

# TOWN OF ESSEX AGRITOURISM WORKSHOP:

## ONLINE PRESENCE & STORYTELLING - KEY TAKEAWAYS

July 20, 2021

Presented by the Town of Essex and Culinary Tourism Alliance

### ONLINE MARKETING AND STORYTELLING

#### The 4 P's of Storytelling

1. **Plot:** When crafting your brand's story make sure that you are taking your audience on a journey that first describes the situation and conflict that make the brand necessary. Then, explain why the solution can be found in your brand's existence. Through this journey your audience can envision their own personal, similar journey and find resolution in your brand.
2. **Purpose:** Be precise about what the brand should mean to your audience. There should be no guesswork in how your brand adds value. This 'P' is essential, since it helps your audience to easily digest and relay your brand's message.
3. **People:** Your brand's story should be relatable. It should easily connect with some facet of someone's life. Your people – whether it's you, your staff, your partners, the suppliers – make up a community. Weaving their stories into your own and transforming them into ambassadors makes a story more robust.
4. **Place:** Place is uniquely important in the world of tourism. What is unique about your corner of the world? How does it relate to the fabric of your community? It's not always obvious but figuring it out has big impact.

Video on Cheesemaking in Gruyères with Gerard: <https://youtu.be/HrTOQVyTPs>

#### Online Storytelling Vs. Onsite Storytelling

- Online storytelling is important for getting people to your business. This is about attraction and engagement. Getting new customers to your agritourism business is how you grow.
- On-site storytelling is how you get people to come back: by meeting visitor expectations. We know word of mouth is one of the most powerful tools. Good onsite storytelling helps with that.

### ONLINE PRESENCE

Online storytelling can take place in different ways, and you get to decide which ones work best for your business. Multiple storytelling touchpoints makes it more likely that your message will be heard. Across these platforms, it's important to keep your stories consistent.



# TOWN OF ESSEX AGRITOURISM WORKSHOP:

## ONLINE PRESENCE & STORYTELLING - KEY TAKEAWAYS

### Key Takeaways for Online Presence

#### Websites

- Include basic information about your business, including hours of operation, contact information, your address, and details about how to visit you.
- Include an "About" page, which tells a story about you and your business, and describes why someone should come to visit you.
- Talk about points of differentiation. What makes your business special?
- Include photos, not just of your products, but of the farm, your store or stand, or the experience you offer. Help visitors imagine themselves at your farm.
- Include links to your social media handles. Some websites may allow you to add a "gallery" of photos that automatically updates, if connected to your social media (e.g., Instagram) account.
- Think about how often you want to update your website - try to have more of an evergreen website and utilize your social media accounts for sharing smaller updates.
- Search engine optimization (SEO) is important – think about the keywords visitors may use, in searching for your business.
- Include business certifications (as applicable), e.g., the Safe Travels Stamp.

#### Social Media

- Hashtags and location tags are important ways of being discovered
- Consider sharing user generated content (which helps build a perception of trust)
- Link to your partners' accounts, so that they can find your posts and add volume to them
- Include key information in your social media bio, so that people know what your business is
- Unless you are the brand, focus on the business when using your social media

#### Review Sites

- Claim the Google listing for your business. This allows you to control some of the information shared in Google search results and allows you to respond to customer reviews.
- Claim your business TripAdvisor listing, and plan to check and respond to reviews in a timely manner.

#### Using Stories to Create Value

When creating captions for images you plan to share, think about the following:

- What is happening in this photo?
- Who am I writing this caption for?
- Who needs to be acknowledged, informed or celebrated?
- Who can I tag to have this caption reach more people?
- What campaigns, partnerships or initiatives can I leverage with this post?



# TOWN OF ESSEX AGRITOURISM WORKSHOP:

## ONLINE PRESENCE & STORYTELLING - KEY TAKEAWAYS

### GOOD PRACTICE IN AGRITOURISM MARKETING CASE STUDY

South Pond Farms in Pontypool, Ontario

<https://southpondfarms.ca/>

Introduction to South Pond Farms video: <https://youtu.be/1O4BxGViD3k>

#### Online Business Scan – Guiding Questions

When evaluating a businesses' website (or perhaps your own!), consider the following questions:

- Trip Scanning
  - Can I find the business website easily (through a Google search)?
  - Can I find their social media easily?
  - What are other visitors/customers saying about the business?
- Planning
  - What does the business specialize in?
  - When can I visit and where is it located?
  - What can I do there? Can I pre-book my visit?
  - What do I need to consider or prepare for?
- Storytelling & Learnings
  - What kind of visual assets does the business use? (e.g., photos, videos, testimonials)
  - Can I find information on the people behind the business?
  - What unique aspects of the business and/or its story are highlighted?
  - What does the business do well? (i.e., What can I learn from it?)
  - Do the business's online assets inspire a visit?
  - Where and how can the business improve its online presence and storytelling?

During the guided activity for this workshop, we looked at Covert Farms in BC: [covertfarms.ca](http://covertfarms.ca)

### RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

- OntarioCulinary.com (<https://ontarioculinary.com/>)
- FEAST ON® (<https://ontarioculinary.com/feast-on/about/>).
- Destination Ontario (<https://destinationontario.com/en-ca>)
- Ontario Craft Brewers (<https://www.ontariocraftbrewers.com/>)
- Wine Country Ontario (<https://winecountryontario.ca/>)
- Savour Ontario (<https://savourontario.milk.org/>)
- Ocean Wise (<https://ocean.org/>)
- Restaurants Canada (<https://www.restaurantscanada.org/>)
- Terego RV Network (<https://www.terego.ca/en>)
- Farm Fresh Ontario (<https://farmfreshontario.com/>)



# TOWN OF ESSEX AGRITOURISM WORKSHOP:

## ONLINE PRESENCE & STORYTELLING - KEY TAKEAWAYS

### Tourism Offices

- Your DMO is: TOURISM WINDSOR ESSEX PELEE ISLAND (TWEPI)
  - <https://visitwindsor-essex.com/>
  - @TWEPI #YQG #DiscoverYQG
- Your RTO is: SOUTHWEST ONTARIO TOURISM CORPORATION (SWOTC)
  - <https://www.swotc.ca/>
  - <https://www.ontariosouthwest.com/>
  - @OntSouthWest #OntSouthWest

### Town of Essex Online

- Corporate website: <https://www.essex.ca/>
- Tourism website: <https://www.tourismessex.ca/>
- Economic development microsite: <https://joinusinessex.ca/>
- Follow the Town of Essex on Social Media!
  - Twitter: @EssexON (<https://twitter.com/EssexON>)
  - Facebook: @TownOfEssex (<https://www.facebook.com/TownofEssex/>)
  - Instagram: @TourismEssex (<https://www.instagram.com/TourismEssex/>)
    - #EssexON #WhereYouBelong

### Federal Covid-19 Tourism Relief Fund

- Supports tourism businesses and organizations in adapting operations to meet public health requirements, while investing in products and services to facilitate future growth.
- Eligible projects will focus on Product and Destination Development
- Apply online:  
[https://www.feddevontario.gc.ca/eic/site/723.nsf/eng/h\\_02650.html?OpenDocument](https://www.feddevontario.gc.ca/eic/site/723.nsf/eng/h_02650.html?OpenDocument)

