



## What's New at ACTP – January/February 2012

Last month ACTP provided a summary of the 2011 US Consumer Research. In this issue of *What's New at ACTP*, the key findings of the 2011 UK Consumer Research are highlighted to continue efforts to promote better usage of ACTP's research. To read other research summaries or full reports, please visit our [research page](#).

### 2011 UK Consumer Research – Key Findings

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.

The following highlights key findings of the research:

#### Travel Patterns

- Travel within the Europe and to North America dominates. Canada was the 3<sup>rd</sup> most visited country overall. Europe (56%), US (53%) and Canada (44%) are the leading long haul UK destinations.
- 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.

#### Activity Profile

- 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.
- UK travellers want new and different experiences but generally want to engage in them at low risk.

#### Trip Planning

- 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.
- Travel agents still play a role in this market; however, not at the research stage. 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 Image Assessment

- Respondents were asked to assess photos and sample advertisements for Atlantic Canada destinations to guide future advertising efforts.
- The top performing images show that dramatic and differentiating images are crucial to attracting travellers’ attention. Dramatic scenery such as fall colours, coastal scenery, wildlife, whales resonated with UK travellers.
- Imagery must also be paired with information important to the UK traveller’s activity profile.

#### Atlantic Canada Momentum

- Of those considering a trip to Canada (19%) in the next two years, 22% are interested in Atlantic Canada
- Market potential is estimated at 2.6 million long haul travellers.
- Strong majority (70%) of those interested in Atlantic Canada are not at the seriously considering (20%) or planning/booking (10%) stage.

#### Next Steps for Building Market Share

- Focus on increasing awareness.
- Communicate the distinctiveness and authenticity offered by Atlantic Canada.
- Leverage 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 and low stress.
- 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.
- 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.

To view the most appealing images, discover more key findings or review the full US Consumer research report, please [click here](#).

#### **The Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership – Who We Are**

The Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership is a nine-member pan-Atlantic partnership consisting of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the four tourism industry associations in Atlantic Canada and the four provincial departments responsible for tourism in New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. ACTP has been in place since 1991 and is dedicated to promoting Atlantic Canada as a tourism destination of choice in key American and international markets. For more information, visit [www.actp-ptca.ca](http://www.actp-ptca.ca)