are reflective of the engagement with Destination Ontario's social content in the form of sharing, saving, likes, applauses, or amplifications.

Both of these objectives are top of mind with everything the team does and for the 2023-24 year the results were as follows:

- Over 75K in new community growth, but paced about 20% less than 2022-23 due to shifts in organic algorithms, pay to play and rise of curated "for you" pages

- Over 1K social posts resulting in 451K post reactions – a 7.6% increase from 2022-23
- Over 153K link clicks – a 120% increase from 2022-23 as more trip planning article content is incorporated into social strategy
- Posted over 500 videos with 10M reel plays – part of a new strategy for social strategy this year
- Fielded 19K inbound messages – a 15% decrease from 2022-23 as we see more domestic travellers returning to pre-pandemic travel patterns
- 250 Destination Ontario content pieces promoted
- 170 partner articles shared

A foundational part of the 2023-24 success of Destination Ontario's social content strategy was the dedicated content creator program. The program launched this year with a focus on Ontario-based creators. The program strategically aligned with Destination Ontario's partnerable Ontario Market plan program, supporting partner destinations and products across the spring, fall and winter seasons. These efforts fueled 13 content creator partnerships profiling 13 different destinations across the province. Destination Ontario's 2024-25 strategies will build upon the success of this program and expand the strategic focus into the U.S. and Quebec markets.

Additionally, Destination Ontario's social channels operate a foundational tool to advocate for and share tourism partner content. Fueled by Destination Ontario's content intake process, the agency's social channels actively promote and coordinate with Ontario's tourism stakeholders.

Research And Data

Destination Ontario had a dual focus in 2023-24 as it relates to research and data. The first was a testing strategy for marketing campaigns with the aim of optimizing marketing efforts, maximizing ROI and better understanding target markets.

The internal performance team conducted three experiments testing campaign elements, such as messaging, imagery, call-to-action prompts, and channel selection. Testing allowed Destination Ontario to allocate its marketing budget more effectively, ensuring that resources are invested in the most cost-effective components of a campaign. In all instances, this led to higher conversion rates and lower acquisition costs with the learnings repeatable on future campaigns. In some cases, the results were shared with partners and operators who replicated the optimizations within their own marketing campaigns, further extending the benefit. The results allowed the organization to create benchmarks for specific campaign types and channels, which can be used to identify areas of improvement going forward.

The second objective was to develop an actionable research program that focused on helping Destination Ontario and its partners and operators make informed decisions and tailor their marketing efforts to meet the needs of their target audiences. The program provided both insights as well as performance measures.

The following research products and reports were produced in 2023-24.

<u>Marketing Campaign Reports</u>
Data Studio, Google’s data visualization tools, allows for real-time and weekly updated performance dashboards and visualizations to monitor campaign progress and identify opportunities for mid-campaign media and web optimizations. It creates tailored campaign reporting for external stakeholders and partners aligned to partnered campaigns, along with a visualization of executive reporting on organizational priorities and program areas, supported by over 70 partner dashboards that were created.

<u>Ontario Tourism Industry Health Check</u>
The team collected data from reputable research and industry sources, including Statistics Canada and CBRE. This data was used to create in-depth insight reports that were continuously updated as the restrictions were lifted. These critical insights were regularly communicated to stakeholders to provide a current understanding of the recovery process from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

International Marketing Research
To drive informed decision-making and effective international marketing, Destination Ontario led the development of several research products and reports in 2023-24 that yielded valuable insights to shape international marketing strategies. Context Research Group was utilized for several of the activities, along with working with other tourism research partners including Destination Canada.

<u>Mexico Creative Testing Research</u>
Destination Ontario conducted creative testing among Mexican high-value guests. This research identified the activities and experiences that resonate most with this target market to inform strategies to drive higher engagement, conversion rates, and ROI.

Testing revealed that 'Niagara Falls' and 'Fine Dining' ads performed best, with 93% and 88% of respondents, respectively, considering a trip to Ontario after seeing the ads. Mexican high-value guests prioritized sightseeing natural landscapes, arts and museum visits, culinary experiences, and urban exploration in Ontario. Niagara Falls-related experiences were the most attractive activities. Respondents indicated a high interest in travelling to Toronto, Niagara Falls, and Ottawa.

<u>U.K. and Germany Ad Testing Research</u>
Destination Ontario conducted creative testing among U.K. and German high-value guests who have friends or family in Ontario. This research aimed to assess the potential re-implementation of the ‘Discover Together’ campaign, which (initially launched in 2021) targeted friends and family of expats from the U.K. and Germany living in Ontario.

Findings indicated that the ‘Discover Together’ ads resonated with viewers, with 83% finding the activities relevant and 79% agreeing the messaging connected with them. The ads made a considerable impression, with 75% of viewers indicating the ad would stand out to them if they saw it on social media today. Over four in five respondents would consider a trip to Ontario after seeing the ad. Among this group, over half of them said they would take the trip this year (2024), especially during the summer. Future consideration of utilizing this campaign concept again and expanding to new markets is underway.

Mexico Visa Requirement Pulse Study

To understand how recent visa requirement changes in Canada impact Mexican high-value guests, Destination Ontario undertook a pulse study to help inform marketing strategies for Mexico. Destination Ontario shared the results with Federal/Provincial/Territorial and regional tourism research and travel trade partners.

The study revealed that 78% of Mexican high-value guests already possess a U.S. visa or have held a Canadian visa in the past decade, indicating a readily mobile travel group that may not need to apply for a visa to travel by air to Canada. However, the results suggest the new visa policies had some influence on Mexican high-value guests' perception of Ontario as a pleasure travel destination, and that Mexican residents are less likely to view Canada as welcoming. Notably, over 60% of those planning a trip to Ontario or Canada remained committed, even with visa requirements.

Overseas ROI Forecasting Model

Destination Ontario commissioned the development of an Overseas ROI Forecasting Model, launching in early 2024-25. This tool will predict the returns of marketing investments in overseas markets, including the projected ROI, the number of visits in Ontario, visitor spending in Ontario, and social media metrics. The model will allow Destination Ontario to forecast the economic impacts in Ontario from the projected visitor spending from the investment.

The model will support Destination Ontario to forecast performance for any campaign, enabling informed investment decisions. The tool will support strategic planning, budgeting, corporate reporting, and performance measurement.

Overseas Market Profiles

Destination Ontario published overseas market profiles on its corporate website, offering insights about visitors from Ontario’s key overseas markets for industry stakeholders’ reference. These profiles contain information about visits, visitor spending, economic impact, and trip characteristics by market (Australia, China, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, and the U.K.).

Tourism Research Partnerships

Beyond generating its own research products, Destination Ontario’s International Marketing team also prioritizes collaboration and data-sharing with tourism research partners to advance the competitiveness of the tourism sector in Ontario and Canada.

Canadian Tourism Data Collective

Destination Ontario supported Destination Canada's Canadian Tourism Data Collective through a premier-tier subscription. The partnership grants Destination Ontario with access to robust and actionable tourism data, market intelligence, and industry analysis, and fosters collaboration across the sector by supporting the launch of a new, centralized platform for tourism research and data in Canada. This platform offers a free, public access option for industry stakeholders.

Visitor Travel Survey

Destination Ontario supported Statistics Canada to conduct the Visitor Travel Survey of international travellers in Canada. The Visitor Travel Survey is a primary source of information about the impact of international tourism in Ontario, and the data are critical for targeting the appropriate markets, measuring recovery from the pandemic, setting goals, and informing strategy development. Survey results are published for free access to support Ontario’s tourism industry.

Collaboration through Working Groups and Associations

Destination Ontario actively participated in several working groups to cooperate on national tourism research projects, support the development of tourism research in Ontario and Canada and a common approach, and share information and knowledge. These groups included Destination Canada’s Segmentation Advisory Committee, the Tourism Research Partners Forum, and the National Destination Development Working Group. Additionally, Destination Ontario accepted an invitation to join Destination Canada’s new Research Advisory Committee. The core mandate of the Research Advisory Committee is to provide strategic advice and counsel that guides Destination Canada’s data and analytics function and initiatives. Destination Ontario also joined the Travel and Tourism Research Association.

Partner Feedback and International Marketing Program Performance

Destination Ontario invited partners to participate in a survey to gather feedback on their experience with Destination Ontario’s International Marketing Program in 2023-24. This included involvement in Destination Ontario’s international marketing activities and tactics such as trade and media fam tours, sales missions, consumer marketing partnerships, and participation with Destination Ontario’s International Marketing team in partner-led events and trade shows, such as RVC and Canada Showcases. The survey aimed to calculate program participation, partner investment, performance and satisfaction levels, and inform strategic planning.

Overall, there were 87 partners (representing 81 organizations) that participated in Destination Ontario’s International Marketing Program in 2023-24.

Most partners that responded to the survey highlighted the expertise, value, and successful collaborations delivered by Destination Ontario’s International Marketing team, fostering industry connections and driving business growth. Destination Ontario’s International Marketing Program achieved an impressive Net Promoter Score of 68.0, indicating strong overall satisfaction among partners. Nearly all respondents expressed satisfaction with their overall experience with Destination Ontario's International

Marketing Program (96%) and felt the program effectively met their business needs (96%). 100% of respondents intend to participate in future activities.

Creative Services

Destination Ontario's Creative Services team plays a pivotal role within the organization, operating as a specialized unit under the marketing department. The team functions as a central hub for creative production, asset capture, and digital asset management , ensuring the seamless execution of promotional efforts in support of Ontario's tourism industry. The team's key functions in relation to our 2023-24 plans are as follows.

Creative Production

- Internal Organizational Support: The team provided essential support to various departments within Destination Ontario, catering to their diverse creative needs. This included crafting social content, promotional videos, print materials, posters, conference backdrops, and other collateral required for the operations success of our travel information centers, international marketing efforts, social activity, and corporate services teams.

- Campaign Ad Units & Videos: The team supported campaign work through designing and producing compelling ad units and videos that effectively communicated Ontario's tourism offerings, contributing to the success of marketing campaigns and promotional efforts across Ontario, Canada, the U.S., and international markets.

- Key 2023-24 Impact: Creative production through outside agencies can become costly. With this dedicated creative production ability comes significant cost savings across a diverse portfolio of creative work.

Asset Capture:

- Supporting Industry Partners: The team facilitated, coordinated, and executed creative partnerships with the Ontario tourism industry. This involved conducting photography and video shoots to capture captivating visuals showcasing the beauty and attractions of the region. Key partnerships included a dedicated partnership with ITO delivering shoots across 6+ key locations across the province, as well as 14 independent partnered photo & video productions with destination partners across the province.

- Photography and Video Shoots: In addition to the partnership activity, Destination Ontario also undertook standalone creative productions, based on an internal gap-analysis, that ensured the ability to adequately showcase key seasonal tourism product and destinations.

- Key 2023-24 Impact: By organizing and conducting professional shoots, the team ensures a steady supply of high-quality visual content that can be utilized across various marketing channels to attract tourists and visitors.

Digital Asset Management (DAM):

- Maintaining the DAM System: Destination Ontario's Creative Services Team maintained a robust DAM system. This system serves as a centralized repository for all creative assets related to Ontario tourism.

- Industry Accessibility: The DAM system is accessible to the broader domestic and international travel industry, enabling stakeholders to easily access and utilize Ontario's tourism assets for their promotional activities.

- Key 2023-24 Impact: Through Destination Ontario's DAM system, we're able to share over 8.2K rights-free high-quality images and video that are available to domestic and international travel stakeholders. By ensuring easy access to a vast collection of high-quality visuals and other creative assets, the team facilitates the promotion of tourism to and within Ontario, contributing to the growth of the industry.

Strategic Engagement and Communications

Industry Relations

Destination Ontario continued to collaborate with stakeholders from across the tourism industry to increase tourism visitation and spend in Ontario. In 2023-24, Destination Ontario engaged with partners across several opportunities, through Destination Ontario-led programs, as well as partner-led programs. All partnerships leveraged resources and investments with the goal of supporting stakeholders and growing tourism in Ontario.

The agency supported program areas of the organization by bringing partners from across Ontario to learn about and find opportunities for collaboration, whether it was through marketing opportunities, broadcast partnerships, creative service partnerships, northern partnerships, media relations or travel information services.

Staff attended a broad range of events to maintain and strengthen relationships, stay up to date on products and experiences, share information about Destination Ontario programs and activities, and discuss ways to support industry stakeholders. Meetings and events included:

- Ontario Tourism Summit
- Northern Ontario Tourism Summit
- RTO, DMO and Sector Association annual general meetings, conferences, and industry events.

Destination Ontario continued to streamline and fuel its content marketing efforts by encouraging partners to complete online content intake forms. These submissions are vital to stay abreast of the latest and greatest tourism offerings and feed into our 'AlwaysON' channels, including organic and paid media, media relations and broadcast activities, trade itineraries, business development training, and recommendations provided by our travel counsellors and contact centre staff.

Destination Ontario also continued to share its regular ‘Tourism Industry Health Check’ research reports to help support the industry in their business and marketing decisions.

Annual Partnerships
Destination Ontario continued to partner with Festivals and Events Ontario (FEO), Attractions Ontario (AO), Resorts of Ontario (ROO), Culinary Tourism Alliance (CTA) and the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) to support their marketing activities and programs and in turn benefit the members and tourism businesses that these organizations serve.

MICHELIN Guide
Destination Ontario continued to support this exciting initiative that was launched in collaboration with Destination Toronto and Destination Canada in 2022 with the first-ever Canadian MICHELIN Guide released in Toronto.

The launch of the MICHELIN Guide Toronto continues to rejuvenate and celebrate the renowned and diverse culinary scene in Toronto. In 2023, the second edition of the MICHELIN Guide Toronto was announced at the MICHELIN Guide Ceremony and awarded Stars to 15 restaurants. The 2023 selection was comprised of 82 restaurants (an increase from 74 in 2022) and 28 types of cuisine.

Four special awards were designated: Exceptional Cocktails Award, Outstanding Service Award, Sommelier Award and new in 2023, the Young Chef Award.

The Toronto event received substantial exposure from local Canadian media outlets and pages, a testament to its relevance and appeal within the region. Destination Ontario was present in 28% of the live video from the MICHELIN Guide. Along with mentions in articles as partner of the event and influencer posts.

With a total of 88 pieces of content, influencers achieved 565K impressions. The predominant form of content shared by influencers were stories, with 81 stories posted; 42% of the stories and posts featured visibility of partners.

The global reach of social and press coverage for the MICHELIN Guide in Toronto combined amounted to 300M people.

Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO)
2023 marked the second year of Destination Ontario’s MOU with ITO. The MOU outlines specific areas for communication, marketing, and mentorship collaboration, with a goal to strengthen the Indigenous tourism industry across Ontario.

Through the MOU, Destination Ontario continued to support ITO’s marketing efforts through dedicated in-house support to promote Indigenous tourism products and experiences. The MOU is in place until March 31, 2027, at which time it will be reviewed for new goals and objectives.

Partnerships with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming and Government Agencies

Destination Ontario collaborated with the following MTCG and government agencies to help support joint tourism efforts:

- The Destination Ontario content team worked with other areas within the organization and directly with agency partners to find out about agency experiences and products, ask questions and fact-check information regarding content and images for DestinationOntario.com.
- Destination Ontario's social media team regularly highlighted and generated engagement of agency attractions and experiences through its network of social channels.
- Destination Ontario's Broadcast Program promoted six agencies and attractions during 12 broadcasts, garnering positive media coverage on television and radio in the Canada and U.S. markets. Agencies and attractions promoted included: Niagara Parks, Royal Botanical Gardens, Science North, Huronia Historical Parks, St. Lawrence Parks Commission and Ontario Place.
- Through the Ontario Travel Information Services team, roaming services were provided during the summer months at a St. Lawrence Parks Commission attraction, Kingston Penitentiary. The Niagara Parks Commission also partnered with Destination Ontario for a ticket sales opportunity.

Corporate Communications

In 2023-24, Destination Ontario reaffirmed its commitment to corporate communications with the goal to enhance the agency's identity and become a respected champion of tourism marketing in Ontario.

A full-time dedicated Corporate Communications Manager was hired to implement Destination Ontario's corporate communications plan to:

- Focus on industry stakeholders as the primary target audience.
- Strengthen communications and engagement by providing stakeholders with timely, relevant, and valuable information for their business.
- Enhance Destination Ontario's brand awareness and generate positive reception from the industry with various communications tactics, including traditional and social media, speaking engagements, event participation, corporate newsletter and leveraging government/industry partners.

Destination Ontario's Strategic Playbook 2024-27 and plans to mark Destination Ontario's 25th anniversary were underway in 2023-24.

Additional corporate documents include Destination Ontario's annual Business Plans and Annual Reports, which are posted publicly on the agency's corporate website at destinationontario.com/corporate.

Broadcast Program

Destination Ontario's broadcast program saw continued growth, reaching a record number of on-location broadcasts promoting Ontario attractions, experiences and overnight stays.

The program continued to build strong relationships with television and radio stations while expanding into the U.S. market in targeted border states, resulting in 4.7K broadcast minutes promoting 435 industry partners with an AVE of $27.8M and a reach of 387.6M in both Canada and the U.S. markets.

Achievements include:

- Summer Campaign – Coordinated 36 radio and television broadcasts across nine RTOs promoting summer Ontario attractions and experiences, including a kick-off to summer in Muskoka with CP24 at JW Muskoka The Rosseau, Breakfast Television in Gravenhurst/Bracebridge and 6 Corus radio stations at Deerhurst Resort. US broadcasts include a full episode of New Day Cleveland in Toronto and 8 radio segments promoting the Blue Mountains on Kiss 98.5 Buffalo.
  Reach: 141M, AVE: $15.6M

- Fall Campaign – Coordinated 22 radio and television broadcasts across 2 RTOs promoting ways to enjoy the fall season in Ontario, including Destination Ontario's first on-location U.S. radio junket where 5 morning shows from Ohio and Michigan broadcasted live from Windsor.
  Reach: 38.5M, AVE: $1.6M

- Winter/Spring Campaign – Coordinated 50 broadcasts across 5 RTOs promoting winter activities and destinations in Ontario, including 4 U.S. television and radio broadcasts promoting Niagara Falls, Toronto, and the Blue Mountains. NBC's Hollywood reached a national U.S. audience.
  Reach: 208M, AVE: $10.4M

Corporate Services and Operations

Ontario Travel Information Services

Destination Ontario's OTIS team provides various visitor information channels for all tourists – whether they be international, U.S., domestic, regional or local – to receive travel and trip planning advice and information on itineraries, destinations, attractions, and experiences across Ontario. Travel Counsellors continue to use a visitor care approach to provide visitor information services and deliver engaging and exceptional customer service through personalized trip and itinerary planning. Extending beyond the traditional bricks and mortar of the travel information centres, services are provided across different delivery channels with a view to extending visitor stay and spend, drive bookings and influence travel purchases and decisions.

Modernized Visitor Information Services

The OTIS team continued to expand and enhance its service delivery models to adapt to visitors changing travel patterns and information needs. Travel Counsellors provided curated, personalized visitor information services in-person at OTICs and roaming at major attractions, tourist locations, festivals and events as well as over the phone, virtually by video conference and by email.

Visitor Health Score (VHS) and Trips Planned

OTIS continued to measure and track the VHS[1], introduced in 2021-22, across all service delivery channels. The VHS reflects the quality-of-service visitors receive across all service delivery channels. It aggregates the Net Promoter Score (NPS), Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) and Service Level (SL). [2]In 2023-24 OTIS service channels collectively achieved a VHS score of 93, an NPS of 90, CSAT of 99 and SL of 86, all out of 100 and Travel Counsellors were able to counsel a total of 113,026 parties through its service delivery channels (in-centre, roaming, by phone, virtually and by email) and create a total of 37.6K Trips Planned. The Trips Planned metric was introduced last fiscal year and is defined as the number of travel-related consumer interactions across all OTIS channels, including new activity, a trip planned and/or itinerary developed, an enhancement or increase to an existing travel plan or itinerary or a booking is made that results in incremental visitor spend.

Ontario Travel Information Centres (OTICs)

In fiscal 2023-24, the OTICs operated with varying schedules and days of operation based on the ever-changing travel demands of the public and available staff resourcing. Some maintained reduced days and hours of operation to meet the slower travel demand and focus on supporting roaming activities, email, virtual travel counselling and the 1-800-ONTARIO tourism line. The digital display screens were refreshed and updated at most of the OTICs which allowed Destination Ontario and partner content to be showcased to visitors.

"I have used this service many, many times over the years for different things. Always friendly and very knowledgeable.!"

1-800-ONTARIO toll free tourism phone line

OTIS staff continued to service English and French calls to the 1-800-ONTARIO line 7 days a week, from 9 am to 5 pm. In 2023-24, a total of 5,037 callers were travel counselled. Travel Counsellors answered questions on trip planning, outdoor activities, shopping and attractions as well as food and wine experiences. Many times, follow up information was sent by email to callers. CSAT, NPC and SL in this channel all scored 100% almost across the board.

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[1] Visitor Health Score (VHS) reflects the quality-of-service visitors receive. VHS is comprised of NPS 40%, CSAT 40% and SL 20%

[2] NPS is an industry measure of how likely a customer would promote our service. Target score across all channels is 80%. CSAT is an industry measure of how satisfied a customer was with the service they received. Target score across all channels is 77%. SL is a measure of how quickly visitors receive responses to their inquiries. Target score for SL is 80% across all channels.

"The knowledge and customer service was 10 out of 10."

Consumer Email Address
OTIS staff continued to respond to both English and French travel email inquiries from consumers 7 days a week from 9 am to 5 pm. The NPS for email increased to 88% as a result of improvements in service enabled by the customer care tool, Zendesk. The average response time to a consumer email is less than 2.5 hours. Customer satisfaction scored 100%, and service wait time 98% out of 100.

"Wow! I can't believe a same day response to a late Friday afternoon inquiry. Given my experience with US visitor guide services, I did not expect a reply for some time which is why I contacted you while I was just thinking about my proposed trip. Now I have to begin more serious planning for a late summer or fall trip. THANK YOU."

Virtual Travel Counselling (VTC) Services
OTIS continued to ensure the availability of evening and weekend appointments to better serve consumers. In 2023-24, OTIS staff conducted a total of 145 virtual travel counselling sessions, with 99% ending in Trips Planned. The CSAT in this channel was 100%, and NPS 86%. Note that wait time service level scores are not tracked as appointments are pre-booked for all sessions.

"Very professional, yet friendly session. Our counsellor was patient, answered all my questions and was willing to go the extra mile to meet our special needs - pet friendly arrangements etc., They were also prompt in following up on email."

Roaming Ambassadors Travel Information Services Program
The roaming ambassadors travel information services program, where staff worked on site at partners' attractions and events with mobile vehicles (gazebos, tents and tricycles) and provided on the spot information services to visitors through the sharing of digital resources from tablets and limited printed material grew and expanded in 2023-24. OTIS had a presence at 54 different festivals, events and high traffic locations across Ontario and a 725% increase in visitors engaged over the same period in the previous year.

A few of the new partners included Tourism Barrie, Parks Canada and Tourism Sarnia Lambton. A total of 37,368 visitors spoke to a travel counsellor and 28% of interactions resulted in a trip planned.

"Outstanding customer service! The Travel Counsellor showed excellent intelligence when directing me to the best attractions to find in amazing Cornwall!"

Digital Tools
To support the modernization and digitization of visitor information services, OTIS incorporated a number of digital tools including Travefy and OpenAI resulting in improved, quicker service to consumers and efficiencies in decreasing the amount of time required to research and build itineraries, among other things. In addition, OTIS

integrated additional service delivery channels (email and phone) into ZenDesk, the customer care tool to facilitate one-window collection of data and improved reporting/dashboards.

Visitor Information Services (VIS) Network
In 2023-24, OTIS established a network with its provincial visitor information services colleagues and municipally operated visitor centres to build on the connections established during the pandemic. OTIS deployed a survey to the network of 250+ VIS contacts and as a result developed a VIS Strategy to be rolled out in 2024-25 to position Destination Ontario/OTIS as leaders in the space, provide regular updates, and strengthen the network of visitor services in Ontario.

Finance and Corporate Services
Destination Ontario Corporate Services continued to improve workplace practices and performance through the implementation of identified efficiencies, training, advisement, and other supports.

From a people management perspective, Corporate Services continued providing guidance, support and advice to employees and management at all levels regarding human resources matters. This included information on workforce management, talent and performance management, labour relations, health and safety, recruitment and retention, and learning and development.

Destination Ontario remains committed to ensuring its workplace culture is one that is respectful, diverse, inclusive, equitable, and free from harassment and discrimination. The Corporate Services team continued to explore opportunities for continuous improvement to ensure all employees feel that Destination Ontario is an organization where they are supported, safe, and provided with the tools and resources needed to effectively perform their roles and responsibilities.

From an employee performance planning perspective, Destination Ontario's priorities for the year were as follows:

- Strong Research, Strong Outcomes and/or Dynamic Organization: Continue to develop a holistic research approach and improve how data is mined to incorporate insights into strategic planning and in all marketing activities across the organization. Strengthen advertising impact tracking and investigate and adopt new, innovative measurement tools. Connect, lead and inspire a team approach within the organization and across the industry. The agency will be nimble, adopt a culture of ongoing program evaluation and regularly evaluate program performance.

- Visitor First Marketing and/or Redefining Partnerships: Start with an empathetic understanding of the traveller's needs, interests, planning and purchase behaviour. Inspire travel to and around Ontario and focus investment on highest return markets, integrate market activity and remain flexible to opportunities. It also includes having modern marketing campaigns informed by data and consumer insights. Emerging technology and marketing trends will inform the mediums that Destination Ontario markets in and the activities the agency undertakes. Lead and collaborate with industry partners toward mutual success, strong ROI and provide value to industry stakeholders.

Guided by a commitment to fiscal responsibility and opportunities for modernization, Destination Ontario continued its oversight of the agency’s corporate services (financial controllership and administration, human resources, information technology, business continuity, procurement, facilities and administrative services) to continue identifying cost savings. As a result, Corporate Services delivered on many activities that achieved improved effectiveness and efficiency, as well as activities to support the organization and industry. This included:

- Securing the services of a facilitator and writer to operationalize Destination Ontario’s Multi-Year Strategic Plan and build on the work done by the Transformation Consulting Services branch. The facilitator worked closely with Destination Ontario’s leadership team to translate the strategic plan into actionable steps, establishing clear goals, timelines, and performance metrics.
- Continuous improvement of the budget planning process and establishing key milestones to identify pressures and savings, and re-allocate as needed, any unencumbered funds to allow Destination Ontario to fund marketing opportunities and meet Destination Ontario’s goal of spending within 1% of its allocation.
- Collaborated with the OPS Cyber Security Branch to conduct a targeted phishing campaign to test processes for areas of improvement all within a safe environment so staff could learn to recognize threats and protect critical assets.
- Implemented new process for evaluating and approving carryover requests to ensure transparency and equal access amongst all program areas and ensure funds are used strategically to maximize ROI, and in alignment with Destination Ontario’s mandate.
- Continued collaboration with MTCG’s legal department for advice on various contract agreements and templates to ensure appropriate accountability and consistency.
- Promoted inclusive hiring practices by supporting internal and external recruitments of management and staff-level positions and organizing diverse interview panels to include diverse perspectives, lived experiences and a range of subject matter expertise in the recruitment and selection process.

In summary, the Corporate Services team continued to champion an organizational culture that enables the leadership team to be equipped with sound advice, helpful tools and coaching strategies to continue building high-performing teams and innovative products to advance the mandate of the agency. Our efforts will strengthen the leadership team’s confidence in managing programs, processes and human capital effectively and efficiently.

Compliance with *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*

Destination Ontario continues to comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Customer Service Standard) and Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005* administered by the OPS Accessibility Office. Destination Ontario continues to ensure corporation-wide compliance and that all staff are trained and aware of the obligations under the AODA. The agency's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Accessibility page on destinationontario.com has been updated for 2021-27.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

VISITOR VOLUME & EXPENDITURE			
	2022-23 Actuals	***2023-24 Target***	***2023-24 Actuals***
Ontario			
Incremental Trips	167.3K	221K	832K[1]
Incremental Visitor Spending	$40.5M	$31.4M	$130.5M[1]
U.S.			
Incremental Trips	225.5K	543K	790K[1]
Incremental Visitor Spending	$139.7M	$212.2M	$444.1M[1]
North America and Overseas (via trade channel)			
Incremental Trips	14.4K	15K	18.3K
Incremental Visitor Spending	$24.5M	$10M	$38.4M
Number of New Products Developed – North America & Overseas	28	30	22

1. Target was slightly exceeded, likely due to factors like higher travel prices, and increased travellers taking longer overnight trips. Note: visits and expenditures modeling will be refreshed in 2024-25 with new data sets for improved forecasting.

VISITOR FIRST MARKETING			
	2022-23 Actuals	***2023-24 Target***	***2023-24 Actuals***
Earned Media Relations (AVE $Ms)	$56.2M[1]	$30M	$86.2M
Travel Trade Trained (#)	3.8K	2.5K	6.1K
Trips Planned	8,479	15,000	37,579
Visitor Health Score	93	90	93
RE-DEFINING PARTNERSHIP			
	2022-23 Actuals	***2023-24 Target***	***2023-24 Actuals***
Total Leads to Industry Partners	11.99M	8.9M	14M
Partners' Cash Contribution ($)	$1.96M	$2.1M	$2.45M
Ontario Stakeholders Participating in Destination Ontario-Led Programs (#)	785	N/A	1,234

1. AVE includes Media Relations and Broadcast Program results.

DEFINITIONS

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	**Definition**
Incremental Trips	Number of trips taken (outcome) by those influenced by the campaign.
Incremental Visitor Spending – Ontario and U.S.	Number of trips taken (outcome) by those influenced by the campaign multiplied by the average visitor spend, as measured through the *Brand and Advertising Tracking Study,* conducted by a third-party research supplier.
Incremental Visitor Spending – North America and Overseas (via trade channel)	Estimated direct expenditures (outcome) from travel trade channel bookings. An expenditure based on estimated number of trips booked as a direct result of campaign or joint marketing initiatives with travel trade and conversion partners internationally. Average per person/night pleasure trip expenditure of visitors to Canada as reported by Destination Canada (based on Statistics Canada's International Travel Survey) is applied to the number of nights reported by trade channel partners.
Number of New Products Developed	The actual number of packages, itineraries, experiences incorporated (outcome) by trade channel partners (new additional overnight in Ontario, new itinerary, new experiences added to itineraries, etc.).
Earned Media Relations (i.e., Advertising Value Equivalency or AVE)	The amount in Canadian dollars a similar size story would cost if it appeared as paid advertising at a 1:1 equivalency ratio, determined by measuring the size/length of the story by the advertising rate of the relevant media outlet.
Paid Broadcast (Reach)	Number of people reached from on-air paid advertising on television and/or radio.
Online Video Views (75% - Completed)	Video advertising viewed 75% to its entirety either on digital or social platforms (paid and organic).
Social Engagement Rate	Destination Ontario owned domestic and international (excluding China) social handles - percent of likes, reactions, comments, shares and clicks divided by total reach.
Travel Trade Trained	Number of tour operator staff and travel agents trained on Ontario tourism products by Destination Ontario or in conjunction with Destination Canada.
Trips Planned	The number of travel related consumer interactions across all OTIS channels that result in one or more of the following: • New activity/trip planned and/or itinerary developed • Existing travel plan or itinerary is enhanced or increased • A booking made that results in incremental spend
Visitor Health Score	An aggregate of the Net Promoter Score (NPS), Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) and Service Level (SL).

Total Leads to Industry Partners	Ad clicks or tracked website visit to partner websites: • From ontariotravel.net (Canada, U.S., France, India, Brazil, U.K., Mexico, Japan, Korea, Germany and China markets). • From Destination Canada partnered initiatives. • From Destination Ontario-led campaigns or initiatives.
Partners’ Cash Contribution	The dollar amount of cash that partners provide to Destination Ontario to execute a Destination Ontario-led campaign or initiative.
Ontario Stakeholders Participating in Destination Ontario-Led Programs (#)	The number of stakeholders that participate in a specific program, initiative, broadcast or marketing project with measured deliverables where Destination Ontario staff lead the coordination and execution (paid and non-paid).

RISK ASSESSMENT

Management reviews risk on an ongoing basis, including quarterly management reports, and year-end and in-year audits. The Audit, Finance and Risk Committee of the Board of Directors regularly reviews and discusses with management corporate policies on internal control to assure itself that appropriate processes are functioning effectively, to monitor the risks to which the organization is exposed, and that internal control is effective in managing risks to an acceptable level. Throughout 2023-24, Destination Ontario remained a flexible and dynamic organization, with the ability to adjust accordingly when internal and external changes impacted Destination Ontario's operations.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the Year Ended March 31, 2024

The Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming is the principal source of agency revenue, contributing ninety-one percent ($33.1M) of Destination Ontario's $36.2M operating revenue. The remaining portion is self-generated through merchandise sales at the Travel Information Centres and the Destination Ontario-led collaborative and partnerable marketing system that leverages partner funds and content to connect consumers with trip ideas and operators. Destination Ontario recorded an operating surplus of $0.7M after a depreciation of $0.4M on capital assets. Spending in 2023-24 was guided by the best possible market intelligence available to make timely and responsible decisions and maximize value for money.

Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation

(operating as Destination Ontario)

Financial Statements

For the Year Ended March 31, 2024

Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation

(operating as Destination Ontario)

Financial Statements

For the year ended March 31, 2024

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Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation
(operating as Destination Ontario)

Management Report

The accompanying financial statements are the responsibility of the management of the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation. The financial statements have been prepared by management in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards. The statements include certain amounts based on estimates and judgements. Management has determined such amounts on a reasonable basis in order to ensure that the financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects.

Management maintains a system of internal accounting and administrative control that is designed to provide reasonable assurance the financial information is relevant, reliable and accurate and that the Corporation's assets are properly accounted for and adequately safeguarded.

The financial statements have been audited by Deloitte LLP, a firm of independent external auditors appointed by the Board of Directors, whose report follows.

Vincenza Ronaldi
President and CEO
June 19, 2024

Ronald Ting
Treasurer
June 19, 2024

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Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of Directors of
Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation (operating as Destination Ontario) (the "Corporation"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2024, and the statements of operations, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies (collectively referred to as the "financial statements").

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Corporation as at March 31, 2024, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards ("Canadian GAAS"). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Corporation in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Corporation's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Corporation or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Corporation's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian GAAS, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Corporation's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Corporation's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Corporation to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants
June 19, 2024

Statement of Financial Position

	March 31 2024 ($ 000)	March 31 2023 ($ 000)
ASSETS		
Current		
Cash	**3,938**	6,931
Accounts receivable (Note 3)	**883**	894
Prepaid expenses	**34**	9
	4,855	7,834
Capital assets (Note 4)	**128**	492
	4,983	8,326
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	**3,331**	7,131
Obligation for retirement benefits (Note 2h)	**294**	311
Deferred revenue (Note 5)	**25**	125
	3,650	7,567
Obligation for retirement benefits (Note 2h)	**592**	696
Deferred capital contributions (Note 6)	**1**	12
	593	708
	4,243	8,275
Net assets (deficiency)		
Unrestricted fund	**613**	(429)
Investment in capital assets	**127**	480
	740	51
	4,983	8,326

Commitments (Note 10)

Approved on behalf of the board:

Board Chair

Member, Audit Committee

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

Statement of Operations

For the year ended March 31	**2024 ($ 000)**	2023 ($ 000)
Revenues		
Province of Ontario grant (Note 7)	**33,063**	33,077
Advertising sales	**2,447**	2,430
Interest income	**403**	354
Travel Information Services - sales	**317**	270
Amortization of deferred capital contribution	**11**	26
	36,241	36,157
Expenses		
Advertising and marketing	**19,741**	22,863
Administration (Note 8)	**7,633**	7,935
Travel Information Services (Note 9)	**5,317**	5,576
Partnerships and sales	**1,479**	2,623
Technology operations	**522**	896
Research	**414**	353
Amortization of capital assets	**400**	656
Board and committee expenses (Note 12)	**46**	9
	35,552	40,911
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	**689**	(4,754)

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

For the year ended March 31

	Unrestricted Fund ($ 000)	**Investment in Capital Assets ($ 000)**	**2024 Total ($ 000)**	2023 Total ($ 000)
Net (deficiency) assets, beginning of year	**(429)**	**480**	**51**	4,805
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses for the year	**1,078**	**(389)**	**689**	(4,754)
Capital assets acquisitions	**(36)**	**36**	**-**	-
Net assets, end of year	**613**	**127**	**740**	51

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

ONTARIO TOURISM MARKETING PARTNERSHIP CORPORATION
(operating as Destination Ontario)

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended March 31	2024 ($ 000)	2023 ($ 000)
OPERATING		
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	**689**	(4,754)
Add (less) non-cash items:		
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	**(11)**	(26)
Amortization of capital assets	**400**	656
	1,078	(4,124)
Change in non-cash working capital (Note 11)	**(3,914)**	2,437
Obligation for retirement benefits, net	**(121)**	235
	(2,957)	(1,452)
CAPITAL		
Capital asset acquisitions	**(36)**	(73)
Decrease in cash during the year	**(2,993)**	(1,525)
Cash, beginning of year	**6,931**	8,456
Cash, end of year	**3,938**	6,931

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

1. NATURE OF CORPORATION

The Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation (the "Corporation") was established as a corporation without share capital on November 30, 1998 pursuant to Ontario Regulation 618/98 made under the *Development Corporations Act.* The Regulation was amended by Ontario Regulation 271/04 in September, 2004 to extend the mandate of the Corporation indefinitely. The Corporation commenced active operations on April 1, 1999. In the fall of 2017, the Corporation announced a new corporate operating name, Destination Ontario. The Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation will continue to be the official legal name of the Corporation. The objects of the Corporation are:

(a) to market Ontario as a travel destination;
(b) to undertake joint marketing initiatives with the tourism industry;
(c) to support and assist the marketing efforts of the tourism industry; and
(d) in co-operation with the tourism industry, the Government of Ontario, other governments and other agencies of governments, to promote Ontario as a travel destination.

The Corporation enters into agreements with private and public sector partners in order to add value to tourism marketing programs. The Corporation tracks the dollar value (leverage, in-kind) of such agreements to demonstrate the impact of the Corporation's investment on the partnered marketing programs. However, related partner revenues and expenses are not included in the Corporation's financial statements.

The Corporation is a not-for-profit organization, and thus not subject to income tax.

2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Basis of Accounting

The financial statements are the representations of management and are prepared in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards ("PSAS") including the 4200 series of standards contained in the Chartered Professional Accountants (CPA) Canada handbook.

(b) Revenue Recognition

The Corporation follows the deferral method of accounting for revenues.

Province of Ontario Grant

The Corporation is funded primarily by the Province of Ontario. Operating grants are recorded as revenue in the period to which they relate. Grants approved but not received at the end of an accounting period are accrued. Where a portion of a grant is related to a future period, it is deferred and recognized in a subsequent period.

Advertising Sales

Revenue from Advertising sales is recognized in the period in which the program is run, the amount can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(b) Revenue Recognition (continued)

Travel Information Services – sales

Revenue from the sale of consigned merchandise is recognized when the merchandise is sold and only to the extent that proceeds exceed the cost of the items sold.

Interest Income

Interest income is recognized in the period in which it is earned.

(c) Partner Support

The Corporation benefits from donated services provided by the tourism industry, such as transportation costs (airline and bus tickets), and accommodation and meal costs (discounted or free hotel rooms and restaurant charges). Because of the difficulty of determining their fair value, donated services are not recognized in the financial statements.

(d) Capital Assets

All capital assets are recorded at cost. Amortization is provided on a straight-line basis over the estimated useful life of the asset, with half a year amortization taken in the year of acquisition and disposition. All capital assets are amortized over three to five years.

(e) Deferred Capital Contributions

Deferred capital contributions represent amounts received from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to finance the acquisition of capital assets. The amortization of deferred capital contributions is recorded as revenue in the statement of operations on the same basis as the amortization of the related assets.

(f) Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates as additional information becomes available in the future. Accounts requiring significant accounting estimates include amortization of capital assets, accrued liabilities, obligation for retirement benefits, deferred capital contributions, and deferred revenue.

(g) Financial Instruments

Unless otherwise noted, it is management's opinion that the Corporation is not exposed to significant interest, currency, liquidity or credit risks arising from its financial instruments.

The Corporation’s financial instruments, which include cash, accounts receivable, and accounts payable and accrued liabilities, are all valued at cost less any amount for valuation allowance.

2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(h) Retirement Benefits

Retirement benefits represent legislated severance accruals under the Public Service Act of Ontario and is recognized as it is earned by eligible employees. The liability is calculated using management's best estimate of underlying assumptions.

(i) Foreign Currency Translation

Foreign currency accounts are translated into Canadian dollars as follows:

At the transaction date, each asset, liability, revenue and expense is translated into Canadian dollars by the use of the exchange rate in effect at that date. At the year end date, monetary assets and liabilities are translated into Canadian dollars by using the exchange rate in effect at that date. The resulting foreign exchange gains and losses are included in the excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses for the year.

(j) Adoption of new accounting standard

PSAS 3400, Revenue

Effective April 1, 2023, the Corporation prospectively adopted PSAS 3400, Revenue. The adoption of the new standard had no impact on the Corporation as it's revenue recognition policies were already aligned with the requirements of the new standard.

3. CREDIT RISKS RELATED TO FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The Corporation's exposure to credit risk is minimal. The Corporation determines on a continuing basis, the probable credit losses and sets up a provision for losses, if necessary, based on the estimated realizable value.

Below the accounts receivable aging is summarized:

				2024 ($ 000)
	Current	**+60 Days**	**+90 Days**	**Total**
General accounts receivable	**103**	**104**	**38**	**245**
Harmonized Sales Tax ("HST") receivable	**638**	**-**	**-**	**638**
Totals	**741**	**104**	**38**	**883**

				2023 ($ 000)
	Current	+60 Days	+90 Days	Total
General accounts receivable	185	-	92	277
HST receivable	617	-	-	617
Totals	802	-	92	894

4. CAPITAL ASSETS

	2024 ($ 000)		2023 ($ 000)	
	Cost	**Accumulated Amortization**	Cost	Accumulated Amortization
Web Strategy	**2,299**	**2,190**	2,263	1,822
Leasehold improvements	**1,106**	**1,106**	1,106	1,091
Furniture	**174**	**155**	174	138
	3,579	**3,451**	3,543	3,051
Cost less accumulated amortization		**128**		492

5. DEFERRED REVENUE

	2024 ($ 000)	2023 ($ 000)
Advertising programs	**25**	125
	25	125

6. DEFERRED CAPITAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Deferred capital contributions represent contributions received relating to acquisition of capital assets:

	2024 ($ 000)	2023 ($ 000)
Opening balance	**12**	38
Amortization	**(11)**	(26)
Ending balance	**1**	12

7. REVENUE: PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

The Corporation received funding that is recognized as revenue from the Province of Ontario as follows:

	2024 ($ 000)	2023 ($ 000)
Core funding	**32,968**	32,968
Summer Experience Program	**87**	109
Repair and Rehabilitation Funding	**8**	-
	33,063	33,077

8. ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Certain costs of administration such as legal and human resources support services were provided by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport without charge. All other administrative expenses are borne by the Corporation and are as follows:

	2024 ($ 000)	2023 ($ 000)
Salaries and benefits	**6,508**	6,939
Lease	**680**	684
Supplies and equipment	**188**	219
Services	**181**	14
Transportation and communications	**76**	79
	7,633	7,935

The Corporation provides pension benefits for all its full-time employees through participation in the Public Service Pension Fund (PSPF) and the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union Pension Fund (OPSEU Pension Fund) which are both multi-employer defined benefit pension plans established by the Province. These plans are accounted for as defined contribution plans, as the Corporation has insufficient information to apply defined benefit plan accounting to these pension plans. Included in salaries and benefits are contributions to the PSPF and OPSEU pension funds for the year of $501,000 (2023 – $498,000).

Costs of post-retirement non-pension employee benefits are paid by the Management Board Secretariat and are not included in administrative expenses.

9. TRAVEL INFORMATION SERVICES

The expenditures for the Travel Information Services are as follows:

	2024 ($ 000)	2023 ($ 000)
Salaries and benefits	**2,865**	2,959
Lease	**1,432**	1,282
Services	**357**	930
Supplies and equipment	**340**	155
Merchandise for sale	**245**	196
Transportation and communication	**78**	54
	5,317	5,576

Included in salaries and benefits are contributions to the PSPF and OPSEU pension funds for the year of $166,000 (2023 - $168,000).

10. OPERATING LEASES

The Corporation has various operating leases for its premises expiring up to the 2025/2026 fiscal year. The minimum annual payments are as follows:

	($ 000)
2025	1,237
2026	547
	1,784

11. CHANGE IN NON-CASH WORKING CAPITAL

	2024 ($ 000)	2023 ($ 000)
Decrease in accounts receivable	**11**	(78)
Increase in prepaid expenses	**(25)**	-
Decrease in accounts payable and accrued liabilities	**(3,800)**	2,390
Decrease in deferred revenue	**(100)**	125
	3,914	2,437

12. BOARD AND COMMITTEE EXPENSES

Board and committee members do not receive per diems. Board and committee members are reimbursed for meal and travel expenses incurred to attend board of directors and related committee meetings, consistent with the Ontario Public Sector Travel, Meals and Hospitality directive.