

**2021 HURON COUNTY BUSINESS RETENTION &  
EXPANSION PROJECT**

**TOURISM SURVEY  
DATA SUMMARY REPORT**



# Data Summary

The following report is based on the responses from 20 tourism businesses in Huron County.

## Which of the following best describes your tourism business?

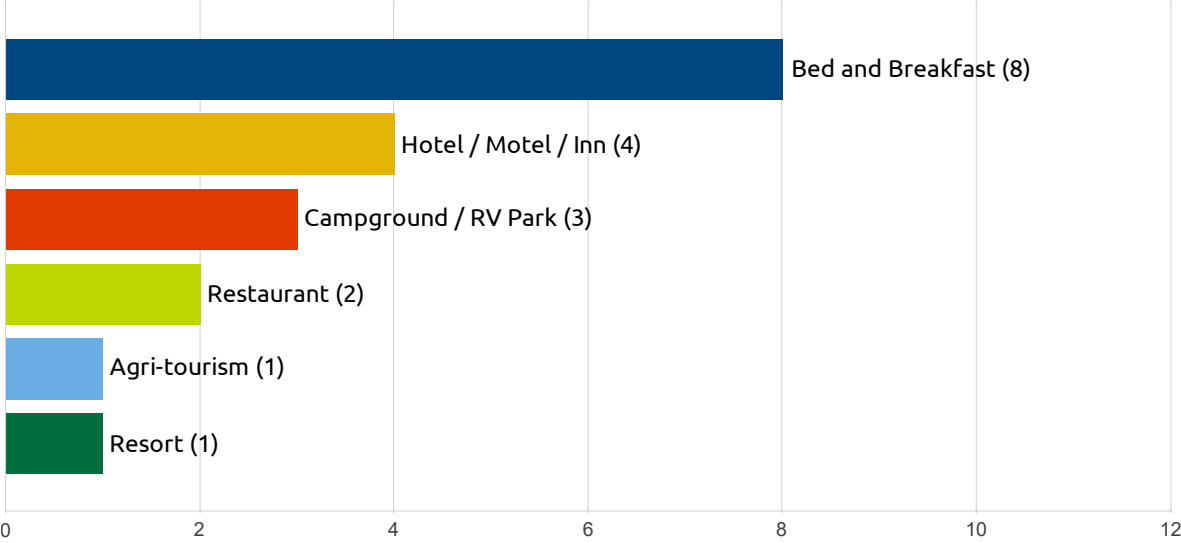


Figure 1

## What time of the year is your business open?

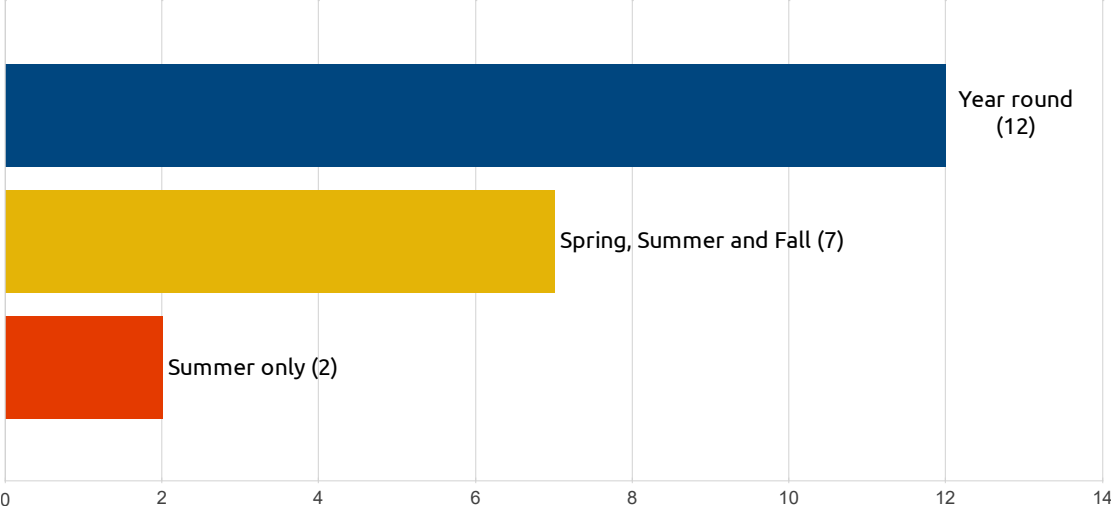


Figure 2

Assuming there is an increase in visitorship in the off-season, a majority (67%) of tourism businesses see potential in expanding into other seasons. This reveals an opportunity to bring people to Huron County during the winter months, utilizing existing assets such as Huron Hygge.

A majority of respondents identified the proximity to Lake Huron (19 responses) as the main advantage of operating a tourism business in Huron County, followed by seasonal traffic (11 responses). Though this reveals the advantages of being close to the lake, it also highlights an opportunity to market inland tourism operators more in the winter time.

**Rating of challenges to operating a tourism business in Huron County:**

	NA	Not a Challenge	Somewhat Challenging	Challenging	Very Challenging
Red tape	31%	31%	13%	13%	13%
Seasonal	5%	32%	26%	11%	26%
Climate	10%	25%	40%	15%	10%
Staffing	37%	26%	5%	16%	16%
Housing	47%	16%	5%	-	32%
Internet / broadband	20%	60%	-	5%	15%
Promotion	28%	17%	28%	17%	11%

*Figure 3*

**Rating of satisfaction with local tourism facilities:**

	NA	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Accommodations	16%	-	32%	32%	21%
Food services	-	20%	10%	50%	20%
Attractions	-	5%	55%	30%	10%
Retail	-	-	45%	45%	10%
Information / visitor centres	5%	24%	19%	33%	19%
Wayfinding signage	5%	37%	11%	47%	-
Highway signage	5%	26%	11%	53%	5%
Cleanliness of public washrooms	25%	15%	25%	30%	5%

*Figure 4*

**Rating of assets/infrastructure you would like to see developed to support tourism:**

	Indifferent	Low priority	Medium priority	High priority
Internet	16%	11%	16%	58%
Better signage	10%	25%	40%	30%
Information / visitor centres	15%	30%	30%	25%
Local transportation	20%	15%	25%	45%
Accommodations	11%	37%	32%	21%
Events / festivals	-	16%	32%	53%
Public washrooms	20%	15%	40%	25%
Promotion / marketing support	5%	16%	32%	47%

*Figure 5*

A number of tourism related assets and infrastructure were flagged as needing development, including marketing and promotional support, wayfinding and signage, and events and festivals (see figure 5).

Similarly, there were other broader infrastructural priorities identified by tourism respondents, such as transportation and broadband, that affect many other business sectors.

### On average, a typical visitor stays:

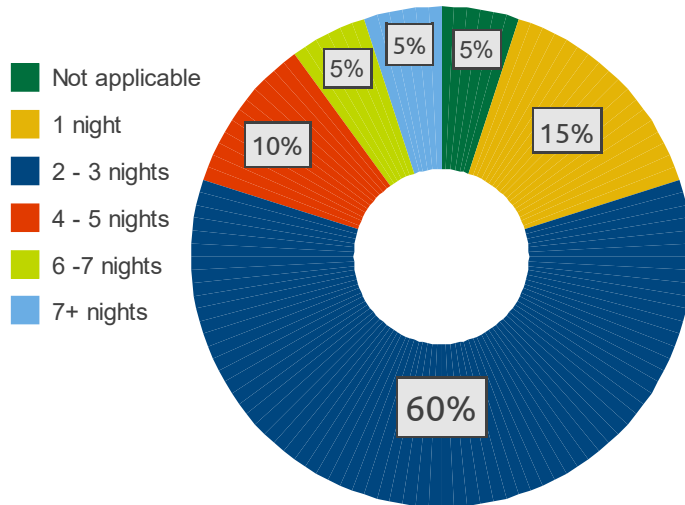


Figure 6

Most respondents found that their typical visitors stayed for an average of 2-3 nights. However, this is under representative of the many local Airbnb and cottage rentals that often require a minimum 7-night stay to be rented out, especially in the height of the Summer season.

### Visitors are most likely to be:

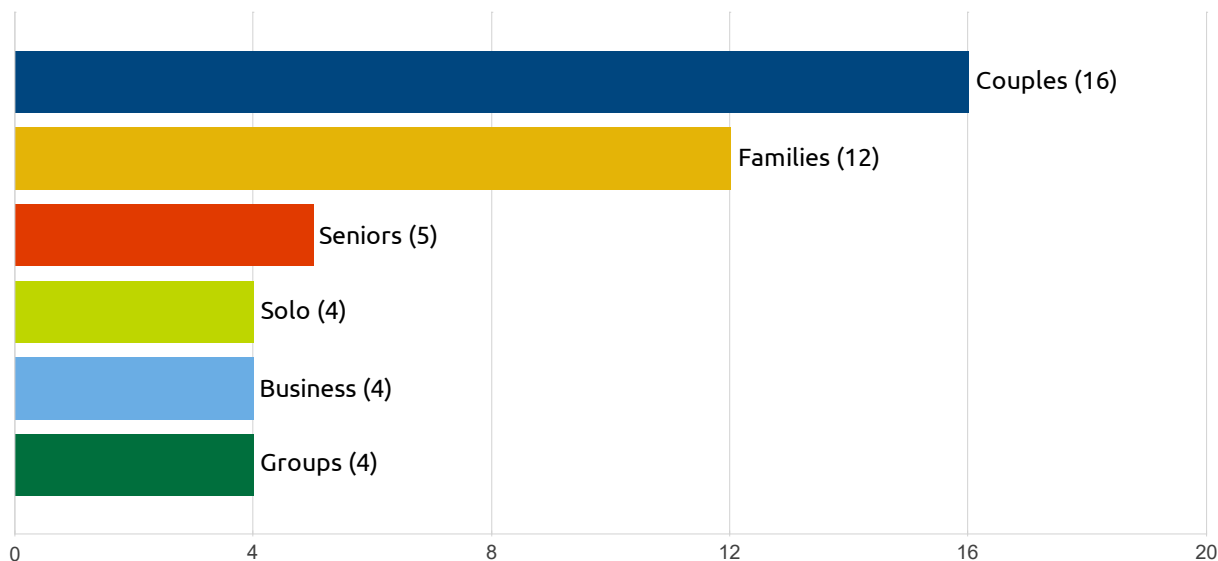
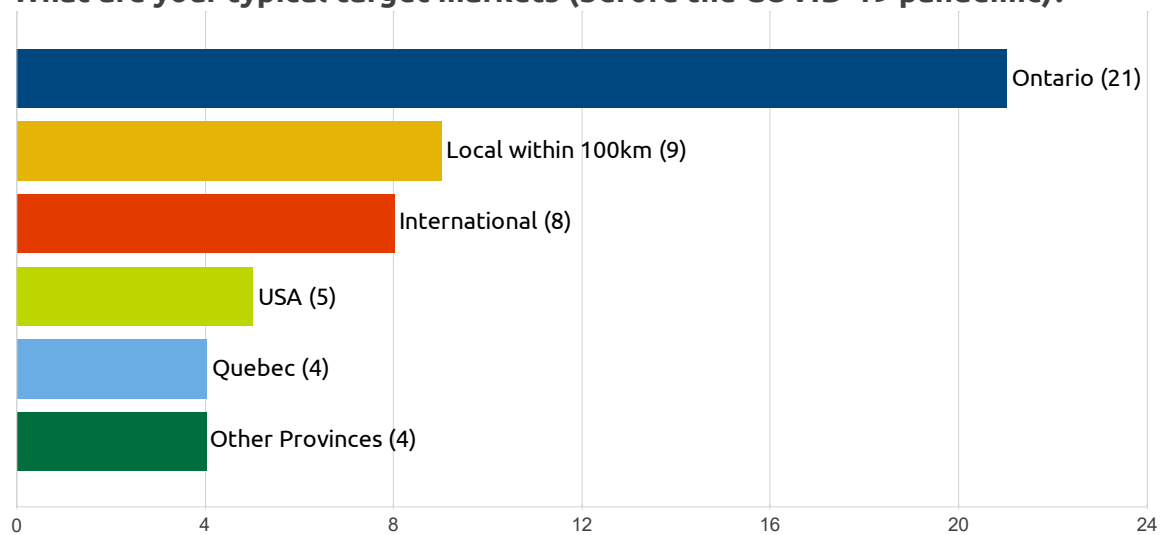


Figure 7

## What are your typical target markets (before the COVID-19 pandemic)?



**Figure 8**

Though a majority of tourists are coming from within the region and province, we also see a significant number of international, notably American, visitors coming to Huron County.

When asked what they felt are the products and activities that attract visitors to Huron County, respondents commonly identified:

- The lake/beach
- Water-based activities
- Craft breweries
- Festivals and events.

It's worth noting that when presented with a list containing a variety of both cultural- and sports-based activities, the cultural options were selected much more often. Activities such as golfing, cycling, hunting, snowmobiling and sporting events were chosen very little.

Only 20% of respondents are a member of a tourism organization (e.g. Ontario Culinary Tourism, Ontario Motel Association or Maitland Trail Association).

As well, there is an opportunity to increase the number of packages (i.e. services and goods combined into a special offer) offered by tourism businesses, since only 24% of respondents currently offer packages.

### Methods you use to promote your business:

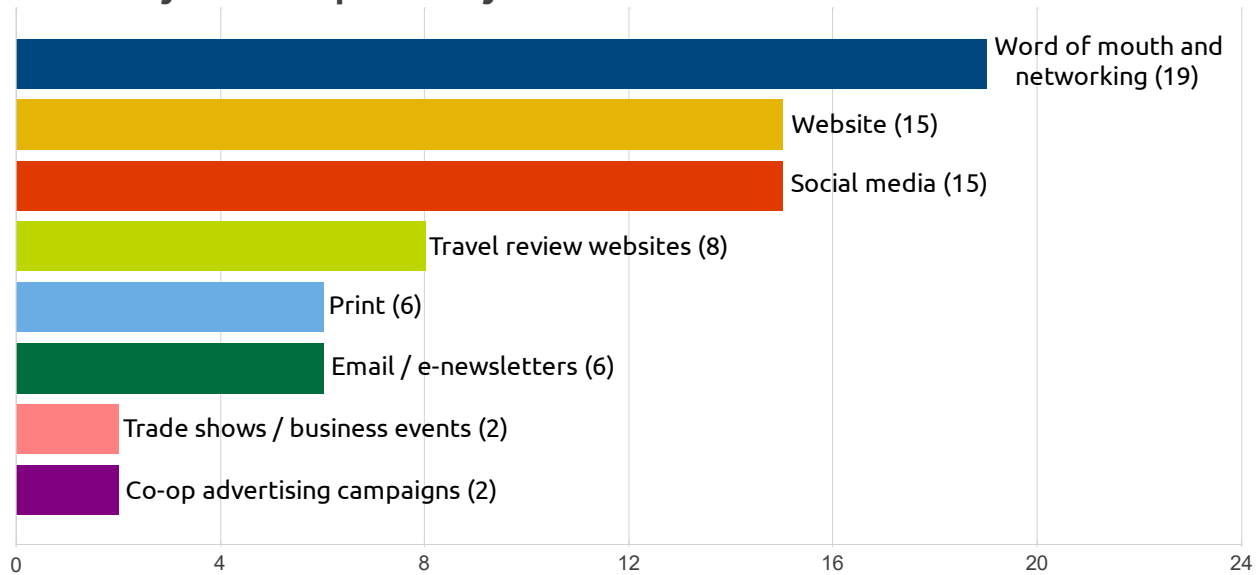


Figure 9

### Where do you get your market research regarding tourism trends, market & growth opportunities?

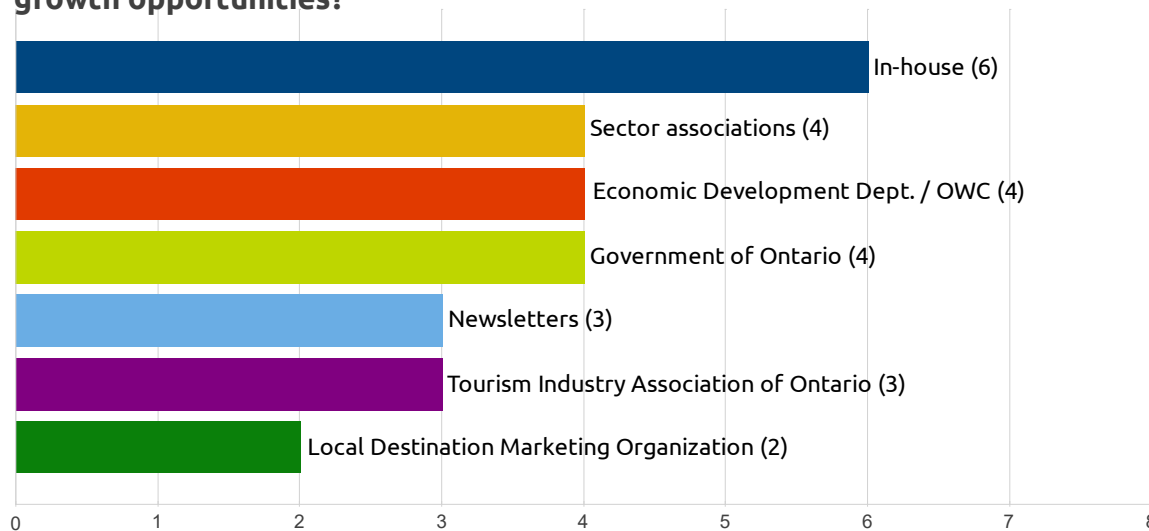


Figure 10

Between 80-85% of respondents have not attended any of the following:

- Huron County webinars
- Tourism Summits
- Small Business & Enterprise Centre workshops

This lack of attendance is worth examining to determine why local tourism businesses do not attend these events and what can be done to improve attendance, along with the value of these events.

Furthermore, only 44% of respondent indicate the market research information they do receive assists them in making business decisions.