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# Travel Offers Program

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Fall Campaign

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2014

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## **Fall Campaign - Travel Offers Program**

### **Overview of Program**

Continuing the Travel Offers program utilized in the Summer Campaign, the Fall Campaign program was in market September 9<sup>th</sup> – October 31<sup>st</sup>. Travel Offers were once again featured on Ontariosouthwest.com and the fall program gave consumers a choice of 80 offers from 42 different tourism operators, please see Appendix 1 for a list of all offers. Each offer appeared in an appropriate category on the website with most offers appearing in multiple categories. The categories were: Overnight Packages, Wine & Culinary, Family Fun, Couples Getaway, Waterfront & Outdoors, and Arts, Culture & Entertainment. There was an additional category for hotels providing a special Fall Road Trip rate/discount just for the duration of the Fall Campaign.

Consumers showed significant interest in the offers and the campaign but there was less overall conversion as compared to the Summer Campaign. Website traffic to Ontariosouthwest.com as a result of the campaign was up 80% over the same period last year. Of the various offer types, Accommodations and Attractions & Entertainment had the best results in terms of conversions; while most restaurant related offers didn't gain very much traction with consumers. These trends echo the results received from the Summer Campaign program. The travel offers resulted in a total of 1,381 referral clicks to partner websites from Ontariosouthwest.com.

As a reminder, it is SWOTC's role, with this campaign and overall, to compel travel to the region. SWOTC's measurement of success for this program, as with the Summer offers program, is the referrals generated to partner websites.

It is SWOTC's hope that by providing this report, it will help tourism operators build even more compelling offers in the future.

### **Fall Marketing Campaign Activities**

The same marketing targets and tactics that were used during the Summer Campaign were utilized for the Fall Campaign but on a much smaller scale. There was significantly less advertising investment in Fall Campaign compared to the Summer Campaign as there was a smaller group of core product offerings featured.

- Free-standing insert (FSI) distributed via major dailies in the markets, shown in Appendix 3. The FSI was also distributed through nine DMOs and at targeted events. See Appendix 2 for a digital version of the FSI.
- Digital media included Trip Advisor, Google AdWords, Weather Network, targeted display ads, targeted mobile, Facebook ads & sponsored stories, and social media strategy.
- Website content updates to [www.Ontariosouthwest.com](http://www.Ontariosouthwest.com).
- Themed e-blasts distributed to OSW's email database.
- Media relations' activities including release distribution and story pitching.
- Consumer Contest – promotion of the continuing Win a Gourmet Getaway Contest

## **Results of Marketing Activities**

Website traffic to [www.OntariosSouthwest.com](http://www.OntariosSouthwest.com) during the Fall Campaign was 37,333 unique visitors, and 43,759 total visitors, which was an increase of nearly 80% compared to the same time period last year. There was also a significant increase in traffic to the website from the United States, representing just over 20% of total visitors, compared to approximately 4% of total visitors last year in the same period. Digital media advertising resulted in 16,312,722 total impressions and 45,650 clicks of all digital advertising.

Two themed E-blasts were delivered to a total of 19,396 email subscribers. The emails blasts averaged an open rate of 31.5%; exceeding the industry average of 20% for Travel & Tourism e-newsletters. Of those subscribers who opened the e-blasts, 1,770 unique people clicked on links pertaining specifically to Travel Offers content. See Appendix 4 for the e-blasts that were deployed during the campaign.

The existing Win a Gourmet Getaway contest was also promoted during the Fall Campaign to help drive more traffic to the website and the offers section as well as increase OSW's email database. During the length of the campaign there were 5,838 new contest entries and 4,328 new unique email database subscribers.

## **Program Insights**

As with the Summer Campaign, Accommodations and Entertainment & Attractions travel offers were among the most successful travel offers during the Fall Campaign. Additionally, of the variety of incentives for the consumer to choose from, offers featuring discounts unique to the campaign performed better than offers featuring existing packages that were available through other sources.

Placement of the offers on the website page had no effect on which offer did well in terms of purchase conversions. An example of this during the Fall program is the Fanshawe Pioneer Village offer which appeared in the lower half of the main Travel Offers page and had conversion success; it was in the top five for purchases and referral clicks. Another example is the Station Park Hotel London that appeared near the bottom of the main Travel Offers page & Overnight Packages page during the length of the Fall program, as it did during the Summer program, and it was one of the most successful offers in terms of conversions during both campaigns.

Additionally, in reference to website referral clicks, SWOTC found that the more successful offers featured dedicated landing pages on the operators' website that related directly to the offer and provided simple transaction processing. This shows that the easier it is for the consumer to purchase or book an offer, the more likely they are to buy.

When trying to determine success through measurement and tracking, offers that were unique to the fall campaign, or featured unique tracking codes, were much easier to track for partners than those that were already existing and available to consumers through other sources.

## Top Performing Offers

Figure 1 shows the Top 5 operators who had the most transactions during the campaign by items sold. Three of the operators shown in the chart featured had multiple offers as part of the campaign but transaction tracking by individual offer was not available so results are given as totals. Ideally, we would have liked to track each of the offers separately to allow for more in-depth conclusions to be drawn from the more successful offers and we hope all offers in future campaigns are able to be tracked individually. Many partners, as they did during the summer campaign, indicated through anecdotal feedback that they most likely had many additional purchases of their offers by phone but were unable to track them unless a unique code was used by the consumer at the time of booking. For a list of all participating offers in the program, please see Appendix 1.

**Figure 1**

Operator	Offer Description	Transactions	Items Sold
Clovermead	Receive \$1.50 off each admission ticket to Clovermead Adventure Farm when you purchase online.	82	82
Port Stanley Festival Theatre	Ontario's Southwest is proud to offer Port Stanley Festival Theatre's 'Early-bird Theatre Subscription' for their 2015 Season at 2014 pricing. For \$142.50 (plus HST & handling) you will secure one ticket to each of the five 2015 Season summer performances at Port Stanley Festival Theatre.	35	35
Fanshawe Pioneer Village	Buy one regular price admission to Fanshawe Pioneer Village and receive the second one FREE!	28	28
Station Park All Suite Hotel	Choice of three different overnight packages – Grand Theatre Package, Grand Theatre Dinner Package, and Dine Out Package	9	9
Courtyard by Marriott London	Choice of three different overnight packages – Stay & Play Packages, Pride & Joy Couples Package, and Romance Getaway	8	8

## Top Website Referrals

There were a total of 1,381 referral clicks to partner websites from Ontariosouthwest.com as a result of the offers. Each offer had two types of referral clicks, one directly to the partner's website homepage and one to the page to purchase, or receive more information, a particular offer on the partner's website. The total number of referral clicks shows that consumers were willing to spend the time to find out more about the operators who listed the offer, as well as the offers themselves.

Figure 2 below shows the Top 10 website referrals by operator by clicks to the offer on their website. When comparing the top website referrals to the top performing offers by transactions in Figure 1, it is important to note that only two of them appear in both charts. How could these qualified consumers have been lost on the path to conversion? Was the offer purchasing procedure too complex or did the consumer just change their mind along the way? Going forward, it's a good rule of thumb to keep in mind that the easier the purchasing procedure is for the consumer, the more likely they are to convert their referral click to a purchase.

There are some limitations to the referral traffic figures as it is only possible to track the referrals from consumers who clicked on the two links listed within each offer. There were, most likely, many consumers who chose to seek out more information about the operators by using other means such as search engines or by calling the provided phone number.

For a full list of offers and the number of referral clicks received for each, please see Appendix 1.

**Figure 2**

<b>Operator</b>	<b>Referrals to Operator Homepage</b>	<b>Referrals to Offer on Operator Website</b>
Bayside Vacation Rentals	N/A	139
Clovermead Adventure Farm	27	99
Comfort Inn Simcoe	56	71
Kettle Creek Inn	97	60
Inn on the Harbour	70	48
Long Point Eco-Adventures	47	46
Comfort Inn & Suites – Ingersoll	N/A	40
Station Park All Suite Hotel	N/A	28
Pelee Motor Inn	48	20
Courtyard by Marriott London	15	20

### **Moving Forward – Lessons learned**

The Partner Offers program utilized in the 2014 Summer and Fall Campaigns was SWOTC’s first time putting together a program of this nature and there were many useful learnings that will be used to improve future programs for the consumer and for you, our regional tourism operators.

SWOTC is planning to run the Travel Offers program again for the 2015 Summer Campaign and we kindly ask that you give some thought into what offers you’d like to participate with. The planning process has begun much earlier for the 2015 marketing campaigns and SWOTC will begin reaching out for offers much sooner than in 2014 in the hope of giving you ample time to pull the best and most enticing Travel Offers together.

The 2015 program will also feature very simplified tracking. You will only be asked to track the number of transactions and items sold for each of the offers you submit and this information will only need to be provided at the end of each campaign. Also, offer conversion tracking will not be optional for submitted offers. SWOTC is required by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport to provide in-depth results of all of our marketing activities and if a submitted offer is not able to be tracked for sales, we will be unable to include it in future campaigns.

Thank you to everyone who provided their results on time. Moving forward as the program is refined and tracking simplified, it would be extremely helpful for participating operators to be more proactive in providing results based on the deadlines provided at the beginning of the campaign.

Finally, SWOTC would like to thank you once again for participating in the Travel Offers program and we hope you will join us again for the 2015 Summer Campaign program. Stay tuned!

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

Please see attached Excel sheet, TravelOffers\_FallCampaign. All offers are listed in alphabetical order by operator name to make finding a particular offer or operator easier.

The spreadsheet also includes the referrals to partner websites associated with each offer from Ontariosouthwest.com.

### Appendix 2

Free Standing Insert (FSI):

**Look for fall getaway inspiration close to home.**

**(back) ROAD TRIPS 2014**

Ontario SouthWest  
Ontariosouthwest.com

**Make sure your <sup>back</sup> road trip includes a visit to our small towns and villages.**

Simcoe  
HARROW  
Thorndale  
KINGSVILLE  
DIADEM  
SPARTA  
Ingersoll  
Petrolia  
CAYUGA  
VICTORIA  
AVONLEA

stay in touch  
Facebook  
Twitter  
Pinterest

**(back) ROAD TRIPS 2014**

**fall festivals & events**

- Chesapeake Festival of Harbours
- Wines of York Region
- Ontario Harvest Festival
- King's County Fair & Antique Show
- Flavourfest
- Wine & Food Festival
- Brantford Harvest Festival

For a full listing of upcoming fall festivals to enjoy visit [Ontariosouthwest.com](http://Ontariosouthwest.com)

Enter for your chance to **win** a **Gourmet GETAWAY**

**Visit [Ontariosouthwest.com](http://Ontariosouthwest.com) today to start planning your fall getaway today.**

**back Create your <sup>back</sup> road trip play list.**

**loast**  
TOUR THROUGH SUBURBS  
Visit some of the most scenic spots in the GTA on the 100+ mile wine and food tour through the Vineyard, the Valley, etc. 10/10/14

**wing it**  
WING IT!  
Experience the wonder of the fall migration and see one of North America's best birding spots.

**cycle**  
TOUR THROUGH SUBURBS  
Visit some of the most scenic spots in the GTA on the 100+ mile wine and food tour through the Vineyard, the Valley, etc. 10/10/14

**cruise**  
TOUR THROUGH SUBURBS  
Visit some of the most scenic spots in the GTA on the 100+ mile wine and food tour through the Vineyard, the Valley, etc. 10/10/14

**dine**  
TOUR THROUGH SUBURBS  
Visit some of the most scenic spots in the GTA on the 100+ mile wine and food tour through the Vineyard, the Valley, etc. 10/10/14

**stay**  
TOUR THROUGH SUBURBS  
Visit some of the most scenic spots in the GTA on the 100+ mile wine and food tour through the Vineyard, the Valley, etc. 10/10/14

**savour**  
TOUR THROUGH SUBURBS  
Visit some of the most scenic spots in the GTA on the 100+ mile wine and food tour through the Vineyard, the Valley, etc. 10/10/14

**taste**  
TOUR THROUGH SUBURBS  
Visit some of the most scenic spots in the GTA on the 100+ mile wine and food tour through the Vineyard, the Valley, etc. 10/10/14

**12 road trip routes AND OVER 40 deals and special offers plus TRIP IDEAS AND TRAVEL TOOLS**

Our maps, guides and tools can help you plan motorcycle routes, find the best local and ethnic and diverse wineries and farm-to-table activities.

Enter on line for your chance to win a **Gourmet Getaway**  
[Ontariosouthwest.com](http://Ontariosouthwest.com)

**Appendix 3**

FSI Distribution

Circulation	Market
121,444	Detroit Media Partnership
57,925	Globe & Mail (Metro)
51,690	Hamilton Spectator
32,000	Oakville Beaver
48,000	Waterloo Regional Record

**Appendix 4**

September E-Blast:

**(back) ROAD TRIPS 2014**

Shift into savings this fall *with over 60 offers* at hotels, restaurants and attractions in southwestern Ontario.

**Stays**  
Special room rates throughout the region.  
[CLICK HERE »](#)

**Wine & Dine**  
Great deals to sip and savour.  
[CLICK HERE »](#)

**Get Outside**  
Find fresh air fun for less.  
[CLICK HERE »](#)

**Culture Vultures**  
Savings on art-filled escapes.  
[CLICK HERE »](#)

**Kid Friendly**  
Affordable family fun.  
[CLICK HERE »](#)

**Getaways for Two**  
Escape with these special offers.  
[CLICK HERE »](#)

Find 12 road trip routes along with trip ideas and travel tools at [www.Ontariosouthwest.com](http://www.Ontariosouthwest.com)

Ontario's **Southwest** Shaped by nature.

ONTARIO  
Year & a Day

October E-Blast:



**(back) ROAD TRIPS 2014**

**get a room!**  
Save up to 30% on overnight stays with our fall road trip rate.

**comfy**  
HOTELS  
[CLICK HERE »](#)

**charming**  
INNS AND B&B'S  
[CLICK HERE »](#)

**cozy**  
COTTAGES  
[CLICK HERE »](#)

**60+ offers**  
FOR WINERIES, RESTAURANTS, ATTRACTIONS AND MORE  
[CLICK HERE »](#)



Final chance to win a gourmet getaway.  
[click here to enter »](#)

Congratulations to our 4 winners to date:  
• Shelley Lavoie  
• Sandra Venner  
• Karen Logan  
• Catherine Toth

Find 12 road trip routes, trip ideas, travel tools and more at [www.Ontariosouthwest.com](http://www.Ontariosouthwest.com)

   

Ontario's **Southwest**  
Shaped by Nature

ONTARIO  
Your Future