

Groups Research 2005

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT DETAILS

Funded by: Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA)
Commissioned to: QA Research

Methodology

Sample size: 100
Special conditions: none
Database: Group Travel Organisers (GTO's)
Research method: A range of methods were used to gain an understanding of the group travel market. The four stages were:

1. Conducting desk research to look at the national picture of the group travel market.
2. Undertaking in-depth interviews with key tourism businesses within Greater Manchester.
3. Holding steering group workshops to consult with key tourism stakeholders on the groups travel market. This consultation helped to inform the direction of the research project and questionnaire development.
4. Undertaking 100 quantitative telephone interviews with a range of group travel organisers in the UK.

Dates: January - February 2005

Objectives

- To identify and benchmark the current position of the groups market
- To identify the strategic direction for groups marketing in Greater Manchester

KEY FINDINGS

Group Visitor Profile

- A high proportion of group types were retirement groups (38%) or social clubs (20%).
- The mode (most frequent) number of group members was 50 people (22%).

Group Visit Profile

- The mean average travel time for a group day trip was 2.89 hours. The mean average travel time for an overnight group trip was 4.98 hours.
- The average mean amount spent was estimated at £124 per person.
- The peak season for group trips was from April through to October; the most popular months being May (63%) and September (61%).
- Results show that day trips made up 72% of group trips. Longer break trips made up 16% and short breaks made up 12% of the total number of groups taken.
- The most popular activities undertaken in a group trip included shopping, eating out, seeing an attraction and general sightseeing.
- The mean average number of activities undertaken by a group in a day was 3.5 activities.
- The most popular incentives related to price with 22% stating price/value, 14% deals/offers, 8% discounts and 6% free admittance.

Group Travel Organisers Profile

- Just under a third of Group Travel Organisers (31%) had visited Greater Manchester previously.
- Popular positive comments cited about Greater Manchester by previous visitors included: “interesting” (32%), “plenty to see and do” (32%), “good shopping” (26%) and “The Lowry worth visiting” (19%).
- Popular positive comments cited about Greater Manchester by GTOs who have not visited before (70) included “plenty of variety” (20%), “good shopping” (11%) and “improving/modernised” (6%).
- GTOs associated Greater Manchester with a mix of positive words including football (13%), art (10%) and shopping (8%).
- The most popular destinations visited included London (23 GTOs), York (23 GTOs), Durham (11 GTOs), Eastbourne (11 GTOs) and Newcastle (11 GTOs).
- Key factors influencing the choice of destination include: easy access, high quality attractions, low crime, quality hotels and history and heritage.

Booking & Information Sources

- For day group trips a large proportion of GTOs booked between 1 to 3 months in advance (29%) and between 4 to 6 months before (30%).
- For short breaks and longer breaks a higher proportion of group travel organisers booked between 4 to 6 months in advance (19% and 15%) and over 12 months in advance (15% and 29%).
- The majority of GTOs stated that they book elements of their trip independently (92%). However just under two thirds also booked as part of an inclusive package (60%) and used a suggested itinerary (65%).
- The most popular marketing sources used when choosing a group travel destination included: group travel magazines/articles (90%), trade fairs (86%), personal experiences (85%) and destination brochures (81%).
- A total of 62 GTOs had access to the internet. The majority of these had internet access at home (44%).

