

Ontario's Southwest Signature Experience Program

Program Description

The Ontario's Southwest (OSW) Signature Experience program is created by Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation (SWOTC) with the purpose of featuring unique experiences within the region and introducing the Ontario Signature Experience and the Canada Signature Experience programs, initiatives that promote the sale of tourism experiences through travel trade.

Required Criteria

Logistics/Operations

- The experience provider must be in market delivering a tourism experience for a minimum of one year.
- Experience provider must have adequate insurance:
 - Adequate liability insurance
 - If experiences require a waiver form, ensure that the contract is formulated by a legal team, and updated periodically as required.
- All business and required operating licenses must be up to date.
- All Municipal, Provincial and Federal Health & Safety Regulations must be followed.
- When able, sites, facilities and services should be accessible to all, including persons with disabilities and others who have specific access requirements or other special needs. Please visit the [AODA](#) website for additional information.
- Have a future marketing/operations plan in place for a minimum of 2 years.
- Must have an adequate budget and business/marketing plan in place.
- The experience offers programming hosted by local storytellers.

Customer Service & Inquiries

- Provide quality customer service including the ability to respond promptly to inquiries and provide confirmation of booking.
- Understand that every customer contact is a chance to shine/ "moment of truth".
- Provide all necessary equipment to participate in the experience (helpful for international travelers).
- Use a [PRIZM](#) customer segmentation analysis to better understand your target market (*note: SWOTC may provide if you currently do not have one*).
- Perform regular evaluation of customer satisfaction levels (e.g., customer survey, examination of online reviews, etc.)
- Complete a yearly assessment of program success (*note: a form will be sent to the e-mail address of host/owner by SWOTC*).



Sustainability

- Acknowledge the triple bottom line in your operations.
- Experience providers are encouraged to participate in programs centered around regenerative business practices.
- It is encouraged that a portion of the experience price is donated to a local charity or used to pay for a carbon offset (*note: this is not a requirement, only a suggestion*).

Pricing

- Experience provider honours rates and refrains from raising prices before the expiry of the contracted agreement (amongst tour operators/tour wholesalers/customers).
- Ensure the experience price includes compensation to the experience provider for their time and expertise (i.e., owner is paid for the 2 hours spent with visitors).

Marketing

- Be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of travel trade.
- Have a collection of images/video content to share with SWOTC and your local Destination Management Organization (DMO) for marketing purposes (*note: if digital assets are not available, contact SWOTC to discuss options*).
- Must have a website to promote the experience and accept inquiries/bookings (*note: can include a webpage on your business website*).
- Have a minimum of one active business social media account that is used to promote the experience (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, etc.).
- Have an overview on file that provides a summary of the experience, net rates, group size, location, and images of experience.
- The experience name provides an understanding of what the experience entails.

For more information about the Signature Experiences program, please visit our [webpage](#). Any additional inquiries can be sent to admin@swotc.ca.



Glossary

Operations/Marketing Plan: consists of an overview of the experience provider's objectives. This includes the necessities to conduct business such as the physical location and outline of capital/expense requirements, etc. In terms of the marketing aspect of the plan, this details the strategy in which you will use to market your products to the ideal consumer.

Moment of Truth: the moment when a consumer interacts with a product or service to form an impression about that particular product or service.

Travel Trade: provides a way to promote your business to the Canadian and international markets in a strategic and cost-effective manner. Working within this market requires patience and willingness to ensure that you are providing the best possible experience for both the end consumer and the travel professional along the way.

Experience Provider: an individual, company or organization that creates travel opportunities by sequencing and staging activities, personal encounters, and authentic experiences that are designed to engage the senses and create long-lasting memories for guests.

Carbon Offset: a service that involves an individual paying someone else to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on their behalf (e.g., investing in an organization's renewable energy project to offset the greenhouse gases produced from heating your house).

Triple Bottom Line: an approach that expands on the traditional framework of only measuring profits and shareholder value by examining how business operations impact the natural environment, society, and the economy.

PRIZM Customer Segmentation Analysis: uses Environics Analytics' PRIZM segmentation system to capture variables including demographics, lifestyles, and values to analyze and better engage customers and markets.

Regenerative Business Practices: business practices that acknowledge the business' place in the system where it operates including the community and industry, as well as focuses on systems that help to protect, restore, and replenish natural resources and human capital.