

POWER UP! Program Guide

Program Overview

Power Up! Program is a digital mentorship program for Tourism Businesses (the Program) is a province-wide digital mentorship program funded by Destination BC. Grant funding is available for up to 75 eligible participants from B.C.-based, small and medium sized tourism businesses (50 employees or less), sole proprietors, and non-profit organizations.

Program Objectives

Digital technology presents opportunities for tourism businesses to streamline marketing efforts and improve productivity and the customer experience. COVID-19 has accelerated the digitization of customer interactions in response to customers moving to online channels; a change that will likely remain once the pandemic has subsided.

To support the tourism industry's economic recovery and tourism business growth, the program will provide access for B.C.-based small and medium sized businesses to a digital technical support specialist or subject matter expert (consultant) to provide audit and technical services designed to improve their digital marketing activities and use of digital technology in a chosen service area. Services are provided free of charge or at a significantly reduced cost, depending on services selected.

How it Works?

Businesses may choose **one** of the following service areas that they deem a priority for their business. Fees are paid by Destination BC to a consultant for the delivery of that service, with eligible costs covered up to a maximum of \$5,000. **In some cases, businesses will need to have additional budget to implement advice by the consultant (noted below in the service descriptions).**

Only one application per business will be accepted.

Service areas include:

Digital Strategy

A consultant will review existing marketing documentation including audience, goals, and channel strategies. Once provided access, the consultant will also review any available analytics related to the current marketing channels and programs.

Based on this review and a discovery meeting with the business to better understand needs, interests, resources, pain points, audiences and goals, the consultant will work with the program participant to develop a high-level digital marketing plan that will include:

- Attainable short and long-term marketing goals

- Advice on how to measure the effectiveness of their ongoing marketing efforts
- Advice on priority marketing tactics and channels
- Advice on supporting educational resources to review

Participants will leave with a high-level digital marketing plan and advice for the prioritization of tactics.

Access to site, ad, email, and social analytics (if available) will be required. **Budget to implement the marketing plan is the responsibility of the business.**

Deliverable format: Marketing Strategy PowerPoint Deck Presentation

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

A consultant will perform a technical and content audit of the business website then work directly with the program participant to develop a set of attainable goals for their SEO efforts and a prioritized list of tactics. This will also include the provision of supporting educational resources to assist in the future execution of the tactics. Specifically, this service will include:

- SEO Technical Audit to identify fundamental technical issues with the site
- Fixing technical SEO issues that may impact SEO, for example:
 - Robots.txt – ensure important pages are not blocked from search engine crawlers and there is a link to the sitemap.xml
 - Sitemap.xml – check there is one and that the correct, only canonical pages are listed and there are no redirects or 404s
 - Canonicals for “non-www and www”, “http/s” and end of URL forward slashes
 - Are all URLs structured correctly?
 - Correct page and link settings for “noindex” and “nofollow”
 - If the site is multi-lingual, ensure Hreflang settings are correct
 - Broken internal links - 404 page not found
 - Broken external links - 404 page not found
 - Redirects and Redirect Chains OR
 - Review and fix Core Web Vitals issues
- Site Content Audit
 - Pages – are there individual, relevant pages that highlight the organization of the business, its business category, products, and services. Are any pages, or any content, missing that customers may be looking for? If not, develop and add new content
 - Are types of pages often utilized in SEO (such as blogs or FAQs) present? If not, consider adding new content.
 - Is the content well organized? If not, consider reorganizing it.
 - Fix or update issues with page titles, descriptions, headings structure (H1-H6).
 - Optimize images.
 - Audit for Structured Data (Schema). Add appropriate schema types throughout the site.
- Create or claim Google Search Console to help identify ongoing SEO issues

- Claim GMB and add UTM tags to GMB links to assist with Local SEO
- Create or claim Google Analytics to assist in measuring SEO impact
- After a solid technical and on-page foundation has been established for the site, focus can turn to:
 - Updating GMB and adding more and regular content to the GMB profile
 - Citation Audit
 - Creating and implementing an outreach campaign to get the site more widely linked to from other appropriate sites

Participants will leave with high-level SEO knowledge, a clean up of technical and content SEO issues on their website, and advice for the prioritization of tactics.

Deliverable format: Expert advice on how to improve SEO performance, a set of attainable SEO goals, and a prioritized list of tactics.

Website Review

This service involves auditing and testing the site to understand potential User Experience (UX) and technical issues that could be impeding the participant's website performance and outlining advice for ways to fix and improve these issues.

The implementation of advice would require supplementary budget and access to the participant's website code to allow a website developer to make improvements, or supplementary technical resources from within the participant's organization to make those updates in-house. Participants will leave with a report prioritizing the most pressing concerns and those easiest to address.

Specifically, this service would include:

- Mobile and accessibility testing and advice.
- Site speed testing.
- Review of any Google Analytics reports/conversion metrics.
- User Experience Testing and a month subscription to a UX testing tool (for example HotJar or Pagesense). Testing and optimization reports would focus on:
 - Navigation
 - Scroll depth
 - Page clicks
 - What content is resonating with user
 - The user's journey across the site, including entrances and exits and whether the site is delivering on their expectations.

The testing phase would be followed by analysis and advice, prioritized by the most pressing concerns and those that are the easiest to address.

Deliverable format: UX report including specific advice in order of priority.

Please note: Businesses that have already been approved for funding under the Launch Online Grant Program for a Booking Engine/Online Store are not eligible for this service.

Email Marketing

This service is suited to participants who do not currently have an email platform in place or have one in place that is not currently in use. The services would include:

- Providing advice on what email platform to choose (***subscription costs for the email platform would be incurred by the participant.**)
- Working with the participant on the initial platform set-up.
- Working with the participant on planning an email sign-up welcome drip campaign.
- Providing advice for email sign-up lead generation tactics and monthly newsletters.

Deliverable format: Expert advice on how to choose an email platform and support in getting the platform set up and the email program started.

Social Media Strategy

This service is ideal for participants who want to augment their social strategy and use it to drive more awareness of their operation and drive more engaged traffic to their business website. The services would include:

- Audit of existing channel activities and analytics (access to reports and tools will be required to complete the audit) and key findings of audit.
- Trend and search data research, including up-to-date social channel trends and updates, Google Search Trend data relevant to the program participant's business, and specific, social "days of the year" relevant to the business.
- Social strategy advice for content, post frequency, tone of voice and channel tactics.

Deliverable format: Social Strategy advice presentation.

Digital Advertising

This service is ideal for participants who want to test digital advertising and/or optimize their current digital advertising activities. Funds for this service include:

- Overview training session of priority, available paid digital media channels and their best uses and best practices.
- Training and support with the set-up, monitoring and reporting of digital ads in the channels reviewed in the training session (a mix of social, search, display and video as made possible by existing advertising assets and access to budget).
Advertising budget would need to come from the participant's own budget.

Deliverable format: training session, support with the set up and optimization of ads.

Who is Eligible?

The following criteria must be met to be eligible for the Program. Tourism businesses must:

- Operate in one of the following sectors: accommodations, tour or outdoor operator, winery/cidery/brewery (must have a retail space and offer a visitor experience such as a tasting room or tour), and attractions.
- Be primarily focused on attracting and servicing visitors
- Demonstrate a need for the digital service requested, be prepared to complete the work within the project timeline (see Program Process and Timeline below), and have budget necessary to deliver advice (if required)
- Be registered in B.C. and owned by a B.C. resident or residents
- Have sole or primary operations in B.C.
- Maintain a PST, GST, and WorkSafeBC number (if applicable)
- Be currently operating or planning to open (if permitted by the current health restrictions and season)
- Operate for at least 4-months in the calendar year
- Have been in operation for at least 1-year prior to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020
- Have a functioning website
- Be able to provide consultants with access to the backend of website for testing purposes
- Confirm the ability to provide one central point of contact for the work
- Confirm they are committed to implementing advice
- Be prepared with additional marketing funds to support ongoing efforts
- Confirm they have a basic understanding of the area of service for which they're applying
- Complete a post program survey within 2 weeks of program completion

Businesses owned by Indigenous peoples, people of colour, women and youth (under 30) are encouraged to apply.

Businesses will be asked to declare that they have not received access to other programs funded by the provincial or federal government for the same services area selected under this program. Failure to make this declaration will result in repayment of any grants made available through this program by the program participant and exclusion from current and future Destination BC programs and services.

Meeting the criteria does not guarantee acceptance into the program.

Destination BC reserves a right to award partial contributions towards the total funding request.

The following businesses are not eligible for the program:

- Franchise operations, including those locally owned
- Businesses with more than 50 staff
- New businesses that have been in operation for less than one year

- Restaurants, spas, retail only operations
- Destination marketing or management organizations or other sector organizations
- Business that are not registered and headquartered in B.C. and do not have a fixed place of business in B.C.

Program Process and Timeline

Program information will be available beginning on September 7th, 2021. Potential applicants are advised to review the information and eligibility requirements in advance of the application intake opening. Application intake will open on September 20th and will remain open until 85 applications are received. Applications will then be reviewed based on application criteria and on a first come, first serve basis until the 75 program spots are filled. **It is important to note that, due to the limited number of spots available, the intake period will be short and limited so potential applicants are advised to be prepared for the application intake opening on September 20th.**

Applicants must ensure that the application form and all required information are completed and submitted. An incomplete application cannot be approved to receive a grant. Successful applicants will be notified within 3 weeks of the program intake closing. To move forward, successful participants will be required to sign a contract between themselves, Destination BC, and the consultant they have been matched with.

Successful applicants will be matched with consultants. Digital work will begin in November and must be completed by February 2022. Businesses must be able to participate in the program within these timeframes.

Following project completion, program participants will be required to complete a survey.

Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses are those identified within this document. All expenses must be related to work completed for the program participant and cannot be used for expenses not related to that business (for example, selling goods or services on behalf of another business). All work completed must be related to tourism products or services that are primarily directed at visitors.

Ineligible expenses include:

- License, subscription, or hosting costs
- Costs that were incurred prior to the program start date
- Costs associated with implementation of plans and advice that are outside the scope of the services identified above

Application Process

Businesses can complete an online application form on **September 20th, 2021**. Participants should have the following information available:

- a) Business information, including Federal Business Number, Provincial Sales Tax (PST) number, Goods and Services (GST) Tax number
- b) Last year's revenue (2019 or 2020)
- c) Number of staff on its payroll, including both full-time, part-time and seasonal staff
- d) Business website URL
- e) Business social media account URLs (e.g. [https://www.facebook.com/...](https://www.facebook.com/), [https://twitter.com/...](https://twitter.com/), [https://www.instagram.com/...](https://www.instagram.com/))

Please note: To be eligible for the program, applicants must demonstrate a minimum level of digital knowledge as assessed through questions in the application form.

Review a sample of the application [here](#).

Businesses are advised to apply immediately as 85 applications will be accepted and reviewed based on criteria and on a first come, first serve basis for the 75 spots available in the program.

For more information please contact:

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