

What's New at ACTP - November/December 2011

ACTP recognizes the importance of being able to communicate research in a manner that can be easily read, understood and strategically applied by destination marketing organizations, tourism associations, governments and individual tourism operators. To provide this content and to promote better usage of its research, ACTP has highlighted the key findings of the ACTP 2011 US Consumer Research in this issue of What's New at ACTP. To read other research summaries or full reports, please visit our [research page](#).

2011 US Consumer Research – Key Findings

ACTP wanted to learn more about the characteristics of out-of-state travellers residing in the Mid Atlantic (New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) and New England states (Maine, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont), with a focus exclusively on three 'high potential' lifestyle segments – Exurban Explorer, Outdoorsy Elite and the Young Sophisticates.

Mid Atlantic & New England States - Lifestyle Profiles /Media Consumption				
	Mid Atlantic		New England	
	Lifestyle	Media habits	Lifestyle	Media Habits
Exurban Explorer	Affluent single and couples, emptying/empty nesters High education HHI	<u>Strong Media Consumer</u> Heavy Newspaper Heavy Magazine Low Online Usage	Singles and couples Couple - empty nesters Highly educated High proportion retired Moderate – high HHI	<u>Strong Media Consumer</u> Heavy Newspaper Heavy Magazine Low Online Usage
	Professional Adult Couples No children at home High education Very high HHI	<u>Strong Media Consumer</u> Moderate/Heavy Newspaper/Magazine Heavy Online Usage	Adult couples If present, children over 18 yrs Highly educated HHI	<u>Strong Media Consumer</u> Heavy Newspaper Heavy Magazine Low Online Usage
Young Sophisticates	Affluent Younger singles and married couples Young children High education HHI	<u>Strong Media Consumer</u> Heavy Magazine Heavy Newspaper Heavy online usage	Families School age Highly educated Moderate - high HHI	<u>Moderate Media Consumer</u> Moderate Newspaper Moderate Magazine Heavy Online Usage

These three segments, identified in ACTP's consumer segmentation research, were the target of the direct-to-consumer campaign which aimed to raise the profile of the four Atlantic Canada provinces in these markets.

The following highlights key findings of the research:

Travel Patterns

- Travel within the US dominates. Florida is the most popular destination for travellers in both regions. Intra-regional travel is also popular with New York State, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts emerging as top destinations.
- Canada was the 4th most visited country overall, visited by 12% of the target group in the past two years. Ontario attracted almost one-half of Mid Atlantic and New England visitors to Canada, while roughly one-third visited Quebec, and 17% going to Nova Scotia.

Activity Profile

- Respondents cited relaxation opportunities as the most important determinant in the destination selection process. Beautiful scenery, a welcoming and friendly atmosphere, good value for money, great weather, and good restaurants were also found to be important criteria.
- The top benefits these travellers seek from vacations include: the chance to see and do new things; freedom to do what they want, when they want; relaxation and getting rid of stress; escaping from ordinary routine; and renewing mind, body, and soul.
- Top activities on previous pleasure trips include dining, shopping, visiting historic sites, seeing urban architecture, and engaging in beach and water activities.

Trip Planning

- Mid Atlantic and New England travellers considering a trip to an Atlantic Canada destination will use the Internet to both look for information and to plan the trip. A variety of websites are typically used in the trip planning process, with approximately one-third of travellers also relying on user-generated review sites for information.
- More than two-thirds of Mid Atlantic and New England travellers considering a trip to Atlantic Canada would drive, explaining why close to half would seek information from auto clubs.
- Few travellers would consult a travel agent to plan or book any part of a trip to Atlantic Canada.
- The planning cycle for regional trips is short, with most travellers planning and travelling within the summer months.
- Passport ownership among the target market is high, so this does not pose an impediment to visitation.

Advertising Recall and Image Assessment

- US travelers were exposed to a series of advertisements and images for individual provinces.
- Top ranking images feature attractive scenery and invite participation, while not being perceived as too extreme or isolated. They are also seen as casual, surprising, genuine, fun, exotic, and intriguing.
- Dramatic and differentiating images are crucial to attracting travellers' attention and positioning the Atlantic Provinces as distinctive destinations, yet able to meet core travellers' needs.
- Conveying authenticity and accessibility are also key success factors for imagery.

Next Steps for Building Market Share

- Differentiate the offer -build on the perceived strengths identified: unique culture, natural wonders, and hospitable people.
- Capitalize on alignment between the Atlantic Provinces' offerings and the benefits these travellers are seeking from vacations, namely: new and different experiences; escape and freedom; stress relief and spiritual renewal.
- Key activities to highlight: soft adventure activities that demonstrate serenity and relaxed enjoyment; each province's unique culture and history; shopping and dining.
- Imagery and messaging: use images that appeal by depicting an alluring and distinctive natural environment as well as cultural distinctiveness, while encompassing attributes travellers appreciate; ad copy should be inspiring, but brief and to the point; limit use of quirky images and attempts at humour.

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