

Tourism Barrie Helps Drive \$600 Million Tourist Economy with a Dynamic Destination Marketing Website Powered by Progress Sitefinity

CASE STUDY



INDUSTRY
Travel & Leisure

PRODUCT
Progress® Sitefinity®
Progress® Sitefinity Insight®

COUNTRY
Canada

SUMMARY

A Progress Sitefinity customer for more than 17 years, Tourism Barrie, the city's official tourism office, continues to enhance and evolve its web presence. Through the delivery of exceptional digital experiences, engaging content and targeted persona marketing, the Tourism Barrie website continues to exceed expectations, playing a major role in the region's \$600 million tourist economy.

Challenge

Known for its bounty of year-round recreational opportunities, burgeoning food scene and a packed calendar of festivals and events, Barrie, located about one hour north of Toronto, has established itself as a tourist haven and weekend getaway destination. Keeping Barrie on the radar of potential visitors requires the ability to attract, inform and retain, while considering the varying needs of different audiences —something Tourism Barrie's lean web team of two has been able to accomplish with Sitefinity's digital experience capabilities.

Solution

To sharpen its competitive edge in an ever-evolving tourism market, Tourism Barrie undertook an initiative with Flywheel Strategic, its Sitefinity implementation partner of more than seven years, to reimagine its website, create a multi-part journey and better utilize Sitefinity's powerful personalization capabilities. This included leveraging Progress Sitefinity Insight, a Customer Data Platform (CDP) that enables Tourism Barrie to build more personalized digital experiences, as well as strategize based on the data coming from Insight. That capability helped Tourism Barrie identify and attract two new Personas, significantly boosting the region's visitor economy.

From a visual experience perspective, the site now features higher-quality images and enhanced video capabilities to provide a unique visitor experience and drive more traffic to local business websites.

"Sitefinity gives us the opportunity to create a unique website along with the customizations Flywheel has created for us," said Kathleen Trainor, Executive Director of Tourism Barrie. "From a content management perspective, it's also important for a tourist office like ours to have the ability to post new content immediately, something other platforms do not allow you to do."

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Results

Tourism Barrie is funded primarily through a municipal accommodation tax imposed by the city of Barrie. Its success is measured by KPIs like the number of site visitors, page views, length of time spent on the site and click-throughs to over 400 partner sites like hotels, restaurants, attractions, etc. By leveraging Flywheel’s expertise and Sitefinity’s capabilities, the team of just two content marketers can manage the digital experiences for thousands of daily visitors who engage with millions of individual digital touchpoints, and that helps bring \$600 million to the local economy annually.

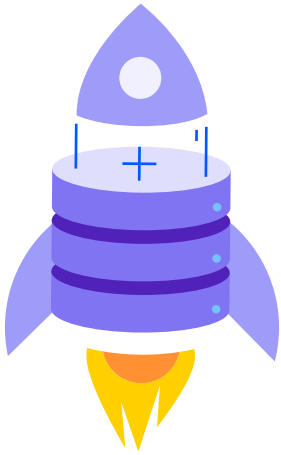
Those results reflect several initiatives carried out in the last year. One initiative, using Sitefinity Insight, is the development of a new Persona (with related marketing and web journey programs), “Sport Barrie,” focused on bringing different sporting events and tournaments to the area. It’s a lucrative business segment, attracting large groups of people to the region who not only hold their events in a rented venue but reserve hotel rooms, dine, shop and participate in local activities. That initiative alone brought more than \$29 million to the local economy.

“We set up a distinct area on the website with customized navigation templates and dedicated landing pages,” Trainor explained. “It’s really its own integrated destination marketing program that exposes participants to activities outside the arena like skiing, snow tubing, dining, shopping options and other attractions that fuels the visitor economy.”

Another web journey is dedicated to attracting new residents to the area. With its bountiful recreational opportunities, diverse cultural offerings and strong job market, Tourism Barrie is looking beyond the tourist business to attract more permanent residents to Barrie.

“Like the ‘Sport Barrie’ Persona, the ‘Live Barrie’ Persona also functions as an integrated marketing program exposing potential new residents to not only job opportunities but real estate, transportation options, education, and our cultural and recreation offerings,” Trainor said.

What makes all these initiatives possible are the powerful content management and personalization capabilities of Sitefinity, in combination with the expertise of the Tourism Barrie and Flywheel teams. In fact, the recent website redesign with an emphasis on responsiveness, specifically focused on mobile device compatibility, provided a multi-channel experience across all device types. As an example, to get literally in step with their target audience, Tourism Barrie created a poster campaign, placing posters with QR codes along the city’s waterfront to drive traffic back to the website, enticing visitors to venture off the beaches and into Downtown Barrie to make a tourism-related spend.



“The QR codes take visitors to landing pages promoting local shops and restaurants,” explained Tina Yui, Communications Manager, Tourism Barrie. She further added, “We do a lot of campaigns on the fly, and the ability to get landing pages built quickly and launch a campaign within days is vital for us.”

Looking ahead, Tourism Barrie has several initiatives on the horizon. In addition to researching new Personas and adding even more personalization capabilities, the team is planning to build a membership portal to offer exclusive member benefits and dive into the world of artificial intelligence to enhance destination marketing experiences.

When all is said and done, it’s the strong partnership with Progress and Flywheel that enables their success. “The partnership, relationship and collaboration speak volumes,” Trainor said. “We’ve been happy for 17 years, and we have no reason to change our platform.”

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Learn how Sitefinity’s digital experience capabilities can make your next marketing initiative a success.

About Progress

Progress (Nasdaq: PRGS) provides software that enables organizations to develop and deploy their mission-critical applications and experiences, as well as effectively manage their data platforms, cloud and IT infrastructure.

As an experienced, trusted provider, we make the lives of technology professionals easier. Over 4 million developers and technologists at hundreds of thousands of enterprises depend on Progress. Learn more at www.progress.com

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Worldwide Headquarters

Progress Software Corporation
15 Wayside Rd, Suite 400, Burlington, MA01803, USA
Tel: +1-800-477-6473

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