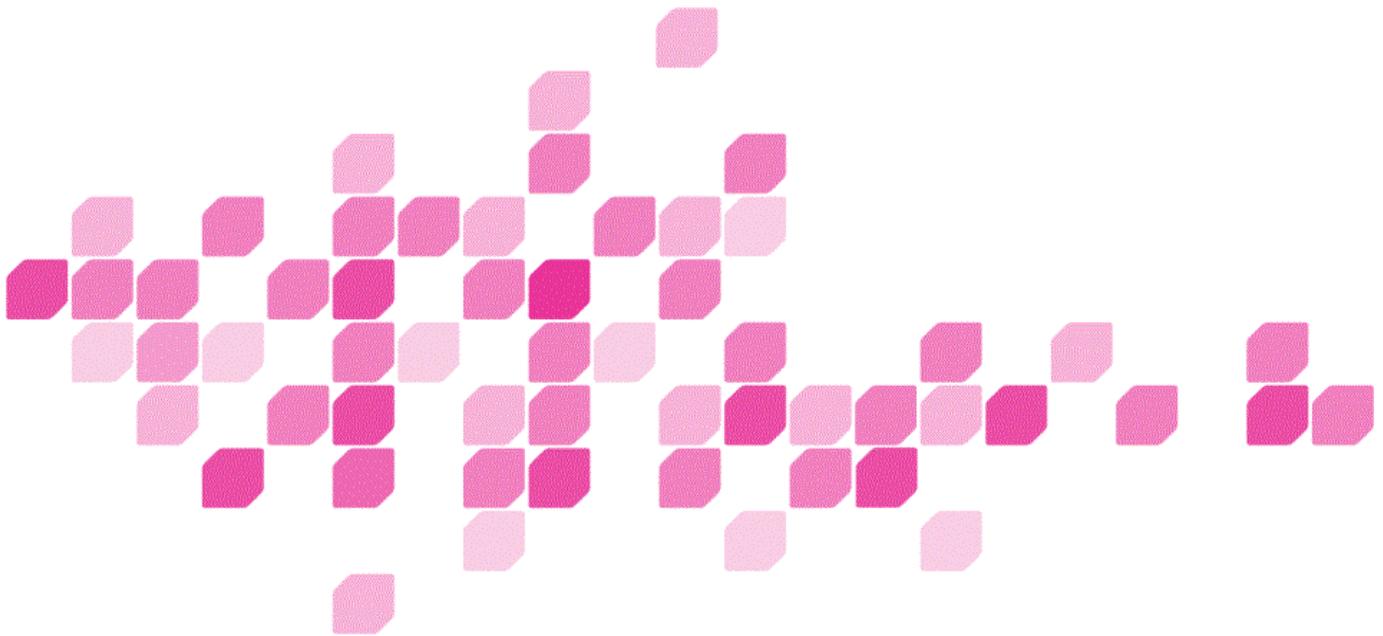


UK Consumer Research

Summary Report

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Presented to • Présenté à
Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership
(ACTP)



Background and Methodology

The following summary highlights the key findings from a research study undertaken for the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership (ACTP) in 2011 by TNS Canada. ACTP wanted to learn more about characteristics of UK long-haul pleasure travellers with a view to attracting more visitors to the four provinces comprising Atlantic Canada (Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island) through direct-to-consumer advertising campaigns.

The research program was designed to:

- Profile current travel behavior and future travel intentions; destinations visited and planned to visit; sources of information used in travel planning; travel purchase process; inspirations, motivations and activities that motivate travel.
- Determine awareness (unaided and aided) of Atlantic Canada overall, and of each of the four provinces specifically.
- Measure interest in, and likelihood of visiting, the region, and to size the market potential.
- Investigate perceived barriers and deterrents to visiting Atlantic Canada.
- Evaluate current positioning of the region in terms of destination appeal and imagery associated with Atlantic Canada and the four Atlantic Provinces.

Data was collected online:

- 1,101 interviews among UK pleasure travellers sourced from a TNS UK panel.
- Fieldwork was conducted between March 10-20, 2011.
- Qualifiers: Had to have taken an out of Western Europe pleasure trip of 4+ nights within the past two years.
- Prior to tabulation, data were weighted to their correct demographic proportions within the sampled markets.

Key Findings

The following section highlights the key findings of the research.

Pleasure Travel Patterns

- Travel within the Europe and to North America dominates. Canada was the 3rd most visited country overall.

Top Destinations – Past 5 Years

UK Travellers (n=1,101)
Europe (excluding Western Europe) 56%
United States 53%
Canada 44%
Caribbean 24%
North Africa / Middle East 22%

- Ontario attracts almost one-half of UK visitors to Canada, while roughly one-third visit Atlantic Canada, Quebec, and BC.
- While approximately one-third of UK travellers have friends and relatives in Canada, few have connections in Atlantic Canada, meaning VFR is a minor draw for the region.

How Vacation Destinations are Chosen

- When planning long-haul trips, UK travellers seek destinations that offer beautiful scenery, are welcoming and friendly, have great weather, good value for money, and relaxation opportunities.
- Top vacation activities on previous trips include seeing beautiful scenery, sampling local food and wine, city activities, historical and cultural attractions, and visiting parks and protected areas.

Awareness and Interest in Atlantic Canadian Destinations

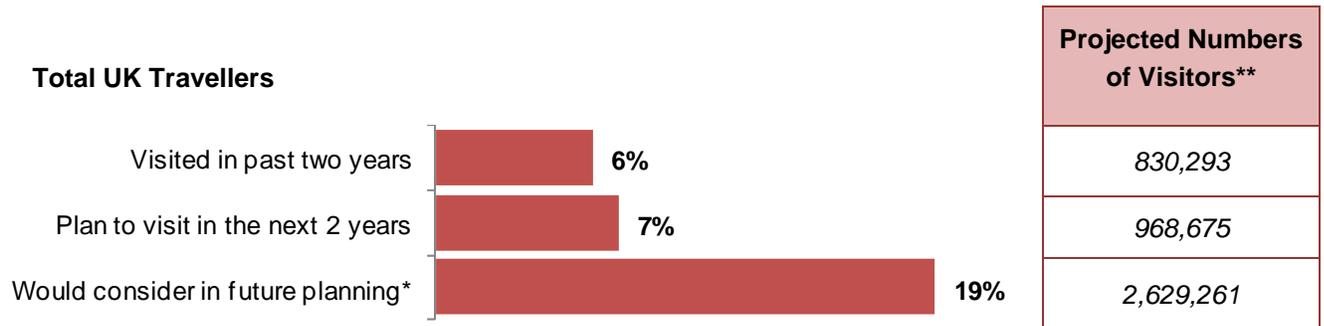
- Awareness of individual Atlantic Canadian provinces varies, from a low of 48% awareness for New Brunswick to a high of 79% awareness for Nova Scotia.
- While knowledge of individual provinces is quite high, UK travellers are less sure of the exact composition of the Atlantic Canada region.

Perceptions of Atlantic Canada

- The four Atlantic provinces generally receive similar ratings on specific tourism attributes. This suggests there is little differentiation among the provinces in the minds of UK travellers.
- Atlantic Canada is known for its friendly people, excellent wildlife viewing (including whale watching), seafood, fall colours, and coastal scenery. This is an excellent starting point, but could be made more compelling through better linkage with cultural and social experiences available across Atlantic Canada's villages and towns.
- While not explored explicitly in this research, it is assumed that New England is a formidable competitor for the UK market, particularly given similar geography, components of the offer, and, more recently, preferential currency exchange rates.

Potential Market for Atlantic Canada

- Future travel intentions appear to mimic past behavior with Europe (excluding Western Europe) and the US representing the top future destinations for UK travellers. Canada is in 3rd spot.
- 19% of UK travellers are contemplating a trip in Canada in the next two years. Among most considering Canada, there is a strong tendency to visit Central Canada (Ontario and Quebec). Atlantic Canada emerges in 3rd spot, behind Central Canada and BC.
- Using past visitation figures and future intention to visit, it is possible to estimate the potential market for Atlantic Canada in the UK. This potential market is approximately 2.6 million when those considering a trip to Atlantic Canada sometime in the future are included in the calculation.



*Based on most popular Atlantic province among travellers

** From UK Census figures and survey qualification incidence data

Trip Planning

- While a fairly large number of UK travellers are contemplating a future leisure trip to Atlantic Canada, few have progressed to actively planning the trip. ACTP's challenge is to convert interest into actual travel behaviour. There is be a need to provide compelling, tangible reasons to choose Atlantic Canada over the competition starting from a position of limited awareness and appreciation.
- UK travellers predominantly use the Internet to both look for information and to plan trips (including looking for package deals).
- Direct mail or emails from airlines, travel agencies or tour operators are most likely to be noticed, along with promotions in newspapers and on television.
- 42% of those interested in Atlantic Canada indicate they would seek advice from a travel agent / tour operator. The decision on destination has normally already been made by the time the travel agent is contacted.
- This suggests a need to stimulate initial interest in Atlantic Canada through media, with some emphasis on online media. Atlantic Canada must be part of the consideration set in advance of travel agent consultation. The agent must, however, be equipped to "close the deal" by linking specific elements of the Atlantic Canada offering to the core needs of potential visitors.

Advertising Recall And Imagery Assessment

- Respondents were asked to assess photos and sample advertisements for Atlantic Canada destinations to guide future advertising efforts.
- The stimulus appears to have some effect on interest in visiting Atlantic Canada in future with significantly more UK travellers reporting some interest after exposure.
- The eight most appealing images are:
 - Mactaquac Autumn – New Brunswick
 - Rocks Panoramic – New Brunswick
 - Breaching Whale – Newfoundland and Labrador
 - Brigus White House – Newfoundland and Labrador
 - Whale Watching – Nova Scotia
 - Lunenburg Harbour Fall – Nova Scotia
 - Skyline Trail – Nova Scotia
 - Grand Manan – New Brunswick
- These top performing images show that dramatic and differentiating images are crucial to attracting travellers' attention. They also help to position Atlantic Canada as a distinctive destination, which is also able to meet travellers' core needs.
- The appeal of these images reflect the perceived strengths of Atlantic Canada - fall colours, coastal scenery, and especially wildlife viewing (two of these images feature whale watching).
- UK travellers were generally positive about the current creative. Very few offered negative comments. Imagery associated with coastal scenery, whale watching, and unique architecture was especially well received.

Conclusions and Implications

The potential market in the UK is substantial (estimated at 2.6 million); yet Atlantic Canada faces considerable challenges to capitalize on this opportunity.

- The competition for the UK market is intense. Historically, the US attracts considerably more UK travellers than Canada, suggesting that New England is stiff competition for Atlantic Canada.
- The UK market is at a very formative stage and will require a long-term commitment to realize success. Building awareness of the uniqueness of Atlantic Canada as a whole as well as the individual provinces is key. This can be achieved by:
 - Communicating the distinctiveness and authenticity offered by Atlantic Canada.
 - Leveraging the region's reputation for offering excellent wildlife viewing opportunities, unique coastal scenery, natural wonders, and friendly and welcoming people. But, it is necessary to expand beyond these attributes to convey uniqueness. Highlighting Atlantic Canada's culture and history, quaint villages and towns, and traditional fishing lifestyle are important.
- Capitalize on alignment between Atlantic Canada's offering and the benefits travellers are seeking from vacations, namely:
 - New and different experiences
 - Escape
 - Renewal
 - Low stress
- Communications:
 - Owing to the dominance of the Internet in research and planning travel, build awareness through online media as well as traditional means such as print.
 - Partner with the CTC to broaden reach through online and print mediums.
 - Travel agents still play a role in this market; however, not at the research stage. Travellers using agents want to be able to book travel, thus, agents must be equipped with the information and ability to book compelling offers.
- Imagery and messaging:
 - The image testing results show successful images convey Atlantic Canada's diversity, authentic and unique experiences, and cultural distinctiveness.
- At this point, market to the mainstream, not niche markets. Focus on the market displaying the greatest interest (middle-aged, middle to high income, well educated). London and the Southeast represent the best opportunity.