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A framework for an industry supported destination marketing information system

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Abstract

This article provides guidelines for the establishment of a comprehensive state/provincial destination marketing information system (DMIS). More specifically, it describes the process by which the tourism industry in Alberta, Canada developed a framework for the acquisition of timely research and intelligence to maintain and enhance its competitiveness as a travel destination. In keeping with a government mandate for greater public–private sector partnership, consideration was given to two equally important, but functionally distinct end users: (1) Travel Alberta, the province's destination marketing organization, which uses information to guide strategic marketing priorities and create cooperative marketing opportunities for industry, and (2) local tourism operators, who demand information to improve their marketing decisions in service of individual business objectives. The needs of these key audience groups were identified and addressed using a comprehensive three-step approach: (1) Interviews were

conducted with key industry players to identify research and intelligence needs, (2) information sources were sought to respond to the identified needs, and (3) solutions were identified to deliver high-quality information at an affordable cost. The end result of this process is a framework that can serve as a useful model for other jurisdictions seeking to develop a DMIS. While the Alberta framework will require ongoing evaluation to ensure its validity and accuracy, it possesses an important quality frequently lacking in this type of endeavor: the broad-based endorsement of tourism operators.



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R.J.B. Ritchie designed and executed the study on which it is based while employed as the Marketing Research Coordinator at Travel Alberta, the tourism marketing agency of the province of Alberta, Canada. J.R. Brent Ritchie previously served on the Board of the Directors of the same DMO.

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