



Innovation Snapshot

British Columbia has thousands of innovative entrepreneurs and leaders in tourism. These people are one of the best sources of information on what works and does not work in the industry.

Innovator in:
Product

Key Words: access
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Kootenay Rockies Tourism

By Richard Crowley

Background

Kootenay Rockies Tourism was founded in 1978 and is a Destination Management and Marketing Organization (DMO). Their mandate is to increase tourism revenues by developing, coordinating and delivering collaborative destination marketing programs on behalf of the tourism industry of the Kootenay Rockies region. The office is located in Kimberley, BC and currently there is eight full time staff.

The Kootenay Rockies destination of British Columbia is one of six designated destinations of BC. Others include Northern BC, Cariboo Chilcotin Coast, Thompson Okanagan, Vancouver, Coast & Mountains and Vancouver Island.

Kootenay Rockies Tourism's activities are delivered by the staff under the direction of an industry Board of Directors. The Board is elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Kootenay Rockies Tourism Association.

The Issue

In the ever changing market, DMO's are faced with increasing pressure to offer quality service to ensure their region is represented and promoted to its fullest potential. Technology is changing and advancing as well; more travelers are connected with personal computers, cell phones, palm pilots and blackberries and use the internet to plan, book, and reserve their holidays and activities. We are living in a 'need-to-know' and 'want-access-now' society where people plan as they go and will change their plans on the road.



KootenayRockies.mobi





The personal computer is still the most popular way to access information in Canada; however internet access via mobile phone is starting to outpace the personal computer in countries such as the United Kingdom, Japan, and Korea. These are key markets for the Kootenay region and it is only a matter of time before more North American travelers start seeking out information on their hand held devices more than their computers.

The Innovation

Kootenay Rockies Tourism is the first DMO in Canada, and perhaps the World, to offer full online travel information services to mobile users, which can be accessed at kootenayrockies.mobi. “This is the ultimate tool for flexible travel,” says Chris Dadson, President of Kootenay Rockies Tourism. “Mobile web sites will revolutionize the way travelers experience a destination.”

Travellers are able to receive detailed visitor information and they are hot linked to websites and phone numbers of tourism operators, resorts, and activities. All the basic information available will comply with Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) payment programs (pay by information downloaded, not time used) and there are options to click through for more detailed information, video, images and sound clips.

The Impact

Better, quicker, and up-to-date information available at peoples’ fingertips is what this mobile site has to offer. An increased international focus on the Kootenay region will help tourism operators increase their revenue potential.

Future applications include accommodation and dining reservations, event ticket purchasing, tee time booking at golf courses, and last minute discounted tee time broadcasts. There will also be the ability to target advertising based on visitor location and their compliance to accept ads. Enhanced visitor experience with site interpretations, history and visitor information through an extensive inventory of video clips, sound clips and information will bring the region to life and influence more travelers to explore the Kootenay Rockies.