

TOURISM TORONTO USES INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY TO LURE URBAN VISITORS

TORONTO (July 23, 2010) – Toronto’s tourism industry got a little hipper this summer as it introduced a new way to tap into the power of social networks to reach connected, urban travellers.

Tourism Toronto was seeking an innovative approach for telling Toronto’s story and engaged USDM.net, Tourism Toronto’s Online Agency of Record, for the project. The result is groundbreaking video technology that taps into social networks via informal “ambassadors.”

Tourism Toronto is setting up interactive video recording stations at a number of festivals (such as Luminato, Pride, Caribana and Nuit Blanche) and attractions (such as the Ontario Science Centre and the Toronto Zoo) and inviting residents and visitors to record messages about why they love Toronto. After a video is recorded, the technology compresses a copy and instantly attaches dynamic lead-in and lead-out video footage that adds music, Toronto imagery, Tourism Toronto branding and a call to action. If the consumer decides they want to share their video, the [“brand wrapped” video clip](#) is then uploaded to their Facebook page, YouTube and Twitter accounts or sent to them by email.

The program is unique from several standpoints – the instant branding video technology has never been used before and Toronto is the first destination marketing organization (DMO) to use this new technology and this kind of approach to promoting a destination.

“We work with top travel and tourism organizations around the world, along with global brands, and Toronto is the first to use this kind of strategy,” said Clifford Ward, Chief Creative Officer for USDM.net. “The combination of community-based engagement, video footage and social networks wins on a number of levels.”

Two other agencies were commissioned for the project: Gabzebo provided the video booths, interactive programming and online technology and smak delivered the on-the-ground promotional tactics, having a presence at the festivals and engaging with potential ambassadors.

“USDM.net approached us to investigate ways to use our innovative video technology so they could provide a unique, fun presentation for the recipient, while leveraging popular festivals to promote awareness of the destination,” said Steven Robert Moore, CEO of Gabzebo.”

The video clips that are not ‘brand wrapped’ are being housed on www.TorontoLooksGoodOnYou.com and some of the best videos will be pushed out by Tourism Toronto through a dedicated paid online media campaign in key U.S. cities this summer and fall that targets young, up-and-coming travellers. The videos also create valuable assets that can be leveraged in future campaigns and to initiate conversations with Tourism Toronto’s social media communities.

“Having these kinds of testimonials is invaluable for marketing Toronto,” said Joel Peters, Senior V.P. and Chief Marketing Officer for Tourism Toronto. “These are genuine, enthusiastic endorsements that reach consumers who are increasingly relying on word of mouth and online networks when making travel decisions.”

About Tourism Toronto

Tourism Toronto, Toronto's Convention and Visitors Association, is an industry association of more than 1,200 members established to sell and market the greater Toronto region as a remarkable destination for tourists, convention delegates and business travellers around the globe.

In 2009 Toronto welcomed approximately 10 million overnight visitors and \$3.9 billion in visitor spending. www.SeeTorontoNow.com

About USDM.net

USDM.net® is an interactive marketing agency and media company, headquartered in Texas, that strategizes, designs and manages digital marketing and media programs. The company has deep experience in multiple industries and since 1993 has been an acknowledged leader in digital travel marketing. USDM.net clients include world-class tourism organizations such as the cities of Toronto, New York, Miami and Atlanta and the U.S. Department of Commerce, Marriott International, Hyatt, Hilton and ResortQuest. www.usdm.net

About Gabzebo

Gabzebo Inc. provides the missing link in the trending world of user generated media and data collection. The movement in marketing is gaining video content for research, film, feedback and entertainment and this is where Gabzebo fills the gap. Founded in 2006 the company designs the booths and writes their own software allowing the HD interactive video recording booths to be client driven with full customization in both the branding and the captivating touch screens. For more information on the exciting capabilities of the video booths please visit www.gabzebo.com.

About smak

smak, www.smak.ca, is an impact driven media, experiential and PR agency. smak takes traditional media to a new level and challenges conventional thinking. With offices in Vancouver and Toronto smak is able to provide national coverage for any campaign that requires measurable engagement and media innovation. Follow smak @smakmedia on Twitter.

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