

Millennial Travel Program

2017 CASE STUDY



Canada



Introduction

As Millennial Travel continued to emerge as a growing segment of the tourism sector the decision was made to use the celebration of Canada's 150th Birthday in 2017 as a focus for a new program tasked with one goal: to encourage the youth travel segment in Canada to travel within their own country. The Millennial Travel Program (MTP) launched in 2016 with this vision:

To create a youth travel movement in celebration of Canada's 150th Birthday.

To inspire this global force of young travellers to explore our amazing country and stimulate demand for Canada's visitor economy.

To turn 2017 into a memorable year for Canadian youth ages 18 to 34 by creating a youth travel movement across the country and forging lifelong travel ambassadors for Canada.

The Opportunity

At the heart of the Millennial Travel program was the desire to break perceptions that kept Canadian Millennials from choosing to travel within their own country. These include:

- An attitude that Canada will always be here and they can travel it later.
- A limited knowledge of what Canada has to offer as a travel destination.
- A perception that the experiences they look for from global travel are not available in their own backyard.

WHY MILLENNIALS?

Beyond the sheer size of the youth travel segment, from research we knew the unique character of this market was one of the main reasons we chose to focus on Millennials for travel growth.

- Millennials often spend more in destinations than other tourists because they travel for longer periods.
- Millennials travel more frequently and off the beaten track.
- Millennials are likely to return to the destination over their lifetime.
- Millennials are pioneer travellers who discover and promote destinations not yet visited by traditional tourists.
- Millennials play an important role in the tourism landscape and image of destinations.
- Millennials are instigators of travel trends and thrive on influencing others.
- Millennials are at the cutting edge of technology and are more connected than any other age group making them more likely to use technology to make recommendations.
- Millennials value travel as an essential aspect of their lives.

Creative Development



As we started to develop the brand platform for our Millennial Travel Program we dove deeper to understand our audience and ensure the brand would connect with both domestic and international Millennials.

Youth travellers globally seem to travel with purpose and are often drawn by one of three key things:

- **Social hubs** (beach towns, ski resorts, events/festivals, cities).
- **Physical challenge** (biking, climbing, Machu Picchu, Kilimanjaro, bungee jumping).
- **Learning and development** (language studies, working, study, cooking, spiritual).

This information drove the creative mission and vision for the Millennial Travel Program and became the guiding principle for all creative assets and content marketing:

Vision › *Lose yourself in the wilds (wildlife and wild life) of Canada and you'll discover something important about yourself.*

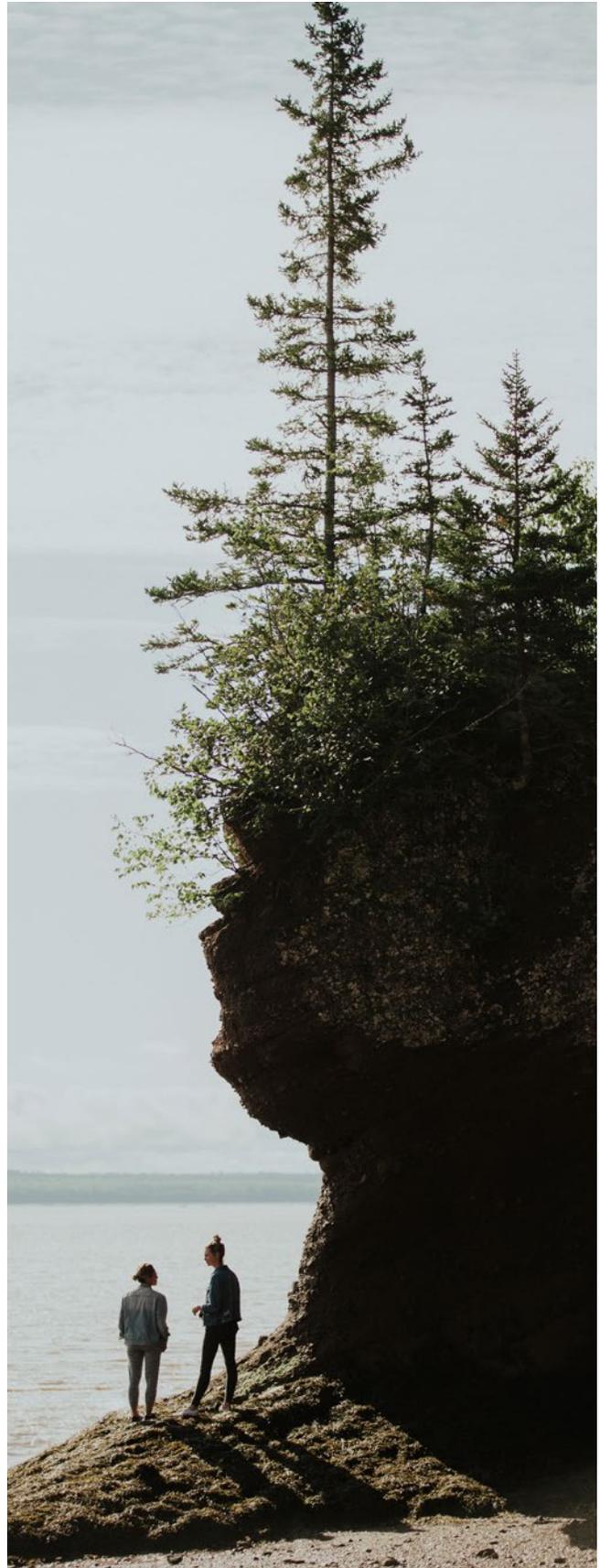
Mission › *Canada offers unparalleled wild places: through our vibrant cities, within our eclectic gatherings, and across our natural landscapes. We challenge the youth of the world to explore our urban backstreets, communal hubs, and rugged trails, marking them with their footsteps, and filling them with their experiences.*

Purpose for Travel



CREATIVE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Provide opportunities for self-discovery. For a new generation of travellers, travel isn't just about seeing things, it's about richer experiences that stay with you for a lifetime and impact you personally.
- Profile destinations and culture in an unexpected way. Skip clichés. When highlighting well-known activities or experiences put a surprising spin on the story.
- Promote Canada's key competitive differentiators. Infuse fun, energy, culture, adventure, knowledge and exploration into the program.
- Provide a balance between urban and nature. Nature is an integral part of Canada's uniqueness but adding urban layers makes the destination fresh and new. Urban emphasis, especially when too party focused, lacks uniqueness and credibility. Consider using music and festivals as a focus for social activities.
- Make it a bit edgy. A challenging and edgy tone has an aspirational quality for Millennials and could effectively disrupt the status quo and change existing perceptions of Canada.
- An authentic claim is paramount in appealing to Millennials. Play on Canadian traditions vs. culture. Culture is a proven driver for travel and using interpretations of culture as people and place should be considered.
- Inspire domestic travellers by using international drivers. These provide the market with an element of surprise, interest, and understanding they could get some of the same experiences they look for from global travel right here in their own backyard.
- Above all, position Canada to youth as an exciting travel option by delivering on Canada's Millennial brand promise: Lose yourself in the wilds (wildlife and wild life) of Canada and you'll discover something important about yourself.



Content Strategy



The content strategy was built from the positioning statement and the focus was on a “Team Canada” approach. The Millennial Travel Program was not about highlighting separate Canadian tourism industry partners. We wanted to ensure that we knit every story together – destinations, experiences, personalities – these were all elements of the storytelling process.

When the original content strategy was put together all of the partners and parties involved with content creation were asked to consider the following:

- Does the content promote a unique feature or take a creative spin of something in Canada in an exciting youthful or edgy way?
- Does the content meet a partner goal or objective?
- Does the content connect the reader with the necessary info to travel?
- Is the content an entertaining and relatable Canadian piece for the audience?
- Does the content touch on the key travel motivators: social hubs, physical challenges or learning and development for the reader?
- Does it provide an opportunity for the reader to self-discover, grow or explore? Or ask the reader to share their experience?

By ensuring all of the content delivered on these points we were able to create a hub of engaging, enlightening and unique media assets that highlighted Canada.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Social Media as a Key Audience Driver

From the launch of the Millennial Travel Program, we knew that social media hubs were going to be a key driver of both traffic and engagement for the campaign assets.

Millennial travellers – more than any of the generations before them – acknowledge that social media plays a significant role in their self-concept. In fact: two in five acknowledge that their holiday decisions are influenced by what they see on their networks on a day-to-day basis.¹

As 76% of Millennial travellers choose where to travel next based on a friends recommendations², we knew we needed to ensure that content was shared on social media alongside positive messages about the activities and destinations included in campaign content.

Partner Support and Investment

Content performance multiplied when all partners worked together and prepared for content launches.



A great example of this is the Newfoundland & Labrador Webisode. This webisode surpassed 1M views but also had 37,109 interactions, particularly on Facebook.

Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism encouraged locals to view the video and share their own thoughts with visitors and the response was incredible.

¹ Expedia “Millennial Traveller Report” November 2016

² Forbes.com “Are Millennial Travel Trends Shifting in 2016?” January 15, 2016

Partnerships



For the success of this program, it was important to select a media partner that has an established affinity with Millennials.

In collaboration with Bell Media and 21 industry partners – provinces, cities, hotel and transportation providers – Destination Canada built a MASSIVE bilingual content campaign that ran over 431 days.

Our goals were to reach 4.4M Canadian Millennials, change their perceptions about travel within Canada and generate a 5% lift in travel by this target group. The program launched in April 2016 and ran through to Canada's 150th celebration of Confederation on July 1, 2017.

→ **89%** of Canadian Millennials were reached 28 times each by the campaign.

Media Mix

Working with Bell Media ensured access to high-traffic media sites that targeted Millennials. In an average week, Bell Media reached 4.2M Millennials (age 18-34) per week through their TV properties alone. Digital outlets added another 6.5M reach while Bell Media radio stations connected with 4.6M Millennials per month.³

Over the course of the program, we utilized several different media mixes for each promotional campaign. The assets were tested for effectiveness and there were some key learnings from each activation:

- Social was effective at driving traffic to the web pages, but not as effective with conversions.
- Other assets (TV, pre-roll, radio) helped with lead generation and engagement.
- Radio was a highly effective medium delivering engaged traffic to the Canada 150 contest.



³ Numeris, Total Canada, comScore & COMB – 2016

Program Execution



To create a youth movement in celebration of Canada's 150th birthday and achieve our goal of reaching 4.4M Canadian Millennials with our message, we knew we had to run the campaign on several platforms to ensure maximum exposure. The campaign would also need to be presented in both official languages. These were some of the tactics used by the team:

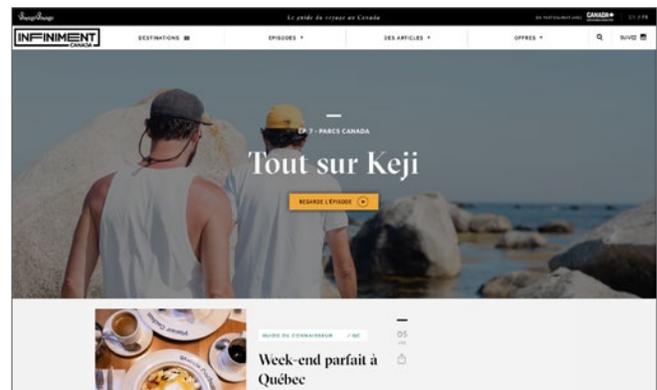
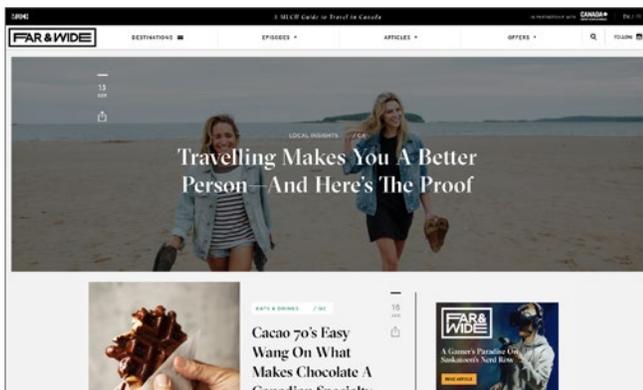
- Launch the **Far & Wide** and **Infiniment Canada** websites to act as content hubs for the Millennial Travel Program.
- Successfully bring more than 150 uniquely Canadian experiences to life via 18 marquee short-form webisodes, editorial content and offers.
- Enlist 50+ social influencers to share real-time experiences.
- Execute a multi-level media campaign for the program through promotions on broadcast, digital, social and radio media.
- Create and share 431 consecutive days of featured content.
- Feature the MTP brand and message at three Millennial focused events: One Young World 2016, WYSTC 2016 and WYSTC 2017.
- Produce three Canada 150 themed online contests with the support of two major partners – WestJet and Marriott Hotels.

International Extension:

Because youth interests do not vary by market, we were able to adapt and utilize Millennial content in International markets. Far & Wide assets were used in 18 International campaigns with an additional \$5M investment.

Millennial Travel Program content was shared across multiple platforms and campaigns targeting the same demographic:

- Being able to move content into other markets and leverage it was possible because the content was built on a solid foundation and spoke to Millennials no matter their nationality.
- Versatility was also considered throughout the asset development stage.
- There was a high adoption of content by Millennial travellers that generated millions of video views and thousands of leads and bookings to Canada.



Program Results



Overall the MTP campaign achieved all of its major goals and deliverables and was considered a success for Destination Canada, Bell Media, and our key industry partners.

DOMESTIC:



34+ M impressions for campaign media.



Over **3.5M** video views across YouTube and Facebook.



Over **670** pieces of unique content were created to help pique interest, encourage exploration and ultimately drive travel.



Reaching **89%** of adults aged 18 to 34, an average of 28 times through a media mix of broadcast, digital, radio and social.

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS INCLUDING:

-  **16% more Millennials** who saw the Far & Wide campaign took a vacation within Canada.
-  **48% of Canadian Millennials** recalled seeing any elements of the Far & Wide campaign at least once.
-  Significantly more Canadian Millennials now say that **taking a vacation in Canada by car is easier** than they believed.



Nearly **300K leads** to partners to book accommodation, travel, and activities.



Creative storytelling, beautiful imagery and a social voice **authentic to the Millennial target.**

INTERNATIONAL (ADDED VALUE):

Content resonated beyond Canada including in the USA, UK, Germany, Australia, Japan, France and South Korea providing:



300M additional reach



16M additional video views



Nearly **35K** additional leads to partners



+30K additional bookings to Canada through travel trade partners such as STA, Hanatour, interpark tours, Air Canada.

Conclusion



As the Millennial Travel Program concludes one fact remains clear: the job of targeting Millennials is not over. We can't ignore this audience and they are not going to change their mindset or their ways. Millennials are who they are and we need to adapt our messaging and strategy to accommodate that.

This is not a generation that puts a high value on brand loyalty like their predecessors and as such will not be influenced by frequent flyer programs. But they will be influenced by their friends.

We also know that global Millennials are much more nervous about travelling alone than their older counterparts ever were. For today's Millennials, travel is an experience to be shared with others and can also be used as a way to connect with a digital penpal. Many Millennials have studied abroad and as such there is high interest to visit friends abroad.

Expedia summed it up quite nicely in their 2013 report⁴:

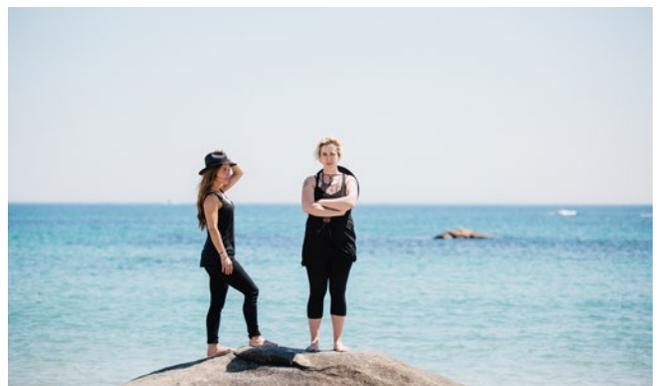
The Future of Travel will be collaborative, co-curated, fluid and flexible and highly personal. This is very much a do-it-yourself lifestyle, where travel can be inspired, planned and booked with a few clicks on a personal device; where a trip is not a trip unless it is both fulfilling and experiential, and shared across social networks before, during and after. In conclusion, millennials will be driving the future of travel.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For more information on the Millennial Travel Program, please contact the Millennial Travel Program Team at Destination Canada:

mtp@destinationcanada.ca



⁴ Expedia "The Future of Travel" 2013