

# Marketing & Education Guide



## Spread the 'green' word.

Tourism operators around the province understand the importance of going green. Increasingly, consumers expect businesses to demonstrate an environmental commitment—and the tourism industry is listening and responding by making positive environmental changes.

By implementing and promoting green initiatives, you will help your business grow.

### Why Share Your Story?

- Improves your bed and breakfast's public image and reputation.
- Increases general awareness about your business.
- Helps your bed and breakfast stand apart from others in the area.
- Helps you attract a new clientele of eco-savvy travelers.
- Assists you in meeting the expectations of guests who come from regions where environmental sustainability is common.

- Provides a positive example for other businesses in your community and throughout the province.

### How to Market Your Green Initiatives

#### ■ Take Advantage of Your Website

- Highlight your bed and breakfasts environmental actions and commitments. Use headings to promote this section of your website or include a link on your homepage.
- Make your list of green initiatives easy to find, read and understand.

*TIP:* Attract guests to your website by keeping it modern, clean and updated.

- Publish visitor comments on your website that pertain to your environmental commitment.
- Consider posting pictures of new environmental initiatives on your website such as harvesting your compost bin or completing a waste audit.

### ■ Incorporate Social Media

- Start Facebook and Twitter pages if your bed and breakfast does not already have them. Keep in mind that many guests are using social media sources to plan their trips and to recommend businesses to other travellers.
- Use your social media sites to provide guests with suggestions for outdoor activities in your community.
- Start a daily or weekly “green tip” for travelers and post interesting links on your social media sites.
- Keep your Facebook page up-to-date with photos, activities and new initiatives.
- Engage people through social media to gain more online followers. For example, you can host a contest for people to post their favourite eco-friendly travel tip to enter to win a free night’s stay at your B&B.
- Hire staff who are internet and social media savvy to assist you with your online presence.



### ■ Explore Online Resources

- Increase your online reputation by encouraging your guests to post reviews about your bed and breakfast through reputable travel websites.
- Receive guest feedback by sending online surveys. Include questions about your environmental initiatives and ask for recommendations.

### ■ Develop Print Materials

Incorporate your environmental commitments in your print materials such as brochures and business cards. Print with soy or vegetable based ink on recycled paper and include a small blurb about your bed and breakfasts environmental initiatives.

### ■ Create a Green Experience

- Recognize that many guests come to Newfoundland and Labrador to enjoy outdoor activities and appreciate the natural beauty; keeping your bed and breakfast aligned with these ideas will help you attract more guests.

- Create a welcoming space in your garden for your guests to enjoy by providing comfortable seating and shaded picnic areas.
  - Keep a calendar of environmental celebrations and display them for guests to see. Consider planning activities around occasions such as:
    - Compost Awareness Week (May)
    - Earth Day (April 22)
    - Earth Hour (March)
    - Waste Reduction Week (October)
  - Allow guests to get involved. Visitors may be interested in learning about your garden or how your composting program works.
  - Engage guests in conversation about environmental programs that your bed and breakfasts offers. Word-of-mouth is a strong marketing tool! Ask guests for recommendations, feedback and testimonials.
- **Create Community Partnerships**  
Seek like-minded businesses and organizations in the community and cross-promote your operations.



## Greening Your Brand

- Consider your bed and breakfast's branding as an important step in making a lasting, positive impression. Branding your bed and breakfast with an environmental theme can help attract new guests.
- Help foster eco-friendly attitudes among guests by promoting nature, peace and care for the environment.
- Participate in a certification course. The Gros Morne Institute of Sustainable Tourism ([www.gmist.ca](http://www.gmist.ca)) offers relevant courses.
- Apply for a green label through the program of your choice. Please note: not all programs listed below will be applicable to your bed and breakfast.
  - **Green Key.** This process begins with an online audit of environmental initiatives in a variety of categories, resulting in accommodations receiving between one and five Green Keys. There is an opportunity for business owners to earn more keys as they "unlock" ways to improve on their sustainable initiatives. ([greenkeyglobal.com](http://greenkeyglobal.com))
  - **Green Seal.** This certification applies not only to the accommodations industry but also to products and services all over the world; therefore, it is easily recognized by many consumers. Receiving a Green Seal involves audits, on-site visits, and ongoing monitoring in categories from hazardous waste management to environmental purchasing. ([greenseal.org](http://greenseal.org))

- **STEP (Sustainable Tourism Education Program, with Eco-Certification).** STEP is a program focused solely on the tourism industry and encouraging positive sustainable behaviours in tourism operators. This is achieved through education made available to business owners or through a certification process. The more stars an operator wishes to achieve, the more stringent an evaluation they must complete.

([sustainabletravel.org](http://sustainabletravel.org))

- **LEED Certification.** A rating system pertaining to the structure of a building and how it meets various structural criteria in terms of energy and water use, resource use and air quality. This program is best suited for brand new buildings or those undergoing renovations. ([cagbc.org](http://cagbc.org))
- Proudly display any green certification that your bed and breakfast has earned.
- Beware of greenwashing or misleading your guests regarding the environmental practices at your bed and breakfast. Do not make promises you can't keep and be cautious of exaggerating your initiatives. Guests will see through this tactic and lose confidence in your commitment to the environment.

## Educate Your Guests

- When sending reservation confirmations, include a note about your environmental programs so your guests will be aware of your policies before arriving.
- Strategically place signage throughout your bed and breakfast, reminding guests of your environmental programs and policies.
- Post “green” reminders around the bed and breakfast to prompt guests to perform small actions to help the environment, such as:
  - A note by light switches asking guests to turn off the lights when leaving a room.
  - A note in the bathroom asking guests to conserve water and reuse towels.
  - Labels on recycling bins and garbage cans to explain what goes in and what stays out.