

Chapter 32

Tourism Saskatchewan – Managing the Use of Social Media

1.0 MAIN POINTS

By January 2018, Tourism Saskatchewan had made significant improvements regarding the management of its use of social media. It had implemented four of five recommendations made in our 2015 audit, and had partially implemented the remaining recommendation.

Tourism Saskatchewan has a social media strategy that links its social media channels to its business objectives. Also, it has an overall performance measure and target for its use of social media.

In addition, Tourism Saskatchewan requires all staff who represent it on social media to formally agree to its social media policies on an annual basis. It posts approved terms of use of its various social media channels. In addition, it tracks and reports the results of the use of social media to the Board and senior management periodically.

While it has approved social media policies, these can still be improved. Tourism Saskatchewan should mitigate potential risks associated with the use of social media by finalizing a risk assessment, and incorporating the assessment into its policies. Having comprehensive social media policies will help ensure Tourism Saskatchewan has addressed the different risks that arise when using social media.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Tourism Saskatchewan is responsible for developing and promoting tourism in Saskatchewan. Its mandate includes marketing, visitor services, education and training, and product and industry development. It uses social media channels extensively to fulfill its mandate. Tourism Saskatchewan is governed by a Board of Directors, which is appointed by the Government of Saskatchewan.

This chapter describes our follow-up of management's actions on the recommendations we made in our *2015 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 41. We concluded that, for the 12-month period ended May 31, 2015, Tourism Saskatchewan had effective processes to manage its use of social media except in three areas.¹ We made five recommendations.

To conduct this follow-up audit, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance* (including CSAE 3001). To evaluate Tourism Saskatchewan's progress towards meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. Tourism Saskatchewan agreed with the criteria in the original audit.

¹ The original report regarding these five recommendations can be found at www.auditor.sk.ca/publications/public-reports. We reported the original audit work in *2015 Report – Volume 2* (Chapter 41, pp. 293-304).



To perform this follow-up, we discussed actions taken with management and reviewed the relevant documentation (e.g., Tourism Saskatchewan social media policies, social media strategy, approved terms of use, submissions made to senior management and the Board of Directors).

3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out each recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendation as of January 31, 2018, and Tourism Saskatchewan's actions up to that date.

3.1 Social Media Strategy Completed

We recommended that Tourism Saskatchewan complete a social media strategy including performance measures and targets for its use of social media. (2015 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement January 11, 2017)

Status – Implemented

As of January 2018, Tourism Saskatchewan has a separate social media strategy that links its social media channels to its business objectives. Instead of putting its performance measures and targets in its social media strategy, it has included an overall performance measure and target in its annual plan (i.e., increase the number of followers across key social media platforms by 25%).²

Tourism Saskatchewan's Social Media Strategy dated March 2016 identifies four primary goals (e.g., build community, engage community) and four primary audiences (e.g., consumers, industry). It connects its goals and audiences through specified potential tactics (e.g., CEO blogs, use of content marketing). In addition, the strategy identifies key social media platforms.

Linking its social media strategy to key business objectives allows Tourism Saskatchewan to determine whether its social media strategy contributes to its overall mandate. Having an overall performance measure and target for its social media enables Tourism Saskatchewan to assess the effectiveness of its use of social media and adjust its social media strategy as necessary.

3.2 Social Media Policies Require Further Improvement

We recommended that Tourism Saskatchewan approve comprehensive social media policies. (2015 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement January 11, 2017)

Status – Partially Implemented

² *Tourism Saskatchewan Plan for 2017-18*, p. 4.

Tourism Saskatchewan has updated and approved various social media policies and procedures since our 2015 audit and made them available to staff. It still needs to finalize a risk assessment for social media.

As of January 2018, Tourism Saskatchewan had prepared and approved a set of social media guidelines and procedures. It also uses the Government of Saskatchewan's Social Media Policy and Guidelines for Citizen Engagement to guide staff when using social media.

However, Tourism Saskatchewan had not finalized its risk assessment for social media or considered the impact those risks could have on its social media policies. Once it has finalized its risk assessment, Tourism Saskatchewan should consider if modifications to its social media policies are necessary to effectively mitigate identified risks.

Not having comprehensive social media policies increases the likelihood that identified risks may not be addressed when posting on social media.

3.3 Social Media Policies Reviewed by Staff Annually

We recommended that Tourism Saskatchewan require all staff who represent it on social media to periodically review and agree to its social media policies. (2015 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement January 11, 2017)

Status – Implemented

Tourism Saskatchewan requires staff who represent it on social media to formally acknowledge that they have reviewed and agree to the Tourism Saskatchewan social media policies on an annual basis.

Beginning in 2017, each year, management requests staff who represent Tourism Saskatchewan on social media to review and agree to Tourism Saskatchewan's social media policies. We sampled employees for both 2017 and 2018, and found that for each year, management had requested staff acknowledgment by e-mail and staff members had responded they reviewed and agreed to the policies.

Having staff acknowledge social media policies periodically helps ensure that staff remain aware of the policies in place and reduces the risk that policies will not be followed.

3.4 Approved Terms of Use Posted

We recommended that Tourism Saskatchewan post approved terms of use on its social media channels. (2015 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement January 11, 2017)

Status – Implemented

Tourism Saskatchewan posts its terms of use either directly to the applicable social media page or by a link to the Tourism Saskatchewan website containing the terms of use.



We found that Tourism Saskatchewan posts its terms of use directly to the applicable social media channel (e.g., Facebook) if size and space permits. For those social media channels (e.g., Twitter) that do not have sufficient room, Tourism Saskatchewan provides a link from each applicable social media channel to its website. The terms of use are posted directly on its website.³

Posting approved terms of use on its social media channels reduces the risk that the terms of use will not be followed by users and that content posted on Tourism Saskatchewan's social media channels may be inappropriate.

3.5 Periodic Reporting to Board and Senior Management Provided

We recommended that Tourism Saskatchewan provide its Board and senior management with periodic reports on the planned and actual results from its use of social media. (2015 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement January 11, 2017)

Status – Implemented

Tourism Saskatchewan is doing a good job of providing actual results of the use of social media to both the Board and senior management.

Tourism Saskatchewan reports quarterly to senior management on its use of social media. It also reports at least annually to the Board on the results of social media projects.

Each quarter, Tourism Saskatchewan tracks pertinent information such as website hits and social media followers, and provides the results to senior management. It also provides previous quarter results for comparative purposes.

Tourism Saskatchewan periodically provides updates on significant campaigns (e.g., 2016-17 Fishing Campaign results) to the Board. Updates include analysis as to what worked well and how that knowledge can be used for future campaigns. We noted it gives these updates at the end of campaigns.

Periodic reporting to senior management and the Board allows Tourism Saskatchewan to assess the effectiveness of social media campaigns and determine, when necessary, whether changes can be made to improve future results.

³ www.tourismsaskatchewan.com/corporate/legal (21 March 2018).