



Knowledge Synthesis

Tourism Part II: Targeting Your Tourism Initiatives

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INTRODUCTION

This knowledge synthesis is part of The Monieson Centre's Knowledge Impact in Society (KIS) Project, a three-year endeavour to connect academic knowledge with economic development needs in Eastern Ontario. The synthesis is an accessible presentation of the latest research on issues affecting rural Eastern Ontario. The knowledge synthesis topics were determined through information gathered at 15 community workshops run in partnership with the Eastern Ontario Community Futures Development Corporation network. The KIS Project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. For more information, visit www.easternontarioknowledge.ca.

Tourism is an important, growing sector of Ontario's economy, contributing approximately \$22 billion in revenue in 2007 alone. For the rural communities of Eastern Ontario, it offers great potential for economic development and growth. This two-part Knowledge Synthesis series outlines possible strategies your community could pursue to capitalize on this growing sector. Part I, available at www.easternontarioknowledge.ca, identified opportunities communities can realize as well as outlining various motivations driving tourists' decisions in choosing a vacation destination. This second part addresses how communities can target different segments of the tourism market.

Targeting is the conscious act of focusing one's marketing efforts and resources on a defined group, or groups, of people. It is based on the principles that consumers are systematically different based on some actionable criteria, they may be grouped into segments as such, and some groups are better to target than others. For example, a standard theme park will likely be more successful if it targets families than if it focuses its efforts on designing rides and creating advertisements for seniors because families are more likely to attend theme parks than are senior citizens.

Targeting is a strategic concept that applies not only at the promotional stage, but also at the conceptual, design, and execution stages when emphasis should remain focused on fulfilling the needs and wants of the target consumer group(s). It is ideal to adopt a consistent consumer-oriented approach early on in this process as it should enhance alignment between consumer desires and the tourist offering. To help inform your tourism targeting decisions, this knowledge synthesis will examine some key consumer segments in the Ontario tourism market, as well as discuss how you might reach them.

TARGETING

At some point after cataloguing your region's resources and considering potential tourist offerings, it is important to consider who you want to target. Your objective is to identify those types of people who

are most likely to come to your region based on your tourist offerings, although in an iterative process, your offerings may evolve once you have selected a target market. Who might your offerings appeal to most? The recent Environics study, *Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Segmentation*, which profiles different segments of people who vacation in Ontario, may help you to answer this question. It notes that almost 60% of Ontarians travel within the province for pleasure, and that about 10% of Americans within close proximity of the border also vacation in Ontario (unfortunately, no data regarding other Canadians are included in the report). The study, which should be consulted for greater detail (please see the reference section), provides segment information on both Ontarians and Americans who vacation in the province. These types of people, along with others from elsewhere in Canada and beyond, may be interested in your tourist offerings and could thus be included in your program's target market.

The following section *very briefly* outlines some information about various market segments.¹

Ontario Travel Market Segment Summary: Ontario Residents

Upscale Adventurers:

Well-off older middle-aged married couples with adult-age children (some are empty nesters). People in this segment enjoy participating in and watching sports; some even prefer extreme sports, such as sky or scuba diving. As they have no children to care for, it is easier for them to frequent late-night entertainment venues, including comedy clubs, casinos, and dinner theatres. They also appreciate culture and the arts, and regularly attend plays, ballets, operas and concert performances. While on vacation, these well-to-do travelers will enjoy a wide variety of activities, from downhill and cross country skiing to sailing and golfing. They will engage in all sorts of cultural activities, such as jazz concerts or operas, and will visit spas and wineries at above average rates. Taking in the architectural beauty of spots they visit, and hitting museums and other cultural sites are also popular vacation activities. Important motivations in travelling include making connections with others around them; gaining knowledge and learning; seeing or doing something different; and practicing their passion, such as skiing, in new ways and places. *Upscale Adventurers* are not drawn to serene nature and camping activities, or to activities geared towards 'finding oneself'.

Provincial Families:

Well-off younger and middle-aged suburban and ex-urban families with lots of children. People in this segment are very kid-focused, and enjoy outdoors activities such as jet-skiing, skateboarding, snowboarding, skiing, and beach volleyball. They prefer short-trips around Ontario, visiting family-friendly attractions, such as theme parks, zoos, aquariums and national parks. Parents will also occasionally golf, take trips to wineries, as well as attend plays and dinner theatres. Important motivations in travelling include enriching relationships with their spouse/children; creating lasting memories; and getting a break from the everyday. They are looking for time-saving options in booking, and are open to family-friendly, group and last-minute travel packages. *Provincial Families* are not

¹ Modified from Environics Analytics. *Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Segmentation Summary* (Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Tourism, 2007), [URL: http://www.tourismpartners.com/publications/Research/reas_sgrpts_TargetSegmentProfiles.pdf](http://www.tourismpartners.com/publications/Research/reas_sgrpts_TargetSegmentProfiles.pdf) (Accessed May 19, 2009).

drawn to activities centered on conservation/ecology or cultural/history, or to activities that ‘push oneself to the limit’.

Young Go-Goes:

Young successful, well-off, multi-ethnic urban trendsetters. People in this segment are childless, typically unmarried, and pursue an eclectic range of leisure activities. They enjoy the nightlife, including patronizing restaurants, comedy clubs, bars, movies/film festivals, plays, and rock/jazz concerts, but also take time to exercise, visit cultural exhibitions, and connect with nature through hiking, backpacking, and camping in national and provincial parks. This group travels frequently within province, out of province and internationally; they will make weekend getaway trips to a big city or other parts of Ontario. While on vacation, they will try almost anything to keep their days filled and interesting. Important motivations in traveling include getting a break from the everyday; relaxing and relieving stress; having a life with no fixed schedule; and seeing or doing something different. They are looking for lots of activity options, like being spontaneous, and desire something unique that will differentiate them from others. *Young Go-Goes* are not drawn to serene nature experiences (they are concerned about the environment, but they enjoy camping/hiking for its escape value), or to an “ordinary,” brand name experience.

Retired Roamers:

Midscale mature and older retirees and seniors living in suburbia and towns. People in this segment enjoy the outdoors and tend to participate in leisure activities which are close to home. They attend festivals, fairs, carnivals, and markets, partake in more sedate activities, such as knitting and sewing, as well as more active ones, including curling, skiing, and snowmobiling in the winter, and birdwatching, fishing, hunting and boating in the summer. Visits to national and provincial parks are a favourite for them, but they also like to golf, and occasionally gamble. Important motivations in travelling include experiencing life and the great outdoors; and connecting with people. They are information seekers, who appreciate good value, and like to support their region and country. *Retired Roamers* are not drawn to spontaneous, new experiences; or to impersonal, packaged tours.

Ontario Travel Market Segment Summary: American Residents

High Flyers:

Wealthy mix of older families and married couples without children at home. People in this segment have busy careers, but take time out to visit restaurants, theatres, and museums, participate in club sports, such as golf, tennis, and racquetball, watch professional sports, including hockey, basketball, and football, as well as get outdoors to camp, ski, hike, and canoe. They are regular travelers, often to international destinations, who like to vacation in style. Generally adventurous, some pursue vacations with organized activities, while others prefer to relax and do nothing at all. Important motivations in travelling include getting a break from the everyday; relaxing and relieving stress; enriching relationships with spouse/children; experiencing life and gaining knowledge; and discovering oneself and being enlightened. They are open to new experiences, risk, and spontaneity. *High Flyers* are not drawn to pre-packaged tours that limit their options to explore.

Footloose Families:

Middle class households with large, younger families, working hard to live the American Dream. People in this segment engage in family activities from travelling to beaches, lakes, and campgrounds to frequenting zoos, bowling alleys, movies, pop concerts, and skating rinks. They also participate in both

individual endeavors, such as jogging and biking, as well as team sports, such as baseball and soccer. These families regularly visit theme parks and ski resorts, but will also travel to Ontario for (comparatively) more rustic summer vacations such as going fishing, camping, hiking and swimming in national and provincial parks. Important motivations in travelling include enriching relationships with spouse/children; creating lasting memories; and seeing and doing something different. They are value conscious, time starved travellers, who want to get the most out of their vacation. *Footloose Families* are not drawn to passive, relaxed vacations, or to small-scale activities or groups.

Silver Streaks:

Mature middle class married couples who have already raised their families (some widows and widowers). People in this segment are entering their retirement years and are actively involved in local groups, associations, and unions. They remain active by golfing, walking, and exercising at the gym, and also visit movies, plays, and concerts on a regular basis. They are adventurous travelers who fill their itineraries with a variety of activities, including golfing, sightseeing, and attending museums, gardens, free outdoor performances, plays, and fireworks displays. This group is also interested in planning vacations around gambling venues. Important motivations in travelling include making connections; seeing or doing something different; and gaining knowledge and being enlightened. They are research-intensive, particularly about getting what they want in a vacation, and are looking for markers of quality. *Silver Streaks* are not drawn to packages that force them to trade-off some of their vacation wants.

Young and Restless:

Well educated younger singles in smaller childless households. People in this segment live active lifestyles, regularly going to bars, dance clubs and restaurants, as well as plays, movies, dance performances, and museums. They also dedicate time to staying in shape. When visiting Ontario, they enjoy a variety of activities such as skiing at resorts, camping, hiking, and canoeing, as well as visiting theatre and music festivals, and art galleries. Big city nightlife also holds appeal for this group. Important motivations in travelling include making connections with partners, friends, and coworkers; creating lasting memories; getting a break from the everyday; and having no fixed schedule. They are skeptical, environmentally conscious, like to have control over their itineraries, and are looking for interesting and meaningful experiences. *Young and Restless* are not drawn to community-oriented events.

After studying these segment profiles, you should find some align better with your resources and potential tourist offerings than others. As a result, you may chose to target one or more of these groups of people. You should keep your target market(s) in mind when developing your tourist offering, branding it, and deciding how to position it in your promotions. It is important to consider their motivations for travelling and how you can fulfill their needs and wants.

One caveat with regards to these segment profiles is that they are broad composites, created to help make sense of all the different types of people who travel in Ontario for leisure. There are sub-groups within these constructed groupings, which may have more specific defining characteristics. Additionally, at the individual-level, each person's needs and wants may vary somewhat from the overriding segment description, and may evolve over time depending on changes in their life context. Consequently, simply because your offering is not a 'key leisure activity' for a segment group as a whole at the present time, does not mean it will fail to find interest from some people within that segment, or even those not in any of the segments discussed above. These segments are comprised of a large number of people, and if your objective is to attract a few thousand additional visitors per year, appealing to a sub-set of a

segment may still help you meet your goals. For more information on leisure travelers in Ontario, you may wish to read the full version of the Environics report *Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Segmentation Summary*, visit the Ontario Ministry of Tourism Research website, or contact the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation.

REACHING YOUR TARGET MARKET

Once you have selected a target market for your tourism program, you should consider how you want to convey your uniquely positioned offering to that group of people. Different segments may be more or less receptive to certain approaches (e.g. a rational information-based approach vs. an emotional imagery-based approach) and certain channels (e.g. internet vs. visitor centre brochures). For more specifics on each of the market segment groups, please see the information sources cited at the conclusion of the previous section.

It is important to consistently reach your target market(s) with a unique and personally appealing message because approximately half (49%) of Canadian tourists to Ontario already have a destination in mind when they start to plan their vacation.² Thus, brand awareness is integral to attracting tourists to your region. Some other ways tourists select their destinations are by starting with a certain type of vacation experience in mind and doing research (23%), or starting with specific activities in mind and doing research (14%). This suggests that it is also imperative to have a presence in those places where your target market obtains their vacation planning information.

Generally, these are the sources that people consult when planning a trip (listed from more to less frequently consulted):³

- An Internet website
 - Website of a hotel or resort
 - A tourism website of a country, region, or city
 - A travel planning/booking website
 - A website of an attraction
 - Some other website
- Advice of others/Word-of-mouth
- Past experience/Been there before
- A travel agent
- Maps
- Official travel guides or brochures from province
- Visitor information centres
- Articles in newspapers or magazines
- An auto club such as CAA
- Advertisements in newspapers or magazines
- Travel guide books, such as Fodor's
- Travel information received in the mail
- Programs on television
- An electronic newsletter or magazine received by e-mail
- Advertisements on television
- Visits to trade, travel or sports shows

Recognizing the Internet's place at the top of the list, constructing a website and associating it with the provincial tourism website, and any regional tourism websites should be a fundamental component of

² Lang Research Inc. *A Profile Report: Canadian Travel Market – Canadian Travelers to Ontario*. Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Tourism, 2008.

http://www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/research/travel_activities/CDNTAMS2006_Travelers_to_Ontario.pdf.

Accessed May 19, 2009.

³ Ibid.

your promotions plan. Ensuring good fit between your offering's promotion and execution and peoples' desires for travel should contribute positively to the next two items: word-of-mouth and past experience, indicating return travel. Developing a presence with regards to the subsequent sources of information may also be explored to help further your potential to reach your target market(s). Ultimately, the process of reaching out to your target occurs much later on in the process after your tourism offering (or product) has been conceptualized and developed, and your strategy, in terms of segmenting, targeting, positioning, and branding has been defined.

CONCLUSION

Targeting is powerful because it has the potential to provide mutual benefits; it promotes both the efficient use of resources and promises to better meet the needs of consumers. Tactically, there are a number of segments, comprised of people from Ontario and beyond, which could be targeted for a tourism program. Notably, people in some of these segments appear more likely than people in others to enjoy the tourist offerings available in rural Eastern Ontario. Investigating these segments further should provide a better sense of their travel motivations, preferences, and sources of vacation information.

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APPENDIX A – RESOURCES

Both the federal and provincial government offer resources that may be of assistance in developing local and regional tourism programs and opportunities.

Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance

Website: <http://www.savourontario.org>

This alliance provides a number of resources related to the complete culinary tourism supply chain including research, best practice summaries and case studies.

Ontario Ministry of Tourism Research

Website: http://www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/research/travel_activities/index.html.

The research section in the Ontario Ministry of Tourism’s website contains tens of reports (and executive summaries) profiling travel segments, tourist activities, and more. If you want to find out more about Canadian or U.S. travelers to Ontario, or particular activities, such as agro-tourism, canoeing or shopping, that may be relevant to your region, this is a tremendous resource to access.

Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp.

Website: <http://www.tourismpartners.com/TcisCtrl?site=partners&key1=home&language=EN>.

The Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp (OTMPC) offers a wide range of programs that may be available to assist your region in developing tourist attractions. These programs include: advertising, product development, consumer information services, as well as access to travel publications, travel trade and media relations. Partnering with OTMPC may enable you to reach broader markets that would otherwise be too difficult or expensive to target. The goal through the partnership is to “bring ‘top-of-mind’ awareness to your product or service while positioning Ontario as a premier four-season travel destination.”

Ontario: Yours to Discover

Website: <http://www.ontariotravel.net>.

The provincial tourism website has sections on a number of regions in Ontario. Within Eastern Ontario, it hosts information on attractions along the St. Lawrence Seaway, as well as in the Quinte region and Prince Edward and Lennox-Addington Counties. This section of the website also links to a few other sites, including www.realontario.ca, which profiles some additional regions and attractions within Eastern Ontario, as well as sites for Prince Edward County’s and Quinte West’s Chambers of Commerce. While it would be ideal to promote your tourist offerings on as many relevant websites as possible, obtaining a posting on an ‘aggregator’ site (such as Ontario’s official website), which tourists are more likely to visit, should be a priority.

Rural Economic Development Data and Intelligence (REDDI).

Website: <http://www.reddi.gov.on.ca/index.htm>.

From the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, this website is designed to help you identify local priorities and carry out strategies that will achieve your community's goals. It includes a “Making the Case for Tourism – Toolkit” document, which may assist you in gathering information and creating a PowerPoint presentation that you can use in promoting local tourism initiatives.