

SWOTC CONFERENCE - MARCH 2018 - LEAMINGTON

- probably one of the best conferences attended in last several years - better than last year's
- full schedule without wasted time - they even gave us boxed lunches to take with us while we travelled to off-site locations
- attended: Live Stream Like a Pro, Who You are Online Matters, If it's not on Instagram, did it even happen?

Jim Hudson - SWOTC Update - state of the tourism nation:

- gone from 6 to 28 craft breweries
- 100 new tourism businesses in 2017
- municipalities can now implement a hotel tax
- ultra low cost airplane carriers like SWOOP starting up at London Airport
- over tourism the number one factor affecting European travel and other hot spots - including Tobermory!
- moved to measureable marketing tactics
- launched a new research plan with bi-annual business surveys and customer experience surveys
- measure brand awareness with DC/DO (?)
- revenue per available room - highest in Windsor
- London had highest occupancy rate

Carol Greenwood (TIAO / Director membership & business):

- advocacy organization
- resource for Bill148 - <http://www.tiaoontario.ca/cpages/bill148resource> (for members only!)
- running a tourism advocacy campaign to coincide with upcoming provincial election - encouraging members to advocate with local MPP, join TIAO, download the Toolkit, have developed party-specific messaging
- tourism awards open end of April tiaoontario.ca/cpages/awards
- newsletter - tiaoontario.ca/cpages/subscribe

Keynote speaker: David Coletto - PhD in market research, founder & ceo of Abacas Data:

david@abacusdata.ca / [@ColettoD](https://twitter.com/ColettoD) / canadianmillennials.ca

- best speaker I've heard on Millennials, how they're similar and different than Boomers, GenX's, GenY's - and why they're a crucial consideration in marketing now and in future
- the Net Generation, Screenagers, Digital Natives, Generation Y, or the Echo Boom, the Millennials are the roughly nine million Canadians born between 1980 and 2000.
- millennials love to travel and eat
- now the largest group in Canada (!)
- 2006: (things) Exxon, Microsoft, Citigroup, bp
- 2018: Apple, Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Facebook
- change has happened and will continue
- millennials are more travelled and more open-minded than previous generations
- 1980 - 2000 (millennials) - obvious lifecycle difference between early and late millennials
- ethnically and culturally diverse; inclusive; tech savvy; entrepreneurial; more women of this generation will have post-secondary education than men
- 9.3 million millennials in Canada - 25.6% of Canadian population; 270,000 new millennial households annually; next 35-years - growing group due to immigration

- GenZ - likely to be overshadowed by millennials (millennials' kids)
- term has become synonymous with being derogatory - millennials as lazy and narcissistic
- 2019 - more millennials able to vote - will be larger voting block than Boomers - so issues that Liberals embrace are millennial touch-points
- similar to previous generations, they want - to get married, to own a home, to have kids
- differences - 50% are atheists - this is a driver of behaviours - if no afterlife then need to experience (live) now
- 1 out 5 - most important to them - making an impact in the world - what they're doing needs to mean something
- millennials more influential about where to vacation than parents - the relationship has changed; families vacation together, because the relationships are different
- self-esteem movement that affected millennial parents meant millennials told "you can do anything - you can be anything you want"; looking for constant feedback
- 34% think their generation will be worse off than parent's - growing pessimism
- **Technology** - has changed the family hierarchy - kids are the chief information officers
- they're about instant reaction and amplification, referrals & reviews, sharing economy, declining deference
- changed expectations and changed behaviours
- instant reaction and feedback on FB post - keep checking the likes and shares
- online rating and review systems - care about what the masses say not the experts
- technology has given us and millennials impression that we know more than we do (example: doctor presented with patient who has gone to WebMD and self-diagnosed)
- social media amplifies the good and the bad and this can quickly become a brand crisis
- new world demands openness and accountability
- ratings drive behaviour - crowd sourcing a powerful decision-maker
- social media is the millennial platform: 85% FB, 43% Instagram, 34% Snapchat, 25% Twitter, 7% LinkedIn
- 71% LOVE being constantly connected vs. 34% of Boomers who feel same way
- millennial household - 5.5 devices connected to Internet at any time (cell, computer, TV, wearables)
- **"Gamification"** of products and services - NEST - uses awarding of green leaves when someone being energy efficient and rates you to others
- 94% own Smartphone, but don't use the phone function - they use it for banking, GPS, music, movie player, location tracker
- every consumer journey starts on the phone (mobile first)
- 42% millennial men are the primary cooks; consensual and collaborative couples; collaborative households - this changes who to market to for packaged goods - who's making the purchasing decision now?
- 1 in 4 Canadians 18 to 29 do not have cable or satellite
- "disruption" = streaming, tip of the iceberg - other generational contagion means more disruption
- **Generational Experience:** CRAVE experiential opportunities
 - 1. Food & Drink - 55%
 - 2. Travel & Adventure - 44%
 - 3. Life Hacks - 42%
 - 4. Music & Entertainment
- experience needs to be authentic
- London (England) - Specialty Coffee Tour - link the experience to the location

- the unique and cultural and landscape - combined Unique Selling Proposition
- need to be genuine, original, HONEST - to this group this means simplicity, connection and control
- how unique and how customized - the sense that it is unique is important
- NOVELTY - uniqueness and allows personal expression - they want peers to know "I chose this because...." - spread the news and benefit of "my" audience
- they're filtering experience via phone - show people where I am - share and show-off
- Do vs. Have - is number 1
- Digital First - number 2 (if you're not online, you do not exist for this group)
- forcing marketers to think differently
- Tell Us Your Store - number 3 - but be REAL

Experiential Travel - Celes Devar

Earth Rhythms - <http://www.earthrhythms.ca>

- today's tourist wants to collect moments not things
- "Skift" (skift.com) - the Rise of Experiential Travel (<https://skift.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/skift-peak-experiential-traveler-report1.pdf>)
- immersive - it's about learning, taking away something tangible that you made
- "experience hosts"
- AirBnB - can be a treasure chest of inspiration for your local businesses - like City Walks, Crafting Classes (Toronto experiences)
- Inspiration & Personalization - the path towards self-discovery
- build on success and ask how to layer in experiential travel - engage the senses
- memorable travel activities - inherently personal
- Nova Scotia tourism - experience toolkit for businesses (<https://tourismns.ca/development/experience-development/experience-toolkit>)
- shift from infrastructure to experiences development
- travelers will pay for the story - not just the stuff
- Art, Nature, Culture, Cuisine, Wellness
- value-based pricing, not cost-based
- **"we're seeking our monk" - experiential travel is the pathway to the monastery**
- it's about programs and people - adds revenue without huge investment - it's low cost, low volume but higher return
- "Fire Roasters" - suite of experiences - Farm grew and sold veggies - added produced products like jams and salsa made from what they grew - next layer is the experiential - long table dining in December in the greenhouse! (<https://prairiegardens.org/festival-events/fire-roasters/>)
- "developing and curating local talent as economic sustainability"
- "Cod Sounds" - forager (Forage & Fire) - Winter Lobster Fishing in Nova Scotia - codsounds.ca
- www.codsounds.ca/wild-foraging-in-newfoundland-and-labrador/
- "During our time together we will walk the seashore and you'll be introduced to the incredible array of wild edibles that grace our shores. Our time together will bring us around an open fire enjoying good food and drink." - walk along the seashore, pick and gather what you later cook and eat
- what is the right experience for the right season for the right visitor
- Purple Haven - lavender farm that grows the source product then produces the value add product and layers in the experience of making your own artisan soaps, bath truffles and salts that you get to take home (<https://www.purplehaven.ca/>)
- community as multiple stages for experiences - the community becomes the stage

- the experience needs to drive the travel purchasing cycle
- Aboriginal Tourism - Great Spirit Circle Trail (Manitoulin Island) - <https://www.circletrail.com/>
- travel - discover - learn / "We offer nature-based and cultural tourism from an Aboriginal perspective on beautiful, majestic Manitoulin Island and the Sagamok region of Northeastern Ontario, Canada. Experiences range from soft adventure to wilderness eco-adventures and educational interpretive tours."

Who You Are Online Matters - Katie Stokes (Blab Media)

- 95% of travellers TRUST tour and activity reviews
- 89% millennials plan travel based on posted content from peers
- build on emotion and inspiration - instead of broadcasting information
- inspire vs. inform
- Platform Etiquette: don't cross-post via software !!! Edit and post the right content for the right platform; know when to use hashtags and when not to; don't use so many hashtags that you look like a crazy person - research them
- don't auto post from FB to Twitter
- have a clearly defined strategy
- know the value of each platform and leverage
- review results and reset goals regularly

Facebook

- interactive & engaging - creates community
- visitors & residents need to be "destination ambassadors"
- ask them to use hashtag when they Instagram their time in a location
- #mtlmoments campaign - *Discover Montréal through the eyes of locals and tourists alike as they post all kinds of images using the #MTLMoments hashtag – join the online Montréal party by sharing your favourite moments from your visit!* #MTLMOMENTS campaign aims to showcase spontaneous "moments" experienced by Montrealers and tourists throughout the city. Based on **user-generated content**, this initiative provided a simple and enjoyable way for local residents, visitors and influencers to share their favourite places or activities, subsequently creating genuine and updated content about the destination.; campaign won 2 awards
- can fully customize FB side tabs - use FB templates
- FB is where your brand advocates
- invest in live video / paid advertising / be creative / don't over share / use photos / photo albums
- create publishing schedule
- social 2-way street

Twitter

- fuelled by hashtags - valuable to marketing
- 1-on-1 dialogue
- ask questions to engage
- connect with influencers
- shorten links
- add value not noise
- utilize lists - organize by topics / categories
- don't use auto-responders
- don't use direct messages - considered spam

Instagram

- humanizes the brand with photos/video
- like a look book - great for telling stories
- content builds TRUST and PERSONALITY
- research hashtags before using - make sure no one else is using, learn what you should use based on your industry
- don't include links - this is not this platform's etiquette
- don't be spammy
- don't wing it with content
- utilize stories
- use to showcase a region / share other's content
- LinkTree - place on Instagram
- make sure there's value to why you're reaching out
- create a publishing schedule / curate content
- Trip Advisor
- highlights strengths and weaknesses
- gives you insight into your business by listening and improving via reviews
- place times when your page is actively managed - as reviewers expect real-time response
- know when to take things private and have a process around dealing with negativity and who is designated to handle (it shouldn't be the intern!)
- don't take it personally
- be consistent, cohesive, response
- all touch points should have same contact info

Snapchat

- place where customers can get sneak peak of brand without fully committing
- allows over shares
- it's for cool, exciting behind the scenes stuff / exclusive deals
- popular with millennials
- blend in and tread lightly - must be about real-time authenticity
- share content in the moment and promote off-line
- use filters and lenses
- don't act like a brand - know your target market

It It's Not On Instagram, Did It Even Happen? - Gregg McLachlan

- workcabincreative.ca
- how and why to get audiences to create your content
- provide the "staging" so people will use in their social media (at Lake Louise, there is always a red canoe positioned just so on the dock!)
- FB owns Instagram
- superfan creates the content and pushes it out to their friends
- the audience believes the peer, not necessarily the brand
- noise = sales, media releases, promotions etc - don't do this!
- create "fans" not "customers"
- outdoor adventure clothing brands to this really well (aka Keen)
- ask what you can do to make the audience active participants with your brand
- use content to "swerve" them (change their direction to your brand)

- current customers most trusted by prospective customers
- 60% believe content created by consumers
- Instagram - about discovery, fun, relaxation (FB is empowerment, connection, recognition)
- millennials - want instagrammable moments - CRAVE unfiltered content
- cannot look staged - HomeTownBrewCo (hometownbrew.com / instagram.com/hometownbrewco/)
- "I was there, this is what I saw, this is what I did" - what millennials do with their phone
- don't put "Like Us" on a billboard or ad or sign - that's passé
- instead do "Instagram our food and get entered to win"
- ***Instagram It to Win It***
- beware the selfie contest syndrome - it's done! rarely works! it's what non social media businesses do because they think it's still hip
- encourage Check-Ins to win
- use Photo Frames (digital kind NOT the physical kind) - make it an emotional frame - think fun, inspirational etc
- Head-in-the-Hole - it's old school, but it still works - families love these
- backdrops for photos (fun, inspirational etc)
- a prop (aka Bat Out of Hell motorcycle)
- Interact & Reward
- try and be immediate - one restaurant realized a group was doing positive social media posts and came over and gave them free dessert
- stencils on the pavement - "this is your happy place" (open circle with words around inner edge so people can put their feet into the circle and take photo)
- big chairs - again, old school, but still works (aka Home Hardware - Grand Bend)
- #ShareTheChair - muskoka chairs in parks (Parks Canada); <https://theculturetrip.com/north-america/canada/articles/the-most-beautiful-red-chair-destinations-in-canadas-parks/>
- TerreBleu Lavender Farm (terrebleu.ca) - door in a field of lavender
- Tweet Tours
- Norfolk County did Doughnut campaign for Apple Cider Doughnuts - when from a dozen sold per day to 150 dozen per day (promo for local apple growers); facebook.com/pg/appleciderdoughnuts/posts/?ref=page_internal
- launch an Ambassador Program - we trust ambassadors - find average person in the community know for their niche - and get them to be your ambassadors
- Instagram "Take Overs" - let a group or travel writer take over your account for the day - carefully vet them and provide guidelines - "shopper on the loose"
- Chalk Boards
- Picture post - simple - 4 x 4 with a platform on top - can use to chronicle year of sunsets from same vantage point and then to a time lapse video / compilation



provide the stage - encourage the participation - get the audience to create your content