How to Transform Your Tourism Business for the Modern Market

By Katrina German (Ethical Digital)

The tourism market has changed dramatically and today's travelers expect digital convenience, meaningful experiences, and values-driven choices. This resource explores what modern travellers want, how digital tools and AI influence decisions, and what Saskatchewan businesses can do to adapt quickly and sustainably. The goal is to help tourism operators strengthen competitiveness, attract new audiences, and create memorable, personalized guest experiences.

Key Insights for Today's Market

1. **Traveller Expectations Have Evolved**
   - Digital-first behavior: 80% of Canadians research and book online; 40% book on mobile.
   - AI influences planning: Tools like Google Travel, Expedia's AI Trip Planner, and ChatGPT shape decisions long before arrival.
   - Your first impression now happens online, on Google, TikTok, or TripAdvisor.

2. **Travellers Choose Based on Values**
   - 67% prefer sustainable or locally owned experiences.
   - Authenticity, inclusivity, and community impact matter.
   - Saskatchewan's strengths include eco-tourism, Indigenous-led experiences, and community-based adventures.

3. **Travellers Choose Based on Values**
   - Experience-based spending is outpacing traditional sightseeing.
   - Travellers seek meaning, connection, learning, and nature-based escapes.
   - Saskatchewan offers unmatched opportunities for cultural, culinary, and nature-focused experiences.

4. **Digital Presence Drives Decisions**
   - Social media inspires 70% of trip choices in Canada.
   - Reviews and influencers carry more weight than traditional advertising.
   - Accurate online data, seamless mobile booking, instant messaging, and digital payments are now minimum expectations.
   - "If travellers can't find you online or can't book you easily, they'll choose someone who can."

5. **Personalization is the New Loyalty**
   - Uses customer insights to deliver relevant, timely, meaningful experiences.
   - Moves beyond simple recommendations to creating a sense of belonging.
   - "Personalization is the digital version of remembering a guest's favourite table."

Ethical DIGITAL

TOURISM Saskatchewan CANADA

6. Ethical AI Builds Trust

- Use only necessary data and protect privacy.
- Be transparent about when AI is used.
- Balance automation with authentic human interaction.
- Regularly review AI outcomes to avoid bias or misinformation.
- "Ethical AI means designing with respect for both people and place."

1. Shift from products to experiences: Integrate local culture, storytelling, and nature into offerings.
2. Use guest feedback strategically: Monitor reviews, surveys, and social listening to refine services.
3. Start small with digital transformation: Modernize one process or platform at a time.
4. Measure what matters: Track booking behavior, digital reach, and guest sentiment.
5. Build a culture of experimentation: Test new ideas, learn quickly, and adapt.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Katrina German is a Forbes-signed author, is in the Top 25 Women in Tech in Canada and has won the prestigious international Women in Tech award for "Women in Communications". She is an award-winning entrepreneur specializing in AI Ethics, technology and digital strategy. As the CEO and founder of Ethical Digital, she and her team are changing the trajectory of the Internet through digital strategy, research, training and certification.