

# Tourism Barrie Increases Engagement, Boosting Visitors and Ad Revenue with Sitefinity



**INDUSTRY**  
Travel and Tourism

**PRODUCT**  
Progress Sitefinity

## SUMMARY

To fulfill its mission to attract visitors to the region, Tourism Barrie has deployed Sitefinity's analytics and customer journey optimization capabilities to gain better insight into visitors to their site with the goal of delivering each visitor a rich, personalized and engaging experience.

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Pam Bothwright,  
Marketing Manager

## Challenge

Located about one hour north of Toronto in a region known for its scenic lakes, Barrie has long been a tourist haven. Historically the region catered to families, but with increased daily train service and a growing millennial population in Toronto, the tourist demographic is changing. And Tourism Barrie, the city's official tourism office, found itself needing to make changes to its marketing.

“From families to day trippers, adventure seekers and nature lovers we now have six personas that we target and to be successful requires a great deal of personalization,” said Tina Yiu, Communications Manager, Tourism Barrie. “Our goal is to offer each visitor a personalized and engaging digital experience.”

## Solution

Since 2011, Tourism Barrie has used Progress Sitefinity as its CMS. It recently deployed Sitefinity's analytics and customer journey optimization capabilities with its Sitefinity Business Partner Flywheel Strategic, to help deliver a high level of personalization. Sitefinity provides multiple capabilities that enable marketers to better understand individual visitor behavior. For six months the organization focused on building detailed customer profiles and carefully tracked online behavior – resulting in data that revealed unique opportunities to develop marketing efforts targeting new personas.

“Through the data collection process, Tourism Barrie found viable demographics to target beyond families,” said Scott Snowden, Partner, Flywheel Strategic. “We worked together putting rules in place to target those personas with blogs, specific web pages and featuring different experiences on their home page.”

## Results

Through data, personalization efforts and journey optimization, Tourism Barrie has made some interesting discoveries that has impacted their marketing efforts. For example, other personas are surprisingly outperforming the popular “sports lover” persona. And two-thirds of visitors to

their hotel partner sites are made up of corporate or events people, visitors they hope to convert to future leisure travelers through personalization. These discoveries and more enable Tourism Barrie's marketing team to adjust marketing plans on the fly, directing resources where they will be most effective.

Their efforts have paid off with significant increases in traffic. For example:

- Return users up 50%
- Session lengths up 50%
- New users increased by 34%
- Organic traffic up 34%
- Mobile traffic up 56%; bounce rate down 7%

This is all good news for Tourism Barrie's business partners, a broad collection of restaurants, hotels, recreation outfitters, retail shops and more. It also helps Tourism Barrie reach its revenue goals as one of the main regional economic drivers.

"The more visitors we bring to our site means more click throughs to local business sites and ultimately more business for them," said Pam Bothwright, Marketing Manager, Tourism Barrie. "Additionally, from Sitefinity's analytics we know certain placements fare much better than others, enabling us to more readily sell prime ad spaces and ensure we meet our business objectives."

She also noted that from a content management perspective, Sitefinity provides many options to increase visibility of businesses.

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"Sitefinity provides multiple opportunities to feature a business on every page," Bothwright said. "Sitefinity's custom widgets readily enable us to highlight certain businesses. For example, we have a long list of restaurants and we can easily pin certain businesses to feature, add content boxes, utilize multiple column formats and rotate content at will."

Moving ahead, Tourism Barrie is looking forward to further honing their personalization skills.

"Our goal is that every piece of content generated is linked to a persona so that individual gets a rich, personalized and engaging experience," Bothwright said. "And we'll also continue making the best use of Sitefinity's analytics, adjusting personas and content as needed to ensure our resources are used as effectively as possible and we stay true to our mission to increase tourism to the region."

## About Tourism Barrie

Tourism Barrie is the official tourist office for the City of Barrie that provides a full range of free information on events, accommodations, attractions, arts & culture, dining, shopping, museums, corporate travel, and much more to tourists and community members alike.



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