# White Paper – Destination Gift Cards

Oct 9, 2026 · @Anne-Marie

## Executive summary

A destination gift card draws visitors in, guides them to local businesses and proves, with hard numbers, the impact of tourism marketing.

Tourism organizations are asked to do more with less. They must attract visitors, spread the benefits across every business in their region and prove their impact to funders. Yet they rarely have reliable data on what visitors actually spend.

This white paper outlines the eight main challenges tourism organizations face and shows how Hello's destination gift card program addresses each one. Participating businesses accept the card with no technical integration. It generates real-time spending data and becomes a tool for marketing, loyalty and incentive distribution.

## The 8 challenges tourism organizations face

Tourism offices, regional tourism associations and destination marketing organizations (DMOs) face the same challenges, whatever their size.

1. **Proving economic impact.** Funded by public money, an accommodation tax or member fees, these organizations must prove their campaigns generate real spending. Yet they rarely have hard data.
2. **Spreading the benefits across all businesses.** Spending concentrates around a few flagship attractions. Still, the organization must give visibility to every business in its region, including the smallest.
3. **Extending stays.** Many visitors come for a single activity and leave the same day. Every day trip turned into an overnight stay multiplies spending in the region.
4. **Smoothing out seasonality.** A busy high season alternates with slow periods that are hard on businesses and their staff.
5. **Understanding visitors.** Organizations often know how many visitors come, but not where they spend or what they buy.
6. **Encouraging repeat visits.** Attracting a new visitor is expensive. Bringing one back pays off more, but is hard to make happen.
7. **Distributing incentives easily.** Recovery programs, contests, packages: managing these incentives with paper vouchers or coupons is cumbersome and hard to track.

8. **Working with limited resources.** Small teams can't run a complex program or integrate each business technically.

## The solution: Hello's destination gift card

Hello's destination gift card is a prepaid Visa card branded for your destination. It is accepted only at participating businesses, so every dollar benefits your region.

It works in four steps:

1. **You launch the program.** The card carries your destination's name, imagery and colours. Hello's Canadian team supports you from design to launch.
2. **Businesses sign up.** They fill out an online form customized for your program and designed by Hello. The card works on the payment terminals they already use, with no equipment or training.
3. **Visitors receive or buy the card.** Depending on your program, it can be sold online, in person or both. It can also be given as a gift, included in a package or handed out as part of a campaign.
4. **Visitors spend at your businesses.** Every transaction is recorded. You track sales, balances and spending by business in real-time reports.

The result: every dollar loaded on the card stays in your local economy, and you know exactly where it was spent.

## Challenge by challenge: how the program responds

The program addresses all eight challenges with a single tool, without adding work for your team or your businesses.

| Challenge | What the card does | Benefit for the organization |
|---|---|---|
| Proving impact | Records every transaction, by business and by period | Hard numbers to share with funders, partners and elected officials |
| Spreading the benefits | Is accepted only at participating businesses | Visitors discover businesses beyond the flagship attractions |
| Extending stays | Offers a preloaded amount to spend locally | A concrete reason to explore more and stay longer |
| Smoothing seasonality | Supports targeted campaigns, packages and promotions | Visitors drawn in during slow periods |

| Challenge | What the card does | Benefit for the organization |
|---|---|---|
| Understanding visitors | Provides real-time spending reports | Campaigns guided by real data |
| Encouraging return visits | Leaves a balance or becomes a gift to share | A reason to plan the next trip |
| Distributing incentives | Replaces paper vouchers with a controlled card | Fast, traceable, measurable distribution |
| Limited resources | Works on existing terminals, managed with Hello | A launch that doesn't overload the team |

Three of these answers deserve a closer look.

**Data that proves impact.** Tourism organizations often measure success by visitor counts or campaign reach. The card adds a stronger measure: dollars actually spent, business by business. These numbers strengthen funding requests and accountability reports.

**Visibility for every business.** Because the card is accepted across the network, every participating business becomes a destination.

**A flexible marketing tool.** The same card can power an accommodation package, a social media contest, an off-season campaign or a recovery program. Each use can be measured separately.

## Use cases

Here are five practical ways to use the card. These scenarios are illustrative and can be adapted to any destination.

**The "discovery stay" package.** A partner hotel gives a $50 card to every guest who books two nights. Guests spend it at downtown restaurants and shops. The organization measures the spending the package generates.

**The off-season campaign.** In November, the organization offers a card to visitors who stay on weeknights. Businesses get extra traffic during a slow period.

**The social media contest.** Cards are offered as prizes. Unlike a prize from a single business, the card benefits the whole network.

**The local corporate gift.** Regional companies buy cards for their employees or clients. The money stays in the local economy, and new customers discover local businesses.

**The incentive or recovery program.** A government or partner funds a tourism incentive. The card replaces paper vouchers and makes it possible to track exactly how the funds are used.

## Implementation

Launching takes five steps, with support from Hello's Canadian team from start to finish.

1. **Set your goals.** Together, we define what the program should achieve: attract visitors, extend stays, support the off-season, distribute incentives.
2. **Design the card.** The card is created to reflect your destination: name, colours and visuals.
3. **Register businesses.** Businesses sign up online. No installation or training is required.
4. **Set up sales channels.** Online sales, in-person points of sale, and a portal for businesses ordering in bulk.
5. **Launch and measure.** Real-time reports let you track results from the very first transactions and adjust your campaigns.

## Conclusion

A destination gift card turns a marketing challenge into a measurable result: more visitors, more spending at your businesses, and proof of your impact.

For tourism organizations, it brings together in one tool what usually takes several initiatives: an appealing offer for visitors, fair visibility for businesses and reliable data for funders.

**Let's talk about your destination.** Hello's team can walk you through the program and help you find the best way to adapt it to your region.