

TOURISM  
BUSINESS  
ESSENTIALS



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# RESEARCH GUIDE FOR TOURISM OPERATORS

*The essential guide on how to conduct  
tourism research.*

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Destination  
British Columbia™

# Research Guide For Tourism Operators

This Destination BC guide is intended to help BC tourism suppliers conduct tourism research to strengthen and grow their businesses. It includes information on what tourism research is and why it's necessary, what the research process entails, how to access secondary research and how to conduct primary research. It also provides advice on data compilation and analysis, collaborative research partnerships, and research projects with consultants.

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First Edition, March 2015

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# Research Guide for Tourism Operators

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# 1

## Introduction

### Have you ever asked yourself:

- What is research?
- Why is it important?
- Who does research?
- How do I use it?
- How do I conduct my own?
- Where can I get help?

The tourism industry is changing rapidly and has become increasingly competitive: more tourism destinations are emerging worldwide, and travellers now have a greater number of locations from which to choose. To remain successful, tourism businesses must be even more strategic when understanding their market and competition, planning their operating strategies and ensuring their profitability. To do this, one of the key building blocks is research.

What is research and why is it important? Research is the process of finding and analyzing information. Among other things, it consists of gathering information about people's behaviours, ideas, attitudes and preferences regarding various topics or concepts. Research also aims to measure and assess this information for decision-making purposes. When a decision is based on reliable facts and relevant information, it is usually far more effective and credible.

Through research, tourism businesses can gain a better understanding of their visitors and the local tourism market. By understanding visitors' preferences and motivations, you can more easily define and solve business problems, set priorities, increase the demand for your services and strengthen profits. Good research information also benefits the entire tourism industry, including business owners, operators, visitors, communities, associations and governments.

Research does take work, requiring internal and/or external skills and resources. However, when done properly, it can reap tremendous benefits. This guide explains what research is, why research is important to the tourism industry, and how to most effectively use research to further your business goals. In addition to the information provided throughout this guide, a directory of key tourism research resources can be found at the final pages to further assist you with tourism research.

# 2 Understanding Tourism Research

## What is Research?

Research is the gathering of information about peoples' behaviours, ideas, attitudes and preferences towards a selection of topics or concepts for the purposes of answering a question(s).

## What is Tourism Research?

Within tourism, there are many different types of research, including:

**Market research:** An organized effort to gather information about markets or customers. It is focused on people (i.e. markets): what people want, need or believe, and how they act or behave. After information is gathered, it can be used to determine how to market and sell products, services or experiences.

**Marketing research:** Deals more specifically with marketing processes, including advertising. It is the systematic gathering, recording and analysis of data about issues relating to marketing products and services. The goal of marketing research is to identify and assess how changing elements of the marketing mix affect customer behaviour.

**Product research:** Used to gather and review information about products and services. This type of research focuses on information to assist in the development and provision of tourism experiences that meet or exceed customer expectations.

**Competitive research:** Used to look at the position and actions of competitors in the marketplace.

**Economic research:** Used to examine economic and business data and information, including revenues, expenditures and their impacts. For tourism researchers, this type of research often focuses on the spending patterns of visitors within a tourism area.



# Why is Tourism Research Important?

**Research can help you become an expert about every aspect of your business. It helps you manage your operations, fine-tune business approaches, address change and plan for the future.**

Once you have gathered information and analyzed the results of your research, you will be in a better position to create a focused business plan, select a new business location, develop new products or services to meet your customers' needs and expectations, set competitive prices, target and attract more visitors or customers, develop a targeted and cost-effective advertising campaign, apply for a loan or other funds, or take other steps to grow your business and profits. The more you know about all of these aspects of your tourism business, the more likely you are to achieve success.

Research also helps improve the quality of a decision, while reducing uncertainty. This is accomplished by collecting and reviewing data, and testing and supporting assumptions with facts using research information. Although research does not ensure the right business decision every time, it helps reduce the risk of making a bad decision.

For example, the financial risk associated with opening a new hotel or resort will be significantly reduced by thoroughly researching the market opportunity before planning, designing and building the property. On a smaller scale, product and service improvements can be easily handled when customer feedback is received on an ongoing basis from a research-based guest satisfaction program. This is far more effective and proactive than having to quickly react to a decrease in visitor demand. At all times, a combination of business expertise, intuition and research will help you make an educated decision, and you are more likely to avoid potential costly mistakes based on unsubstantiated judgment.

Tourism research helps address basic questions about your activities and services. Common issues and questions might include:

## **Tourism Trends**

- What are the trends in the tourism and travel sector?
- What changes can I expect and how can I plan for the future?

## **Competition**

- Who is the competition for my business?
- What are they doing, how are they selling their product and what can I learn?

## **Products and services**

- What new products and services are being introduced in my marketplace and elsewhere?
- How well are my products and services meeting the needs and expectations of my customers?

## **Customer/Market**

- Who is my target market and how do I reach those people?
- What are my target market's travel needs and motivations?

## **Marketing Planning**

- Where do my customers obtain travel information (e.g. print ads, television, online, travel agents)?
- How do I communicate effectively and cost efficiently with my customers?

## **Tracking and Evaluation**

- What is the cost per enquiry, customer or bed night?
- How many visitor/customer enquiries have converted into actual visitors/customers?

## **Business Operations**

- In what areas does my staff need training?
- How should I best allocate resources within my organization?

# 2 Understanding Tourism Research

## Why is Tourism Research Important?

### Visitor Information Every Tourism Business Should Know or Collect

- Who is visiting?
- Why are they visiting?
- Where are they from?
- What did they do?
- How much did they spend?
- Where did they stay?
- How long did they stay?



Many organizations conduct research on an ongoing basis. Organizations could include private tourism operators such as hotels, museums or travel agents, public institutions (e.g. government or academic) and non-profit associations such as tourism industry associations or publicly owned facilities. Each of these organizations can directly benefit from research to gain a broader understanding of their target market and their potential profitability.

Research can provide value to the tourism sector and communities in British Columbia by:

- Giving ownership of information to local stakeholders so they can use it for their own business planning/use.
- Increasing the understanding of the overall value of tourism to the sector, region, community or province by collecting much-needed visitor information on all sectors and areas of BC.
- Assisting with the development and/or evaluation of marketing initiatives.
- Guiding effective product development in the various tourism sectors.
- Guiding a community's use of various tourism sectors for community development.
- Supporting funding applications.



# 3 Conducting Tourism Research

To be useful and valuable, research must be gathered using a sound research process, such as an ordered set of research activities. A research process ensures a structured collection of information using accepted methods of data collection and analysis. This can be used as the foundation for drawing conclusions, forming recommendations and making decisions.

## The Research Process: Six Steps

Like any business activity, it is important to start with a plan. Many tourism organizations have used the following six-step plan to assist with their research:

1. Setting the business objective
2. Establishing the research objective
3. Gathering information and conducting analysis
4. Developing results
5. Formulating conclusions
6. Making recommendations

The research process is mapped out here for quick reference while the rest of this section explores each step in more detail.

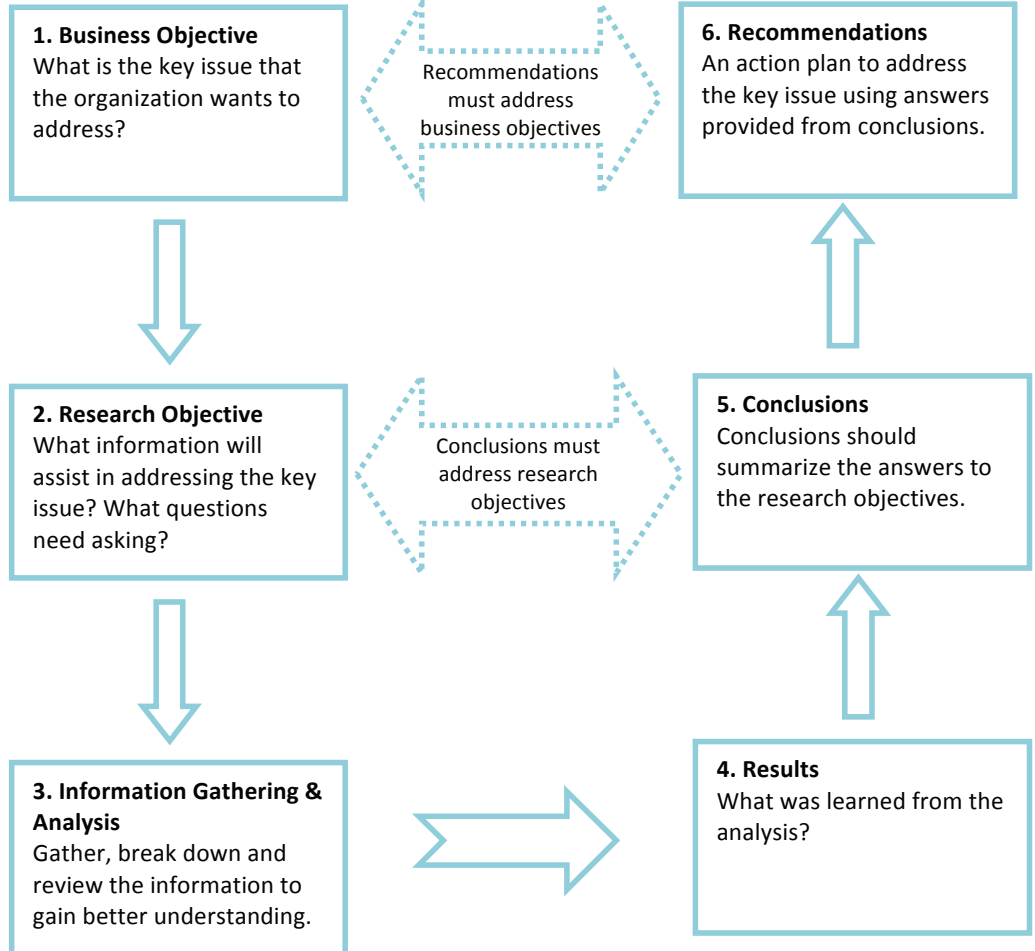
### **Vital Questions to Ask Before You Begin Your Research**

- Do you need this information? Are the funds available? How will it be used? Who will use it?
- If limited resources, what information should be prioritized/is needed most?
- What do you hope to learn from the research? In what ways can you learn from it?
- Does the data already exist? Can the information be found locally, regionally, provincially or nationally?
- What experts and peers can you consult for advice and third-party opinions?

# 3 Conducting Tourism Research

## The Research Process: Six Steps

### The Research Process



## The Research Process: Six Steps

### Step One: Business Objective

The business objective is the key issue your business or organization wants to address. This is the most important starting point of any research project. To determine your business objective/key issue, it may be helpful to consult with the people who know and understand your operating environment, for example your staff. Some examples of key issues include:

- How to make a profit or keep the business open (operations and financial feasibility)
- Determining current/future resource needs (forecasting)
- Determining short- and/or long-term plans (strategic planning)

- Setting priorities and develop marketing plans (marketing)
- Enhancing visitor experiences (product development, customer service)
- Evaluating success of new initiatives/ changes (product development and evaluation)
- Assessing visitor satisfaction (performance measurement)
- Tracking performance (business monitoring)
- Confirming decisions (accountability).

Once a clear business objective has been determined, the next step is to identify what type of research information will help address this objective.

### Case Study: What's the Point of Conducting Research?

A relatively new heritage attraction was ramping up for its third summer season. During a pre-season staff meeting, senior management asked the team about the typical summer visitor experience at the attraction. Their goal was to map out events and exhibits that would be of interest to most visitors. Unfortunately, none of the staff had been tasked with taking notes or conducting research about who had visited and what they had found appealing. They sat silent.

Next, senior management asked why overall visitation had declined at the end of the previous season. The team was also stumped. Were visitors unaware of the attraction? Were the seasonal exhibits not appealing enough? Should more performing arts be featured? Or were interactive and technology-rich displays the way to go? As they pondered all the possibilities, staff realized the common theme to all these questions was the issue of visitor volume and how this issue could be addressed. They also realized that they could contribute to the solution and started discussing ways they could address their boss' primary concerns.

# 3 Conducting Tourism Research

## The Research Process: Six Steps

### Step Two: Research Objective

Next, determine your research objective: the research information you need to address your business objective. Start by asking these questions:

- What kind of information are you looking for?
- What questions need asking?
- Where can you find this information?
- When do you need to obtain this information?
- Who can answer your questions?

If you discover you have multiple research objectives, prioritize them into “need to know” and “nice to know” categories. Prioritizing will allow you to shape your needs with more ease as the project progresses.

You also may find you need to pare down objectives due to limited time or finances, or explore the possibility of partnering with others to address a larger scope. For additional information on collaborating with partners, [see Chapter 7](#).

### Case Study: What’s the Question?

Back at their desks, the inspired staff started to think of questions they would need to answer to address the core business objective of visitor volume. As they brainstormed, they wrote down the following questions:

- Who are our current visitors and why do they come? Are they satisfied? Do they return? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- Who are the visitors to our community? Are they different from the visitors to our attraction? If so, why aren’t they visiting?
- How are our current products of events, exhibits and shows meeting the needs of our visitors? Do they exceed their expectations?

After listing the questions, they drafted a “research objective” that identified who they needed to interview, the type of information they were looking to capture, and when they should be asking for it:

The “what”: The purpose of this research project is to develop a profile of visitors to our attraction operation and to our host community.

The “who”: Who is visiting our attraction and who is not visiting us? We need to target visitors to our community who may or may not come up to our attraction.

The “when”: In three weeks we will kick off the busy season – both for our attraction and our community. We will get everything in place and start on the Victoria Day long weekend, our first weekend with “summer hours”.

### TIP

A solid research objective will drive every other stage of the project, including planning, data collection, analysis, reporting and conclusions. At every step of your project, frequently refer back to your objectives to ensure your final conclusions address your initial research objective(s).

# The Research Process: Six Steps

## Step Three: Information Gathering and Analysis

After defining the business and research objectives, the next step is to source and incorporate different types of research to gather, break down and analyze the required information. Essentially, all research data comes from one of two sources: primary research sources and secondary research sources.

### Secondary Research versus Primary Research

Primary does not mean first or more important, and secondary does not mean second or less important. In fact, researchers often incorporate both types of research into their work. Essentially, secondary research can lay the groundwork for your information needs, and primary research can help fill in the gaps.

Secondary research is the summary, collation and/or synthesis of research that already exists. It can be gathered from government census reports, economic and production data, information from agencies, surveys by trade and industry associations and government departments, or through private research that often is available for sale. While the information may not contain specific information about your business, it probably contains valuable information about your operating environment. Secondary research can include information such as:

- Market trends
- Overall market size
- Visitor volumes
- Market segments
- Market characteristics
- Competitors
- Suppliers.

To determine if secondary research is required, ask yourself:

- What type of information do we need to answer our research questions?
- What information do we currently collect (e.g. ticket stubs, attendance counts, website visits, phone calls)?
- Can any of that information be used to answer our questions?
- What other information/research do we have access to?
- Can we use existing research, if similar research has been conducted?

If you determine secondary research does not address your research objective(s), you will need to do some customized primary research. This is research you generate for your own business based on your exact needs. Primary research is generated when you ask questions that have never been asked before. It is the collection of new or original data, also known as raw data, which is information that does not yet exist. Sources can include existing and potential customers, employees, suppliers, consultants and others involved in the work you do. Researchers will often do secondary research first to obtain an overall understanding of a topic, and then conduct primary research to obtain unique and specific information not available elsewhere. By using both types of research, business owners and operators get a well-rounded view of their position and the appropriate information they need to assess options and make important business decisions.

# 3 Conducting Tourism Research

## The Research Process: Six Steps

### Case Study: How to Get the Answer?

Staff at the heritage attraction had their work cut out for them. How could they get a sense of their visitor volume and satisfy their research objectives? Thankfully, one of the staff had just completed a research course as part of his tourism program at the local college. He suggested they look at secondary sources to get a sense of the bigger picture before embarking on some primary research to fill in the gaps.

Staff members went online and began searching for sources of information about visitors to their community and region. They quickly found previous research conducted by their community, regional and provincial tourism agencies. This gave them a sense of general trends in visitor volumes, demographic data, spending patterns, and other statistics and market characteristics. The team now had a better understanding of visitors overall, but needed to focus on information specific to their small community, particularly their heritage attraction. They decided to gather primary data.

A more in-depth look into secondary and primary research can be found in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively.

### Quantitative and Qualitative Research

Through secondary and primary research, information gathered is either quantitative or qualitative in nature. Quantitative and qualitative research methods provide different types of data and information insights. As a result, research findings are often most useful when the two methods are combined.

Quantitative research is research that involves the measurement of quantities or amounts; it aims to count or measure how many people do, say, think or feel something. Data is numerically-oriented and can be expressed as quantities, percentages or numbers.

It requires considerable attention to the measurement of trends, opinions, responses and patterns, and most often involves statistical analysis. Quantitative research is essentially the tallying of individual responses to a question and is appropriate in the case of questions that need precise numbers.

Qualitative research, on the other hand, is more exploratory. It seeks to identify issues, questions and concepts – the “why?” – and is often done face-to-face. A popular form of qualitative research is focus groups, in which a group of people are asked by a moderator about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes. Focus groups do not always follow a fixed set of questions; instead, a topic guide or an interview guide investigates issues more extensively.

### Quantitative versus Qualitative Research

	Quantitative	Qualitative
<b>Research purpose</b>	Specific, conclusive	General, insightful
<b>Sample size</b>	Large	Small
<b>Collection methods</b>	Rigid, well-structured	Open-ended, semi-structured
<b>Analysis</b>	Formal, statistical, quantitative, counts and tallies	Informal, non-quantitative, thematic, insightful
<b>Level of detail</b>	High, less subjective interpretation	Low, more subjective interpretation

## The Research Process: Six Steps

### **Case Study: What to Ask, and How?**

Staff determined they had enough personnel to conduct primary research, especially with help from some students from the local tourism program. They wanted to quickly and accurately capture real-time information from visitors to their attraction as well as visitors to the community during the course of the season. Along with a quick snapshot survey, they wanted an option to follow up with more detailed questions later on.

Their plan was to intercept visitors and conduct short surveys both at their heritage attraction and at off-site locations (around the community and at entry points such as Visitor Centres). At the completion of the survey, they would ask the respondents for their email address so follow-up online surveys could be conducted after the visitors returned home.

The snapshot questionnaire was created first, with a goal of capturing data that could be compiled to indicate overall trends. They asked questions such as:

- Where do you live?
- If you are from out of town, what attracted you to our community?
- Where are you staying while you are in town?
- Have you heard of our heritage attraction?
- Have you visited our attraction? If yes, what enticed you to visit? If no, why not?

The team then created a follow up online survey, allowing respondents to answer freely about their thoughts, attitudes and beliefs about the attraction and what could be improved.

They also decided to ensure quantitative tracking systems were put in place for the summer season. The first tracking point would be a guest book at the front gate. They also asked the stage manager of their live show to keep track of audience numbers for the morning and afternoon performances, and to observe the level of engagement in each group. Finally, they asked the on-site restaurant and gift shop to compile their sales at the end of each day, so rises and falls in revenue could be tracked.

The team planned to sit down at the end of the summer with their collected data and notes from phone surveys.

# 3 Conducting Tourism Research

## The Research Process: Six Steps

### Data Collection Methods

Data collection is the process of preparing and collecting data. There are many different data collection methods available to tourism researchers to help collect information. Some of these methods or instruments can be used as either quantitative or qualitative research tools, while others are only applicable to one type.

The following data collection methods can be used to conduct primary quantitative and/or qualitative research:

Research Type	Collection Method	Description
<b>Quantitative and/or qualitative research</b>	<b>Surveys and questionnaires</b> (completed in-person, online, by telephone, direct mail, or direct email)	A survey is the process of describing some aspect(s) of a population or group of people based on a sample of the total. Visitor surveys (questionnaires) are the most common type of tourism research.
	<b>Trip diaries</b>	Visitor recordings of trip details, such as expenditures, travel routes, sightseeing, highlights and other activities.
	<b>Field tests</b>	Assessing a situation under the conditions it is actually being used, such as distributing questionnaires while people are using your product/experience.
	<b>Observations</b>	Watching or observing a situation to record relevant facts, actions and behaviours (e.g. watching which exhibits guests choose first after entering an attraction, or observing audience members during a performance).
	<b>Comment cards</b>	An informal way of soliciting feedback and information from visitors/customers.
<b>Quantitative research</b>	<b>Guest books</b>	Informal recording of guest details on a voluntary basis; often designed like a tally sheet to record basic visitor profile information such as origin and party size.
	<b>Visitor profile tracking</b>	A structured approach to provide a description of visitors based on demographic and behavioural characteristics (e.g. origin, party size, length of stay, frequency of visit).
	<b>Web-analytics</b>	The measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of Internet data for the purpose of understanding and optimizing web usage.
<b>Qualitative research</b>	<b>Interviews</b> (completed by telephone or face-to-face)	A way to capture in-depth and insightful information; interviews enable the interviewer to be flexible to “probe” the interviewee for additional information, as needed.
	<b>Focus groups</b>	Through a discussion led by a moderator, a sample gathering of respondents to get their direct feedback such as perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes on an issue(s).



## The Research Process: Six Steps

When conducting primary research, a data collection method will be chosen depending on the types of information needed as well as the planned use of the information. If the information is needed for decision-making, then a more rigid approach (quantitative) should be taken, rather than an ad hoc approach (qualitative), which may not be thorough or representative of your audience.

When conducting secondary research, you will not need to actively choose between different data collection methods, as these decisions were made by the original researcher. However, having a strong understanding of the different options can help you decide whether to use the selected information found to help support your business' objectives.

For more information about the different types of data collection methods, and advantages and disadvantages of each, [see Chapter 6](#).

### Step Four: Results

The next step is to identify what was learned from the analysis. This analysis process requires data preparation (the “cleaning” and preparation of data) and descriptive statistics (the description or summary of data collected).

This step can be simple or complex, depending on the tools available and the types of information collected. For instance, if your company uses an online program, the data collection, preparation, and descriptive statistics (including charts and graphs) can be created automatically. Many businesses use programs such as Microsoft Excel or Access to summarize data, while others use systems such as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Regardless of the program selected, the overall goal is to ensure all the results are readily available.

Whether you are using an online package or entering the collected data into an electronic spreadsheet, it is important to clean your

data. Look for anomalies. If a self-completed survey was used, are there any questionnaires in which someone answered every question the same way, even when the answers didn't make sense? Did someone type gibberish to move past a field in your online survey? If these types of circumstances occur, it is often best to remove the responses in their entirety rather than have their responses skew the entire pool of responses.

Once the data is clean, it can be analyzed via descriptive statistics: summaries of information collected in either written or chart form. This can include demographic information, such as gender and age, as well the frequency of responses to your questions, for example, “50% of people we surveyed this summer plan to return to our attraction next year” or “four out of five visitors to our festival are from BC.”

### Step Five: Conclusions

Inferential statistics is the process of forming conclusions about the data. This process frequently includes extrapolating information from a data sample to apply to a larger group. For detailed information on compiling and analyzing data, [see Chapter 6](#).

In considering key results and the culmination of data, the overall outcomes and implications of the research are summarized.

It is easy to get side-tracked while analyzing data, e.g. if unexpected results are discovered. Therefore, as conclusions are formed, it is very important to refer back to the research objective(s) to ensure the question(s) is being answered.

# 3 Conducting Tourism Research

## The Research Process: Six Steps

### **Case Study: What Did We Discover Overall?**

As the summer season came to a close, staff gathered to review the results of their research project. Each staff member presented the findings in their area of research. As the meeting progressed, certain trends became obvious. They thought back to their initial questions and drew the following conclusions:

#### **Current visitors: profiles and motivation**

Over 50% of their visitors were local residents (within 30 kilometres of the site). On average, they returned two times per year. Many cited cost per visit as a deterrent to repeat visitation. Another 30% came as guests of local residents. Typically, they did not return, also citing cost. The remaining 20% were people who came to the community for another reason, for whom the heritage attraction was an afterthought.

#### **Overall visitors to our community: motivation**

A large group of visitors came to the community for summer fishing and winter skiing. Over 50% of visitors to the community surveyed had heard of the attraction, but the majority of these visitors were seeking short-term (less than a full day) interactive experiences that involved physical activity.

#### **Current product offering analysis**

The majority of visitors left the attraction having spent very little on food, and even less on gifts and mementos. However, based on head counts at the theatre, live performances ran at least 75% capacity, during both morning and afternoon.

Equipped with the outcome of their study, staff started to draft implications and recommendations for their boss.



## The Research Process: Six Steps

### Step Six: Recommendations

Once you have drawn some conclusions from the data, you are ready to create an action plan to address the key issue(s) of the research objective(s). Consider a range of options, which can be further analyzed based on cost and feasibility. During this step, you can select the best options for your business, and test these options knowing they are backed by solid information.

#### Case Study: What Next?

Based on their conclusions, staff developed several ideas for improving business during the following summer, and presented them for consideration by their boss. These included:

- Creating a “locals club” with a discount pass that residents could use year-round at significant savings. The club would also receive a monthly newsletter featuring cool events and attractions at the site.
- Giving non-locals a coupon at the exit gate for a return visit at a greatly reduced cost.
- Promoting the live theatre aspect of the attraction in all marketing materials, as this was the most popular offering on-site.
- Hosting restaurant service only on August weekends (peak time), and offering a restricted snack menu the rest of the year (with select seasonal and local treats rather than a full menu).
- Creating special short tours with a physical component, such as a bike tour of the site or dance lessons with the in-house performing company.
- Converting part of the gift shop into a “make your memory” experience where guests could customize a keepsake using a skill/product showcased in one of the exhibits.
- Tying the experiences offered at their attraction to the ski and fishing industries (exploring the local history of these sectors), and offering discounted tickets to their venue at the local ski hill and fishing shops.

Management listened carefully to the suggestions and proposed ideas of their own. Within a few weeks, they mapped out tests of each initiative, including ways to measure success, such as putting codes on all coupons and continuing the guest book tracking system. The entire team was inspired by the process, and committed to checking in at regular points during the year to measure their ongoing progress.

# 3 Conducting Tourism Research

## The Research Process: Six Steps

### **Informed Consent, Confidentiality and Anonymity**

Most market researchers should and do abide by the codes, policies and procedures outlined by the Market Research and Intelligence Association of Canada (MRIA-Canada). All research participants must agree in advance to participate in research, also known as informed consent. The researcher should provide verbal or written details of the study, including who is conducting the research, who is funding the research, and what the objectives of the research are, as well as an explanation of what can be expected of the data once it is collected.

Another important factor is maintaining the confidentiality of participants and their responses. When people disclose personal information for any research purpose, the information provided must be kept private. The unauthorized disclosure of personal information provided in confidence would be deemed a breach of confidentiality.

It is occasionally necessary to publicly share the information that has been gathered. For instance, you may intend to publish your research or need to share responses such as open-ended comments with others (including staff or research partners). Participants should be aware of and give consent to these terms, prior to the commencement of research. If non-aggregate information is to be released, it is strongly recommended that each response or comment is thoroughly viewed in detail, and any identifying information of the participant is removed to maintain confidentiality.

Participants must also have anonymity when participating in research. Anonymity is the act of being publicly unknown. Identifying information can be as explicit as a name, address, email address, phone number or place of business, but it can also be implicit. An example of implicit information would be a statement that the income of a person of colour exceeded a certain amount; if there is only one person of colour in the community, that person's privacy is no longer protected.

Research participants should be aware of limitations to the guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity. There are certain times where it may be necessary for the researcher to release information that was gathered under confidence. For instance, collected information does not have legal privileges and may be liable to subpoena by a court of law.

# 4 Understanding and Using Secondary Research

As noted earlier, secondary research (also known as desk research) is the summary, collation and/or synthesis of existing research. The most commonly used research method, it consists of reviewing and analyzing previous studies and findings – such as reports, websites, press articles and previous research studies – and is an excellent source of information about your tourism environment.

Secondary research is generally the most cost-effective source of data, though sometimes it is necessary to pay for the information you are seeking. For instance, companies and organizations may charge a fee to access information or data they produced. However, abstracts, which are summaries of larger pieces of work, are often free. A single

abstract or a combination of abstracts may create a sufficient picture, and accessing a full report may not be necessary.

The summary and collation of secondary research data can usually be conducted fairly quickly, as the majority of the work (i.e. data collection, analysis and reporting) has already been completed. This information may not be tailored to address your specific business issue(s), but it is sometimes possible to access existing databases and conduct your own analysis to better meet your needs. Like primary research, this will require more time and expertise, but may result in more targeted information to support your business and research objectives.

## Advantages and Disadvantages of Secondary Research

Advantages of secondary data sources	Disadvantages of secondary data sources
Often available free of charge or at low cost	May be out of date
Typically contains a wealth of detailed information	May not address issues specific to your business (e.g. product, locality)
Minimal specialized skill required to review and analyze information	May not directly answer your research question(s); supplementary material may be needed
High quality of data if from a known and reputable source	May need some level of expertise to interpret and assess reliability of information
May be possible to re-analyze data to answer specific questions	May require caution regarding the reliability of the information: addressing how, when, where and by whom it was conducted

# 4 Understanding and Using Secondary Research

## Types of Secondary Research Data

Secondary research can provide valuable insights into market developments and your respective role. It can provide a wide range of information and statistics on market shares and status of markets and products, including new products and predictions of future developments.

Some types of data that can be derived from secondary research sources include:

- **Census:** Data collected by official counts or population surveys, typically recording details of individuals.
- **Demographics:** Statistical characteristics relating to a population and its particular groups, such as age and gender.
- **Psychographics:** Data that describes the classification of people according to their attitudes, aspirations and other psychological criteria.
- **Public opinion polls:** Inquiries into public opinion conducted by interviews of a random sample of people.
- **Customer and sales data:** Data about areas such as volume, history, patterns and trends.
- **Market segments:** Data from a subset of a market consisting of people who share common needs or interests.
- **Media survey data:** Data such as reader and viewer profiles.
- **Product and service:** Trends and information on new products and services.
- **Scientific study data:** Data, such as environmental issues, affecting the industry.
- **Contact information:** Data such as address, phone numbers and email databases.

Some types of tourism specific secondary research data include:

- **Tourism forecasts, outlooks and tracking publications:** Data about visitor volumes, trends, patterns, borders, airports, ferries, highways counts and other tourism areas.
- **Tourism industry performance publications:** Information about the economic value of tourism.
- **Regional profiles:** Information from BC's six tourism regions.
- **Sector profiles:** Information about various sectors such as outdoor adventure, golf, ski and wine touring.
- **Geographic market profiles:** Data such as visitor origin information (Canada, US and International markets).
- **Target market research:** Defining characteristics and needs such as demographics and psychographics, and ways of reaching specific markets.

## Secondary Research Sources

Various secondary research sources are available to tourism researchers and marketers. Much of this information is available online or by directly contacting the source in person, by email or by phone. Appendix B provides a thorough reference listing of useful resources, descriptions and contact details for tourism researchers. Some examples include:

- Government departments
- Tourism industry associations
- Academic institutions
- National and local press industry magazines and newspapers
- Informal contacts and associates
- Trade directories
- Business and academic libraries
- Professional institutes and organizations
- Previously gathered marketing research
- Public records
- Private consultants

## Evaluating Secondary Research

Since secondary research has been originally collected for other purposes and is available to multiple users, it is important to assess its value to your situation, and determine whether it can be used to support your project. Specific questions to ask include:

- When was the research conducted and the study completed? The importance of this will depend on the type of data you are reviewing, your specific research objectives and the applicability of the data to your business issue(s). Always try to obtain the most recent data available.
- Learn about the organization supplying the data, in terms of who conducted the research and their credibility. Do they have good experience? Are they experts in the field they are researching?
- How pertinent is the information to your research objectives? Even the best researched study can be of little value if not relevant to your issue(s). You must be able to apply the data to your circumstances.
- How much time went into the study? Is the research plan and method realistic?
- What was the cost of the study? This information may not be available and can be misleading, but a low-cost study with a large and complex scope may indicate some weakness with the research model.
- Under what conditions was information collected (i.e. voluntary or mandatory)?
- Is there freedom from bias? Were the researchers likely to have any vested interest (e.g. personal or economic) in the outcome of the research?
- Were the research plan and methodology developed properly and accurately, particularly the sampling plan? Was one developed? Was the sample collected randomly? Was it large enough?
- How accurate is the data? How was it collected? What tools were used? How were the responses tabulated? Can the data be verified?

# 5 Understanding and Conducting Primary Research

As explained earlier, primary research is conducted to discover original or raw data, giving you the opportunity to investigate a previously unexplored issue specific to your business. Primary research is a particularly important consideration when launching a new product or service, developing and understanding a new market, and/or making a case about business or economic potential and impacts.

When conducting primary research, your research process should be designed to obtain the information you need to address your business and research objectives, and include ways to analyze, review and synthesize the data.

## Advantages and Disadvantages of Primary Research

Advantages of Primary Research	Disadvantages of Primary Research
Data is designed to address the most relevant business and research objectives and issues for which the information is required	More expensive than secondary research
Data can be high-quality and extremely useful	Requires research expertise and statistical understanding to design and manage the research process and interpret and assess results
Private and confidential to the researcher	Time-consuming process from start to finish (e.g. data collection, inputting)
Data can be easily accessible in-house by tracking daily information on an ongoing basis	Results may be short-lived before they become out-of-date





# Types of Primary Research Data

The following types of research may be most relevant to you, depending on your business and research objectives.

## **Product/service development**

This type of research focuses on information that can help you develop and provide tourism experiences, services and/or infrastructure that meet or exceed customer expectations. It includes seasonal product opportunities, strengthening and building of destination areas, upgrading and enhancing the market readiness of tourism products and services, and improving visitor services and transportation infrastructure.

## **Visitor profile**

This is a description of your visitors based on demographics and behavioural or psychographic characteristics such as age, income, accommodation preferences, activity preferences, travel party size, season of travel and spending patterns. Having a clear understanding of your visitors' profiles can help you make better marketing decisions regarding product/service development and marketing/operations, and can also assist you with obtaining project funding.

## **Market segmentation/target marketing**

This is used to identify the customer segment in your geographic target that is most likely to visit your area or become a customer. It investigates the market by segments such as age, gender, income, lifestyle, activity and/or interests. This can give clear insight into who is (and is not) your target market.

## **Visitor perceptions**

These are the impressions that visitors and potential visitors have of a tourism business. This information can give insight into the

satisfaction of your visitors, and can provide direction on both how and where to make improvements, as well as whether your marketing and communication program is successful.

## **Advertising tracking and effectiveness**

Monitoring customers' reactions to your advertising helps determine where advertising spending is most effective. It is important to know how people are finding out about your business as well as which methods of advertising are having less impact. This enables you to make choices about how and where to allocate advertising and other marketing dollars.

## **Competitor research**

It is important to have an understanding of your competitors: who they are and what they are doing. This helps you determine how you should be positioning your tourism product.

## **Visitor expenditures**

This is the dollar amount spent by a visitor. Economic impact measures the visitor spending generated by an event, attraction or visitor market in a specific geographic area during a specific time period. It estimates the net impact of spending originating from visitors who live outside the defined geographic area, and the dollars that stay in the local economy. For example, economic impact measures can evaluate how much visitors spend in the local community, how many jobs tourism supports in the community, how much tax revenue is generated by visitor spending, etc.

# 5 Understanding and Conducting Primary Research

## Primary Research Sources

It is ideal to collect and maintain your everyday primary data on an ongoing basis, so you can regularly access, review and analyze the information to stay on top of issues and make decisions quickly. The following are easily accessible sources of potential primary research (which you may already be collecting) that may meet your business and research objectives:

### **Customer enquiries**

Records of the kinds of questions people ask about your tourism product. Always take the time to ask people about themselves – their activities, interests, satisfaction levels, perceptions – as this will help you gain insights into their motivations for visiting.

### **Customer complaints**

These provide valuable feedback and an opportunity to fine-tune and improve what you are doing.

### **Visitor records and sales receipts**

These are some of the most essential tools for collecting primary data. Always maintain

records of your visitor/customer volumes and look into any other data you may be able to easily collect, such as origin or size of party. This helps you manage different aspects of your business, such as estimating average expenditures.

### **Special promotions**

Keep track of responses to daily, weekly or other specials, as they help you test demand for products, services and packages, and test pricing strategies.

### **Website data**

User-friendly programs such as Google Analytics, a free service offered by Google, generates detailed statistics about visitors to your website, including online bookings.

### **Online monitoring**

Keep track of visitor reviews on sites such as Trip Advisor and Yelp, as well as social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, to help determine visitor satisfaction levels.

### **Case Study: Everyday Primary Research**

It is halfway through summer and a hotel owner is interested in understanding whether his promotions are having a positive impact on sales. The hotel manager follows through on this objective by creating a tracking sheet that lists the variety of weekend promotions that are available. He has already devised a tracking sheet to monitor the promotions by tracking the number of bookings and sales generated. By the end of the summer, the owner will have all the information he needs to address his objective, all with everyday tracking.

### **Case Study Discussion: Everyday Primary Research Tracking**

You can conduct basic tracking by recording various pieces of information about your visitors/customers. The following table outlines some basic information that can be collected on an everyday basis.

## Primary Research Sources

Topic	Question
Number of visitors	How many people visit your tourism destination?
Visitor party size	How many visitors are in each party?
Visitor composition	How many adults and/or children are in each visitor party? Is the party an individual, couple, family or group?
Demographics	What age(s) are the visitors? What gender(s) are they? What is their education level? What is the visitor's household income? What is their primary language?
Origin of visitors	What is the visitor's host community/city/country?
Purpose of visit	Why are they visiting your destination? Is it for business, leisure or other? Is there a main attraction?
Participation in activities	During this visit, what activities has the visitor participated in? What activities does the visitor plan to participate in?
Accommodations	Where is the visitor staying?
Length of stay/journey	How many nights does the visitor anticipate being away from home? How many nights is the visitor spending in your tourism destination?
Repeat visitation	Has the visitor visited your destination before? If so, how many times?
Method of travel	During this trip, what is the visitor's primary mode of transportation (e.g., car, RV, plane, bus)?
Use of information sources	How did the visitor hear about your destination?

To learn more about primary research – in particular, visitor surveys, [see Chapter 6](#).

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## Primary Research: The Visitor Survey

In the tourism business, a market survey is the most common and frequently conducted type of primary research. Through market surveys, a group of people in a certain market are asked specific questions, with the aim of collecting first-hand information. This is a quantitative research technique, which gathers data on areas such as visitor characteristics, behaviours, attitudes, impressions, opinions, satisfaction levels and spending patterns.

For tourism researchers, the most commonly used market survey is the visitor survey (a guest survey or customer survey). This is a typical way of communicating with people who currently come to your tourism business, as well as those you would like to attract in the future. Depending on your business and research objectives, the research data collected and analyzed from visitor surveys can be used not only to describe the people surveyed, but to also predict attitudes and behaviours of your target markets, plan marketing activities, and estimate the economic effects of tourists to your business.

### The Research Process for a Visitor Survey

As with any research, visitor surveys closely follow the steps of the research process outlined in Chapter 3. In this chapter, additional steps are outlined to provide information pertinent to visitor surveys.

These steps consist of:

1. Determining Business and Research Objectives
2. Developing a Research Method
3. Developing, Testing and Conducting the Survey
4. Compiling Data
5. Analyzing Data
6. Reporting Results

#### **Business and Research Objectives**

To start with, clarify and understand your overall business objective, i.e. the key issue your business wants to address in the visitor survey. Business objectives for visitor surveys tend to revolve around visitor profiles, perceptions, awareness and/or expenditure issues.

Next, determine your research objective. Be specific about what information must be gathered by the visitor survey to address this business objective.

#### **Resources**

Before conducting a visitor survey (or undertaking any tourism research), carefully consider your budget constraints, timelines, deadlines, and both the skill set and availability of personnel to conduct/distribute the surveys and analyze the results. These are essential to choosing and planning the research method.

Budget and timelines will pose limitations, as sufficient funds and time must be allocated to do research properly. Your resources will also help determine whether you are able to conduct research in-house or need to obtain expertise from outside your organization (see Appendix A for a detailed checklist on conducting research with a consultant). You may also be able to identify and coordinate with research partners to expand your resources (see Chapter 7 for more information).

When conducting research in-house, cost considerations will include: staff to manage the project, research training, interviewers and

# The Research Process for a Visitor Survey

software. In addition, if you are not working in collaboration with partners, your staff should be knowledgeable about research implementation, tourism research techniques, and both data analysis and presentation as this is a specialized set of skills (e.g. data analysis requires statistical expertise) and it is important to take the time to ensure you and your staff are equipped to carry out these tasks.

## Research Method

Once you have identified your objectives and are aware of your resources and timelines, the next step is developing your research method (also known as research methodology), which is the main research activity: the process of how to proceed, how to measure progress and how to determine success.

An important consideration is the survey method, which is how you administer the survey and collect the information. The survey can be conducted by an interviewer (an interviewer-administered survey) or be completed by the participant (a self-administered survey). Other considerations include where you conduct the survey (e.g. in person, on site, at your place of business, at an event). Alternatively, the questionnaire can be completed by participants online or via email, mail or telephone.

The advantages and disadvantages of different survey method options are summarized in the table below.

## Survey Methods

	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Interviewer-administered questionnaire</b>	<p>Face-to-face or telephone interviews during or after visit</p> <p>Dedicated staff to conduct interviews</p> <p>Pre-selected interview days/times</p> <p>Computer software for data entry and analysis</p>	<p>Works best when dealing with visitors in a congested area</p> <p>High response rate</p> <p>In-depth, quality data</p> <p>Timeliness of results managed in-house</p> <p>Capable of high-level statistical analysis</p> <p>Interaction with visitors is usually positive</p>	<p>Time consuming</p> <p>High demand on resources; costly due to staffing requirement</p> <p>Research/interviewing training and experience necessary</p> <p>Need dedicated staff/volunteers</p> <p>Potential for interviewer bias</p> <p>Data entry usually time consuming and expensive unless entered electronically at time of interview</p> <p>Participants may consider the interaction to be a hassle, especially if the survey is long</p>

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## Primary Research: The Visitor Survey

### The Research Process for a Visitor Survey

#### Survey Methods, *continued*

	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Self-administered printed questionnaire</b>	<p>Printed postcard/booklet questionnaire that is distributed or mailed to random/all visitors</p> <p>Self-administered survey/card that is collected before departure or mailed in after/during trip</p> <p>Computer software for data entry and analysis</p>	<p>Relatively low cost</p> <p>Able to cover large proportion of visitors</p> <p>Low demand on human resources</p>	<p>Relies on staff to administer program</p> <p>Mailouts can be expensive</p> <p>Often requires extensive follow-up</p> <p>Longer time horizon for research results because of mail-back period</p> <p>May yield low response rates, as people are more accustomed to electronic surveys</p>
<b>Self-administered electronic questionnaire</b>	<p>May be on-site data gathering survey units or questionnaires, which are emailed to target participants via an online survey link</p> <p>Data entry, analysis and presentation such as charts are usually a part of the software package</p>	<p>More current and environmentally sensitive than paper or telephone questionnaires</p> <p>Cost effective</p> <p>“Real time” results</p> <p>Not time-consuming; no expensive data entry required</p>	<p>Participants may consider this to be a hassle as they are already inundated with other online survey and marketing initiatives</p>

# The Research Process for a Visitor Survey

## Survey Preparation

When developing your survey, it is important to ensure it produces the information needed. The quality of answers depends on the quality of the questions you ask and how you ask them.

## Types of Questions

Essentially, there are two types of questions typically found on a survey:

Closed-ended questions (or structured questions) anticipate the participants' possible answers. Surveyed participants are asked to choose from a list of predetermined responses and/or scales/intervals (i.e. ranking or satisfaction ratings). These types of questions will typically make up the bulk of your quantitative survey and won't be too time-consuming to compile and analyze.

Open-ended questions (or unstructured questions) allow participants to express themselves more openly and in greater detail, using their own words. As each individual response must be read, these questions require someone to analyze the data, break it down into independent fragments, and devise a coding system to analyze the responses. This type of question provides an opportunity to collect qualitative data that is rich and detailed.

### Case Study: Combination of Closed-ended and Open-ended Questions

A hotel manager wanted to know how satisfied visitors were with the customer service they received. She wasn't just interested in how satisfied visitors were: she was also interested in the specific reasons for their satisfaction or lack thereof. She assembled a questionnaire which asked visitors the following question:

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates Strongly Dissatisfied and 5 indicates Strongly Satisfied, how satisfied are you with the customer service during your stay at this hotel?  
(Please circle)

Strongly Dissatisfied					Strongly Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5	

If you were Strongly Satisfied, please let us know why.

---

If you were Strongly Dissatisfied, please let us know why.

---

From this survey, the hotel manager was able to gauge visitor's satisfaction levels of customer service. The use of open-ended questions was particularly helpful in determining specifically what visitors were thinking.

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## Primary Research: The Visitor Survey

### The Research Process for a Visitor Survey

#### Closed-ended Questions and Open-ended Questions

Closed-ended Questions	Open-ended Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require participants to choose from a set of responses/scales</li> <li>Provide greater opportunity to control interview/responses</li> <li>Eliminate/mitigate interviewer bias</li> <li>May limit some participant answers that feel they do not fit into the predetermined category</li> <li>Often do not paint the whole picture</li> <li>Commonly used in surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow participants to reply in their own words</li> <li>Require more thinking, is often time consuming</li> <li>Time-consuming to record if interview administered</li> <li>Provide an opportunity to collect detail-rich information</li> </ul>

#### Closed-ended Questions

There are five basic types of closed-ended questions that can be asked in a survey, yielding five different types of responses.

- Dichotomous (or single response or discrete choice) questions:** Require participants to choose between two choices provided (i.e. select only one response: Yes or No; Male or Female; True or False).

Have you visited this attraction prior to this occasion?

- Yes  
 No

- Multiple response questions:** Allow participants to select one or more choices (i.e. select all that apply).

During this trip, what contributed to your decision to visit this attraction? (Please select all that apply)

- Price  
 Package deals  
 Activities  
 Location  
 Recommendation

- Rating (or scale) questions:** Allow participants to evaluate statements by giving a grade or rating along a set scale (i.e. select only one response). Each scale includes a set of anchors, written with a descriptive score and/or a numeric score, that present response options of equal intervals.

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates Strongly Disagree and 5 indicates Strongly Agree, how would you rate the following statement?

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	(Descriptive score)
This attraction met my expectations	1	2	3	4	5 (Numeric score)



# The Research Process for a Visitor Survey

- **Ranking questions:** Require participants to rank responses (i.e. select first, second, third choice).

In your opinion, please rank in order, the importance of the following areas to this attraction, where 1 indicates most important, 2 indicates the next important, etc.

- \_\_\_ Rides
- \_\_\_ Games
- \_\_\_ Petting zoo
- \_\_\_ Food court

- **Numeric questions:** Allow participants to identify a specific number (e.g. age, time period, dollar expenditures, and percentage distribution).

How much did you spend during your visit today? Please round to the nearest dollar.

\$\_\_\_\_\_

## Characteristics of Well-Written Questions:

- No double-barreled questions – only ask a single question at a time
- Short and concise questions, so the question is easily and quickly understood
- Neutrally worded to reduce bias or leading respondents to respond in a way they may not have on their own
- No unanswerable questions (do not provide response categories that do not apply or ask questions where information required to respond is not readily accessible)

## Survey Instructions

Clear, unambiguous instructions are another critical part of successful surveys.

The following should always be included in the survey's introductory paragraph:

- Identify the purpose of the survey.
- Name the sponsor of the survey.
- Ensure confidentiality of responses.
- Provide details about whom to contact regarding questions, concerns or other matters pertaining to the survey.
- Identify completion/return date timelines for self-administered surveys.
- Advise whether any future follow-up will occur.
- Thank respondents.

Instructions for answering individual questions are also important. The respondent should be able to easily identify what type of response you are looking for when reading a question. In addition to the question itself, provide the respondent with guidelines to follow when answering the question.

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## Primary Research: The Visitor Survey

### The Research Process for a Visitor Survey

#### Case Study: Creating Clear Survey Questions

A hotel manager was interested in understanding what motivated guests' trips: business or leisure. Therefore, he designed a survey that included the following question:

What was the motivation for this trip?

- Business
- Leisure
- Other

This question may be adequate for guests who are visiting for either business or leisure, in which case the respondent will not have any doubt about which box to tick. However, many visitors have a dual purpose for their stay (such as guests who are there for business, but end up staying longer for leisure) and may tick both boxes of the survey. This isn't problematic if the hotel manager wants to know all of the reasons for a guest's stay. However, if the hotel manager is looking for the primary motivation of why guests are staying at their hotel, the question should be phrased differently. Instructions are needed to avoid any confusion and gain the direct information being sought. A well-designed question in this case would read:

What was the primary motivation for this trip? Please select only one response.

- Pleasure
- Business
- Other

#### Survey Format

The next step is to compile the survey. To start with, outline or map out the survey questions to provide the flow of the survey. The survey format should allow clear communication with the survey participant to ensure quality of data. Most well-developed surveys are systematic in their approach and use a common format: they lead with general questions, followed by more detailed questions. You and your participant are essentially strangers, and by using a systematic format, you are establishing a sense of rapport and trust to get quality answers.

#### Formatting Tips

- Create a logical flow.
- Provide clear instructions.
- Place the most important questions near the beginning, without disrupting flow.
- Organize the questionnaire logically by grouping questions according to topic.
- Within each of these topics, organize questions from general to specific.
- Use a consistent set of response categories (e.g. excellent, good, fair, poor).
- Use consistent measures for ranking/scoring questions wherever possible.
- Include "Don't know," "None," "Other" as response options, as appropriate.
- Use the appropriate symbols in the response space, for example if a request for dollar amount or percent, insert \$ or %.
- End with demographic questions.
- Design the appearance of the survey to assist with the flow of questions and instructions and, as much as possible, make it interesting and pleasant to complete.

# The Research Process for a Visitor Survey

## Survey Pretesting

Address all outstanding issues before the survey is finalized and launched. Try out the questionnaire on a few test subjects before you implement it. This will reveal shortcomings of the survey, such as:

- Difficulties in completing the survey. Were the instructions confusing? Did the questions make sense?
- Questions consistently left unanswered.
- Length of time required to complete the survey.

## Sampling

It is nearly impossible to survey every individual who visits your tourism business; the costs and logistics of reaching everyone are simply too high and time-consuming. Therefore, when conducting your survey, select only a sample (or a subset of the larger population). If that sample is selected correctly, you can be confident, when analyzing the data, that inferences made from the sample (selected visitors) represent the overall population (total visitors).

When creating your sample of respondents, clearly understand who your overall target population is. When defining the target population, consider:

- What are the defining characteristics of visitors?
- Who should be included? Is anyone excluded and, if so, will that be a problem?
- Where and when are you most likely to find the visitors?
- Who does not need to be reached? Are there any excluding criteria that would narrow the focus (e.g. residents, tour groups)?
- Where and when is it best to intercept visitors?

Once you understand your target population, you can determine a method for selecting a sample. Three general questions should be answered before selecting a sample:

1. How should the sample be selected?
2. How representative must the results be?
3. How large does the sample need to be?

### “How many people do we need to survey?”

This is the most commonly asked question by survey researchers and those commissioning a survey. A balance must be found between accuracy, budget and available time constraints for completion and analyzing results (e.g. your season opening is in 6 weeks so what can realistically be achieved in that time frame?).

## Random Sampling

Like the quality of your questionnaire, the quality of your sample selection will help determine the value of information you collect through your survey. In order to collect information that is representative of your target population, it is necessary to select a **random sample**, in which each member of the population (i.e. every visitor) has an equal chance of being selected.

When conducting a survey of visitors to your tourism business, it is best to survey year-round to account for seasonal variation. This also offers the opportunity to make comparisons. However, a year-round survey might not be practical, given budgetary or human resource constraints. A reasonable level of randomness can be achieved simply by selecting every “nth” visitor at varying times during the day on different days/weeks/months of the year (depending on the objectives). As much as possible, seasonal and weekly

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## Primary Research: The Visitor Survey

### The Research Process for a Visitor Survey

variations in visitation should be taken into account.

Any research project will have certain limitations and sample selection can be a challenge. Sampling bias occurs when a sample is collected in such a way that some members of the intended population are less likely to be included than others. A biased, non-random sample can produce erroneous results.

#### Sample Size

Sample size is the number of participants included in a statistical sample. Typically, the sample size used in a study is determined by the expense of data collection and the requirement of statistical validity (how large a sample needs to be to draw valid conclusions).

Determining total visitor population and survey sample size can be difficult. Because a survey is based on a sample rather than a complete census, the findings will be based on those who respond. The difference between the results of a survey sample and a census is called sampling error, which exists in every survey. The important issue to assess is how big the probable error is, given the sample

size. The measure of this is called the margin of error, which is expressed as plus or minus a certain range (e.g. +/- 5 percent, if a census was surveyed, the real answer would fall within plus or minus 5 percent of the sample estimate). Thus, if the sample shows that 70% of visitors shopped during their trip, it means that the percentage could be as high as 75% or as low as 65% in the population.

To be useful, the level of confidence, which indicates how often the actual answer will likely be found within the margin of error, must be set. Generally, tourism researchers work within a confidence level of 95%, or 19 times out of 20. This is a sufficiently rigorous confidence level, but not unnecessarily high.

The following table summarizes estimated sample sizes based on known population sizes required to achieve a 4% or 5% margin of error at a 95% confidence level. To minimize the margin of error in results within a reasonable level of confidence, follow the table to determine how many respondents are needed for your survey, depending on population size.

Total Population	Margin of Error	
	+/- 4%	+/- 5%
	Sample Size	
1,000	375	278
2,000	462	322
3,000	500	341
4,000	522	351
5,000	536	357
10,000	566	370
20,000	583	377
25,000	586	378
50,000	593	381
100,000	597	383
500,000	600	384

# The Research Process for a Visitor Survey

## Survey Implementation

Finally, the time has come to implement the survey. Administering the survey requires:

- Finalizing details of where and when to survey
- Training and managing interviewers
- Managing questionnaire distribution and collection
- Handling completed questionnaires

If staff or survey interviewers will be intercepting visitors, they should be well prepared with appropriate training, which should include:

- Being fully informed of the survey purpose and questionnaire details
- Delivering the introductory script so that it sounds natural
- Smiling, being friendly and looking professional
- Being consistent with each respondent
- Providing a token thank-you (if one is planned), such as free food, drink, souvenirs or discounts as an incentive for visitors to participate in the survey
- Dealing with refusals, tracking incomplete surveys and noting the reasons why (especially if there may be ways to improve the survey implementation process to obtain a higher response rate)
- Assisting with preparation of data for compilation

## Data Compilation

After the surveys have been completed, the collected data must be prepared for analysis. Unless the survey is done online (and data entry is therefore automatic), the information obtained from the questionnaires will need to be entered into a database before it can be summarized, analyzed and applied to answer your business and research objectives.

Data entry requires focus and attention; accurate data entry is critical to the accuracy of the results. It can be conducted in-house by staff (using Microsoft Excel or a statistical package such as SPSS), or externally using a data entry contractor or company.

The person(s) responsible for data entry should be familiar with the questionnaire and database. For identification purposes and ease of data entry, every completed questionnaire should be allocated a record number (orange box), every question a variable number (blue box), and every response category a numeric code value (green box). Each of these numbers or codes on the questionnaire should correspond to where and how to enter data into the database.

MASTER DATA CODE SHEET

Survey Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Good morning / afternoon / evening. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm conducting a survey on behalf of Destination British Columbia. We'd like to ask you about your trip to the Hope region and your experiences in British Columbia. Can I please speak with someone in your travel party who is knowledgeable about your trip planning and expenditures?**

1. Would you have approximately 10 minutes to answer some questions? If you participate, we would like to give you a complimentary gift for your time.

1 YES 2 NO → Are you sure? You will receive a complimentary gift for completing the interview. Thank you.

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## Primary Research: The Visitor Survey

### The Research Process for a Visitor Survey

The person entering the data should also ensure that missing responses are properly coded, the data makes sense and there are no other obvious errors. A decision should also be made regarding outliers. In statistics, an outlier is an observation that lies an abnormal distance from other values in a random sample from a population. In a visitor survey, an outlier may be a visitor who stays an unusually long period of time or makes a single very large expenditure. Generally, these responses should be handled separately or removed from the database.

The data entry task involves:

- Determining what program to use for data entry and analysis
- Setting up a master coding sheet (hard copy) and/or spreadsheet (electronic copy)
- Assigning a record number to each questionnaire, a variable number to each question and a numeric code value to all categories of closed-ended questions (e.g. for gender, Male = 1 and Female = 2)
- Identifying a process for coding open-ended questions (e.g. creating themes/key word categories and assigning each a numeric value or entering the responses verbatim)
- Creating a master database to include the coding worksheet with all variables, labels and response categories
- Entering the participant values from each question into the database
- Cleaning the entered data to ensure there are no errors or incorrect/false information, checking for miscoding and missing data, and checking for outliers
- Ensuring the data is accessible and retrievable
- Maintaining confidentiality of data

### Data Analysis

When analyzing your data, keep your objectives clearly in mind. This will help determine what types of analysis and reporting will answer your information needs. The software package chosen for data entry will provide the final determinant of what kind (and how detailed) your analysis will be.

The first task is to calculate the survey's response rate (also known as completion rate or return rate): the percentage of people who completed the survey. A high response rate helps ensure survey results are representative of population.

#### How to Calculate Response Rate:

**Number of Completed Surveys**  
\_\_\_\_\_ X 100 = **Response Rate**

**Number of Participants Contacted**

If you handed out 100 surveys and received 80 back, your equation would be:

**80 Completed Surveys**  
\_\_\_\_\_ X 100 = **80% Response Rate**

**100 Participants Contacted**

# The Research Process for a Visitor Survey

The next step involves analyzing the responses of participants. The most common ways of presenting data tabulations are with frequencies, cross-tabulations and charts, which help you to understand (and possibly predict) visitor trends, patterns, similarities and contradictions.

**Frequencies (or one-way frequencies or one-way tabulations):** This shows the number of times an event (i.e. a response) occurs. Frequency of response data can be used to calculate the average, also known as the mean, which is the sum of all values given for a variable (such as age) across all questionnaires, divided by the number of participants who provided a value for the variable. Frequencies can also be used to calculate percentages and other statistics such as a standard deviation. The use of frequencies is a very important tool and should be conducted on all questions in your database. This type of analysis can provide meaningful insight such as:

- Characteristics that distinguish visitors (e.g. highly satisfied vs. unsatisfied)
- Percentages of participants who respond differently (e.g. likely to return to attraction vs. not likely to return)
- The number of counts of response in each category (e.g. years of age)
- Grouping of response categories to create subgroups (e.g. 35 to 55 years of age), and calculation of formulae (e.g. calculate new percentages where necessary)
- Easily graphed results using graphing software, such as Microsoft Excel

**Cross-tabulations (or two-way tabulations):** This is a way of organizing and presenting data in tables with rows and columns. It represents a statistical technique that establishes an interdependent relationship between two tables of values, but does not identify a causal relationship between the values. For example, cross-tabulations may be used to show the different patterns of responses

based on categories such as gender and geography. They are useful for:

- Categorizing numbers of responses from two or more questions
- Looking at relationships among and/or between variables
- Calculating and interpreting more complex data

**Charts:** These present data in a visually meaningful way, and are often easier to interpret than tables showing frequencies and cross-tabulations. Charts are often useful because graphics can:

- Be an effective visual tool in communicating results quickly
- Add clarity and impact, if used properly

There are different types of charts available for use. It is important to use the appropriate type of chart with the appropriate data. Types include:

- Bar
  - Horizontally or vertically oriented
  - Good to depict magnitudes, differences, distributions of responses or change
  - Can display multiple variables
- Line
  - Connects series of data points; continuous
  - Good for portraying trends over time
  - Can display multiple variables
- Pie
  - Best displays relative proportions
  - Displays percentage of total
  - Best limited to seven categories
  - Unable to display multiple variables

# 6

## Primary Research: The Visitor Survey

### The Research Process for a Visitor Survey

#### Report Results

Effectively reporting the details of your visitor survey data most often incorporates different types of reporting. You may need to choose one or more of the following ways to report and present the research results depending on if and how you are sharing the results:

- Full final report
- Executive summary
- Slide show presentation
- Workshops/seminars
- Press release
- Newsletters
- Website publications

Always consider the practicality of your preferred reporting style. You want to ensure the research you have produced will be interesting, properly understood, useful, meaningful and practical to end-users.

The full final report should incorporate the following sections:

- Executive summary with report highlights
- Introduction
- Research methodology with overview of research process, sampling plan and analytical methods (full details may be placed in an appendix)
- Key findings presented with written text, tables and graphs
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Appendices (e.g. a copy of the questionnaire)





# 7

## Collaborative Research Partnerships

Traditionally, tourism businesses have functioned in a self-sufficient fashion, and have viewed other tourism businesses as competitors. Now more than ever, the tourism industry is moving towards increased openness and teamwork. As you may have seen in your day-to-day business, there has been a shift to strategic tourism partnerships in all areas: marketing, promotion, development, planning and research. These partnerships are important and can be an efficient and effective way of getting quality results.

Collaborative research partnerships involve two or more people or organizations working together to realize and achieve shared goals. This type of partnership may be accomplished by sharing knowledge, experience, finances and other resources while building and maintaining consensus through the process. Teams that work collaboratively can often obtain greater resources, recognition and reward than they might working independently.

### Research Partners

Partners who participate in tourism research collaborations include members of the private, public and non-profit tourism sectors, including academia, all of which represent important and often complementary tourism interests. These include:

- Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs)
- Regional Destination Marketing Organizations (RDMOs)
- Sector associations
- Community, municipal, provincial and national governments
- Universities or colleges
- Tourism research academic or professional agencies and associations
- Tourism-related research institutions
- Independent professional consultants

The ideal partners involve a combination of hands-on tourism industry knowledge

along with specialized skills and expertise in research techniques. For this reason, private/public/academic partnerships often work well.

### Partnership Advantages

The advantage of bringing together individuals and/or organizations not only leverages expertise and resources at lower costs, but adds further benefits such as:

- Helping to increase ownership and the quality of the results
- Enhancing the overall regional/provincial/national or sector understanding within the tourism industry by jointly collecting information and sharing with the broader tourism industry
- Obtaining market/visitor/product research vital for businesses, communities, regions and provinces to make effective, informed decisions, and to conduct evidence-based short- and long-term business plans
- Leading by example and demonstrating to partners how different levels and types of stakeholders can work collaboratively for a mutual purpose
- Building networks at different levels that can be accessed for future research or other tourism needs (e.g. marketing, product packaging, tourism planning)

Additionally, different partners will see additional benefits from the collaboration, including:

### For Industry Partners

- Marketable solutions to current tourism industry and/or business challenges
- Access to new talent, such as professional research expertise available through consultants or established academic researchers
- Opportunity to work with and learn from other industry colleagues
- Affordable, short-term skilled labour when student talent is incorporated into the research
- Exposure of company and brand

# 7

## Collaborative Research Partnerships

### **For Public and Non-profit Sector Partners**

- Real, current industry data information that can be used in areas such as funding applications or budget decisions
- Information to provide input into long-range region, sector or province-wide strategic planning, marketing and budgeting
- Opportunity to gain first-hand understanding and perspective of tourism operations at the core level

### **For Consultants and Academic Partners**

- Exciting research challenges
- Hands-on working relationships with the tourism industry
- Highly qualified personnel, students, post-doctoral fellows, professors and others who receive real work and training opportunities in which they can advance their skills and expertise
- Recognition when work is acknowledged and/or published

### **Financial Advantages to Partnerships**

In addition to cost savings resulting from pooled financial resources, an important potential benefit of a partnership research approach is access to outside agencies for assistance and/or funding support. By showing collaboration and efficiencies through local/regional and/or sectoral partnerships, tourism organizations increase their funding appeal. Providing certain criteria are met, outside agencies can be accessed at zero to low cost to assist in various aspects of research. These agencies are often more likely to assist when more than one stakeholder is involved.

### **Academia as Collaborating Partners**

Universities, colleges and technical schools provide an excellent potential source for research involvement, particularly from their Tourism or Business Faculty and/or Department. The academic sector of tourism can offer professors, teachers and/or students of the tourism industry, who have valuable skill sets in statistics, marketing and/or survey interviewing, often at a reasonable cost. It should be noted, however, that when an academic community becomes involved in tourism industry research, the individuals working in collaboration must have a strong understanding that the end results of the research should be applicable to everyday tourism industry needs, with less of an academic focus.

### **SUMMARY**

Tourism research can help you become an expert in every aspect of your business. The more research you conduct on your business, the more likely you are to achieve success. If you do not have the resources to research everything you want to know, set priorities. Conducting research can be as simple as tracking the number of people who walk through your door, to conducting a detailed off-site visitor study. Regardless of the type of information you are gathering, keep your business objectives in mind. Consistently refer back to the reason you are conducting your research; this will help you stay focused and gather the most important information you need. Follow the step-by-step approach in this guide to give you the necessary tools to successfully conduct your own research. For more information, please [see Appendices 1 to 4](#).

# 1 APPENDIX: Checklist: Commissioning and Managing a Research Project with a Consultant

This checklist details what is involved and required of tourism businesses when working with an external research consultant.

## **Define information needs internally**

- Be clear about why the information is required and what decisions will be made
- Review existing sources (if any) of relevant information
- Identify information gaps to be addressed and redefine information needs if required
- Give thought to which methodology might be appropriate
- Be clear on the budget available for the project

## **Prepare a shortlist of consultants**

- Look for consultants with relevant experience
- Check references
- Ask colleagues for referrals
- Check any available preferred consultant lists
- Involve key people in the choice
- Agree who to involve in the briefing
- Inform relevant parties that research will be conducted
- Check confidentiality agreements and determine possible conflicts of interest
- Send research brief to at least three consultant suppliers

## **Write the brief**

Provide the following information to the prospective suppliers of consulting services:

- Overall objectives, both marketing and research
- The business decision that will be made on the basis of the research
- How the research will be used
- Target groups
- Which methodologies might be appropriate
- Who from your business, if anyone, will be involved in data collection
- Your preferences for data collection
- Your primary and secondary contact person for project management
- Deliverables required (e.g. progress and

final report(s), meetings, presentation)

- Broad idea of budget
- How many suppliers have been asked to bid
- Key selection criteria for the successful proposal
- Form and style of the proposal required (e.g. Word, PDF, PPT, email, mail, in-person presentation)
- Deadlines for the proposal, when the decision to commission will be made, and the date for project completion

## **The proposal**

Bidders should include the following in the proposal:

- Restatement of objectives to demonstrate understanding, including changes to the brief as a result of discussion
- Proposed methodology and reason for choice
- Limitations of the research design, if any
- Detailed time plan
- Your responsibilities (e.g. provide previously conducted research that may be relevant background information, relevant contact lists, introduce the consultant to staff, help coordinate on-site interviews)
- Project team profile and the relevant experience of key personnel
- Proposed fieldwork interviewers
- Any use of freelancers/contractors
- Sample size, composition and recommended recruitment criteria
- Definition of specific project deliverables (e.g. meetings, report(s), presentation(s)), as well as format in which final data is to be delivered (e.g. tables, data files, databases, electronic copies)
- Costs of using your company's template (if required) and likely costs of optional elements (e.g. extra meetings)
- Codes of conduct adhered to, and related training of relevant personnel.
- Payment details/invoice schedule
- Terms and conditions of business

# 1

## APPENDIX: Checklist: Commissioning and Managing a Research Project with a Consultant

### **Selecting the consultant**

- Involve all decision-makers
- Compare and contrast proposals
- Highlight how each proposal has met the selection criteria
- Ensure consultants are contacted if clarification/modification is required

### **Notifying the consultants**

- Advise successful consultant
- Provide feedback to all consultants who submitted a proposal and give specific reasons as to why they were not successful, citing the selection criteria

### **Project acceptance**

- Any further material changes to the proposal document should be specified
- Accept the project verbally and then in writing/via email, confirm the total cost, and specify details of any options included in the proposal
- Receive budget authorization for the project
- Generate and have parties sign contract
- Initiate purchase order internally and advise the consultant how long it will take to issue/who will issue

### **Initial project kick-off meeting**

- Can be done either in-person or by teleconference
- Review research objectives and information need
- Review timing and align feedback with any internal deadlines
- Ask about quality procedures
- Establish how you would like to work with the consultant
- You will need to approve all documentation (e.g. screeners, guides, questionnaires, worksheets): depending on the terms of agreement, you are usually responsible for preparing concepts and other stimulus material required for testing
- Inform the consultant as early as possible of your intention to observe any aspects of the research (e.g. attending fieldwork)
- If attending, you must be familiar with the prevailing code of conduct relating to your

involvement, especially the declaration of your position to the respondent, and the respondent's right to anonymity

- The consultant should provide regular updates on the progress of data collection and notify you of any time delays and related reasons (e.g. delay in acquiring sample lists, recruitment problems, late delivery of interview material)
- Clarify data entry/analysis procedures, including data editing and cleaning on quantitative projects and depth of analysis for qualitative projects

### **Reporting the results**

- Let the consultant know how many days are needed to review the report and any presentation materials
- Advise the consultant about all of your personnel who will be attending meetings, their responsibilities, and any particular issues that might be raised
- Agree on length of time required for presentation of findings and whether material will be circulated prior to the presentation
- Ensure appropriate equipment is available

### **Review the project with the consultant**

- After the presentation and/or delivery of the report, review (debrief) the project with the consultant
- Where relevant, complete a project evaluation and return it to the consultant
- Agree on follow-up required by both you and the consultant

# 2 APPENDIX: Research Organizations and Data Resources

## British Columbia Tourism Associations and Organizations

Organization Name	Description	Website
Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia (ATBC)	A non-profit, membership-based organization that is committed to growing and promoting a sustainable, culturally rich Aboriginal tourism industry.	<a href="http://www.aboriginalbc.com/corporate">www.aboriginalbc.com/corporate</a>
BC Stats (Tourism Monitor)	The central statistical agency of the Province of British Columbia.	<a href="http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/BusinessIndustry/Tourism.aspx">www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/BusinessIndustry/Tourism.aspx</a>
Destination British Columbia	The Research, Planning and Evaluation team conducts research on various aspects of the tourism industry, providing the industry with information to enhance the effectiveness of future marketing activities and development projects.	<a href="http://www.destinationbc.ca/Research/about-research-planning-and-evaluation.aspx">www.destinationbc.ca/Research/about-research-planning-and-evaluation.aspx</a>
Go2	An independent, non-profit industry association that works with BC tourism employers, employees, career seekers, educators and government on human resources issues impacting BC's tourism industry.	<a href="http://www.go2hr.ca">www.go2hr.ca</a>
LinkBC	A value-added service organization working with tourism and hospitality programs across BC.	<a href="http://www.linkbc.ca">www.linkbc.ca</a>
Small Business BC	British Columbia's premier resource centre for knowledge-based business products and services.	<a href="http://www.smallbusinessbc.ca">www.smallbusinessbc.ca</a>
Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC)	Formerly the Council of Tourism Associations of BC. A not-for-profit trade association whose primary purpose is to advocate for the interests of its members. TIABC takes a collaborative and research-based approach to advocacy.	<a href="http://www.tiabc.ca">www.tiabc.ca</a>

## 2 APPENDIX: Research Organizations and Data Resources

### British Columbia Tourism Associations and Organizations

Organization Name	Description	Website
Tourism Vancouver (The Greater Vancouver Convention and Visitors Bureau)	A business association representing approximately 1,000 members in tourism and related industries/activities. Its purpose is to effectively market Metro Vancouver as a destination for leisure, meeting and event travelers.	<a href="http://www.tourismvancouver.com">www.tourismvancouver.com</a>
Vancouver Economic Development Commission	An agency of the City of Vancouver that works to strengthen the city's economic future by helping existing businesses, attracting investment, researching the business environment and making policy recommendations.	<a href="http://www.vancouvereconomic.com">www.vancouvereconomic.com</a>
Vancouver International Airport (YVR)	Provides monthly passenger and flight statistics of YVR.	<a href="http://www.yvr.ca/en/media/factsheets.aspx">www.yvr.ca/en/media/factsheets.aspx</a>
Vancouver Port Authority	Canada's largest and busiest port, a dynamic gateway for domestic and international trade and tourism, and a major economic force that strengthens the Canadian economy.	<a href="http://www.portmetrovancover.com">www.portmetrovancover.com</a>
Vancouver Public Library (Business and Economics Division)	Funded by the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Public Library is the third largest public library system in Canada. Exceptional collections, services and technologies offered at 22 branches and an extensive virtual library available to all citizens of Vancouver.	<a href="http://www.vpl.ca">www.vpl.ca</a>
Wilderness Tourism Association of BC	Industry association to ensure the ongoing viability of the industry through the protection of the wilderness tourism land base.	<a href="http://www.wilderness-tourism.bc.ca">www.wilderness-tourism.bc.ca</a>

**BC Academic Institutions (Offering Tourism Research Support)**

<b>Organization Name</b>	<b>Website</b>
British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)	<a href="http://www.bcit.ca">www.bcit.ca</a>
Capilano University	<a href="http://www.capilanou.ca/global-community">www.capilanou.ca/global-community</a>
College of the Rockies	<a href="http://www.cotr.bc.ca">www.cotr.bc.ca</a>
Royal Roads University	<a href="http://www.royalroads.ca">www.royalroads.ca</a>
Selkirk College	<a href="http://www.selkirk.ca">www.selkirk.ca</a>
Simon Fraser University (SFU) Centre for Tourism Policy and Research	<a href="http://www.sfu.ca/~dossa">www.sfu.ca/~dossa</a>
Thompson Rivers University (TRU) School of Tourism; RED TREE Project	<a href="http://www.tru.ca/act/tourism/news_and_events/redtree.html">www.tru.ca/act/tourism/news_and_events/redtree.html</a>
University of Victoria (UVIC)	<a href="http://www.uvic.ca">www.uvic.ca</a>
University of Northern BC (UNBC)	<a href="http://www.unbc.ca">www.unbc.ca</a>
Vancouver Island University (UIV) Department of Recreation and Tourism Management; Recreation and Tourism Research Institute	<a href="http://web.viu.ca/rtri">http://web.viu.ca/rtri</a>

# 2 APPENDIX: Research Organizations and Data Resources

## Canadian Tourism Organizations

Organization Name	Description	Website
Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC)	As Canada's national tourism marketer, the CTC introduces the authentic and the exotic to world travelers.	<a href="http://en-corporate.canada.travel">en-corporate.canada.travel</a>
Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC)	One of 34 national sector councils whose overall goal is to improve the quality of the Canadian labour force, and to assist businesses to be more flexible in meeting changing competitive demands.	<a href="http://www.cthrc.ca">www.cthrc.ca</a>
Canadian Tourism Research Institute (CTRI)	Serves the travel and tourism industry by providing sound economic forecasts and models.	<a href="http://www.conferenceboard.ca/ctri/default.htm">www.conferenceboard.ca/ctri/default.htm</a>
Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA)	A Canadian not-for-profit association representing all aspects of the market intelligence and survey research industry, including social research, competitive intelligence, data mining, insight, and knowledge management.	<a href="http://www.mria-arim.ca">www.mria-arim.ca</a>
Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada	An advocate for the privacy rights of Canadians.	<a href="http://www.priv.gc.ca/index_e.asp">www.priv.gc.ca/index_e.asp</a>
Statistics Canada	Produces statistics that help Canadians better understand their country: its population, resources, economy, society and culture.	<a href="http://www.statcan.gc.ca">www.statcan.gc.ca</a>
Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC)	Responsible for representing tourism interests at the national level, TIAC's advocacy work involves promoting and supporting policies, programs and activities that will benefit the sector's growth and development.	<a href="http://www.tiac.travel/">www.tiac.travel/</a>
Travel and Tourism Association (TTRA) – Canada Chapter	An association of tourism research and marketing professionals dedicated to individuals interested in advancing the quality and effectiveness of tourism research and marketing.	<a href="http://www.ttracanada.ca">www.ttracanada.ca</a>



### US Tourism Organizations and Associations

Organization Name	Description	Website
Destination Marketing Association International	Provides its members (professionals, industry partners, students and educators) the most “cutting-edge” educational resources, networking opportunities, and marketing benefits available worldwide.	<a href="http://www.destinationmarketing.org">www.destinationmarketing.org</a>
Global Business Travel Association	The world’s premier business travel and meetings organization.	<a href="http://www.gbta.org">www.gbta.org</a>
National Tour Association	The leading association for professionals serving travelers to, from and within North America. Members join to demonstrate their commitment to the profession, further their education, and collaborate and partner with the best the industry has to offer.	<a href="http://www.ntaonline.com/index.cfm">http://www.ntaonline.com/index.cfm</a>
Travel and Tourism Association (TTRA) – USA Chapter	Seeking to improve the travel and tourism industry through education, publications and networking activities.	<a href="http://www.ttra.com">www.ttra.com</a>
US Travel Association	A national organization that leverages the collective strength of those who benefit from travel to grow their business beyond what they can do individually.	<a href="http://www.ustravel.org">www.ustravel.org</a>
International Trade Administration – Office of Travel and Tourism Industries	Enhances the international competitiveness of the U.S. travel and tourism industry and increase its exports, thereby creating U.S. employment and economic growth.	<a href="http://www.tinet.ita.doc.gov">www.tinet.ita.doc.gov</a>

# 2 APPENDIX: Research Organizations and Data Resources

## US Academic Institutions (Offering Tourism Research Support)

Organization Name	Website
Purdue University, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management; Tourism & Hospitality Research Centre (PT & HRC)	<a href="http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/html/pages/research/res_pthrc.html">www.cfs.purdue.edu/html/pages/research/res_pthrc.html</a>
Texas A&M University, Parks and Tourism Sciences; e-Review of Tourism Research (eRTR)	<a href="http://rpts.tamu.edu">http://rpts.tamu.edu</a>

## International Tourism Organizations

Organization Name	Description	Website
Association of Southeast Asia Nations	Vision is to accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations.	<a href="http://www.aseansec.org">www.aseansec.org</a>
Cruise Lines International Association	The world's largest cruise association, dedicated to the promotion and growth of the cruise industry.	<a href="http://www.cruising.org">www.cruising.org</a>
European Association for Tourism and Leisure Education	Promotes the teaching of tourism, leisure and related subjects, encourages the exchange of staff and students between member institutions, promotes links between professional bodies in tourism, leisure and associated subjects and to liaise on educational issues, curriculum development and professional recognition of courses; promotes transnational research, which helps to underpin the development of appropriate curricula for transnational education.	<a href="http://www.atlas-euro.org">www.atlas-euro.org</a>

### International Tourism Organizations

Organization Name	Description	Website
International Ecotourism Society	A non-profit organization dedicated to promoting ecotourism.	<a href="http://www.ecotourism.org">www.ecotourism.org</a>
Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)	The leading voice and authority on travel and tourism in the Asia Pacific region.	<a href="http://www.pata.org">www.pata.org</a>
The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO/OWT)	The United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.	<a href="http://www2.unwto.org/en">www2.unwto.org/en</a>
World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)	The forum for business leaders in the travel and tourism industry.	<a href="http://www.wttc.travel">www.wttc.travel</a>

# 3 APPENDIX: Research Glossary

**Abstract**

A brief summary of a larger piece of work, such as a report.

**Analysis**

Break-down and review of research information collected, in order to gain better understanding.

**Anchor**

Used with rating or scale questions to present response options of equal internals.

**Anonymity**

The state of being publicly unknown.

**Audience**

The main end-users of your research.

**Average (or mean)**

The sum of all values given for a variable across all questionnaires divided by the number of participants who provided a response.

**Business objective**

The key issue an organization wants to address.

**Census**

An official count or survey of a population, typically recording various details of individuals.

**Charts**

A graphical representation of a collection of data.

**Closed-ended question (or structured question)**

A form of question which anticipates possible answers by providing a list of predetermined responses for participants to choose from. For example, a multiple choice question.

**Collaboration**

An opportunity to work with others to achieve a common goal.

**Comment card**

An informal way to solicit feedback and information from visitors/customers.

**Competitive research**

Examination of the position and actions of competitors in the marketplace.

**Conclusions**

Summarize the answers to the research objectives.

**Confidence interval**

A range of values so defined that there is a specified probability that the value of a parameter lies within it.

**Confidentiality**

The ethical principal of discretion.

**Consultant**

A person who provides expert advice professionally.

**Cross-tabulations (or two-way tabulations)**

Statistical technique that establishes an interdependent relationship between two tables of values, but does not identify a causal relationship between the values.

**Data**

Facts, statistics and other information compiled for reference or analysis.

**Data collection**

The process of preparing and collecting data.

**Data preparation**

The process of checking or logging data; checking data for accuracy; entering data into the computer; transforming data; developing and documenting a database structure that integrates the various measures.

**Demographics**

Statistical characteristics relating to a population and particular groups within it.

**Descriptive statistics**

Statistics that help describe, show or summarize data in a meaningful way.

**Dichotomous response question (or single response question or discrete choice question)**

A form of question that requires participants to choose between two choices provided (i.e. Yes or No; Male or Female; True or False).

**Economic impact**

The measurement of visitor spending generated by an event, attraction or visitor market in a specific geographic area during a specific time period.

**Economic research**

Examines economic and business data and information, including revenues, expenditures and their impacts. For tourism researchers this type of research often focuses on the spending patterns of visitors within a tourism area.

**Field test**

Assessing a situation under the conditions it will actually be used.

**Focus group**

A gathering of a sample of potential clients or customers to get their direct feedback (such as perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes) on an issue(s), through a discussion led by a moderator.

**Frequencies (or one-way frequencies or one-way tabulations)**

A type of statistic that calculates the number of responses for each answer choice in a survey question.

**Guest book**

Informal recording of guest details on a voluntary basis such as origin, party size, comments, etc.

**Informed consent**

Providing agreement based on terms, conditions and possible consequences.

**Intercept survey**

A one-on-one interview done in-person at a central location; the interview actually “intercepts” the visitor/tourist/customer participant and asks him/her to take part in a survey.

**Interview**

A means to capture in-depth and insightful information; enables the interviewer to “probe” the interviewee for additional information.

**Interviewer-administered survey**

A survey administered by the interviewer to the participant.

**Inferential statistics**

The process of drawing conclusions from data.

**Margin of error**

A statistic expressing the amount of random sampling error in a survey’s results; the larger the margin of error, the less confidence one should have that the survey results are close to the “true” figures; i.e. the statistics for the whole population.

**Market profile**

A summary of the characteristics of a market; includes demographic, income, life style, psychographic, and socio-economic information.

**Market research**

The gathering and analysis of information about peoples’ ideas, interests, attitudes, preferences and/or behaviours.

**Marketing research**

The collection and review of data about marketing processes, including advertising; e.g. issues related to marketing your products and services.

**Market segment**

A subset of a market consisting of people who share common needs or interests.

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## APPENDIX: Research Glossary

### **Market survey**

A quantitative technique which gathers data for example on visitor/customer characteristics, behaviours, attitudes, impressions, opinions, satisfaction levels and spending expenditures.

### **Median**

The value below which 50% of the cases fall.

### **Mode**

The most frequent value of a random variable.

### **Multiple response question**

Questions that allow participants to select one or more choices.

### **Numeric question**

A question that allows participants to identify a specific number (i.e. age, time period, dollar expenditures, percentage distribution, etc.).

### **Numerically oriented**

Data that can be expressed as quantities, such as percentages.

### **Observation**

The situation of interest is watched or observed, and the relevant facts, actions and behaviours are recorded.

### **Open-ended question (or unstructured question)**

A form of question that ask participants to reply in their own words allowing them to express themselves more openly.

### **Outlier**

An observation that lies an abnormal distance from other values in a random sample from a population.

### **Partnership**

A formal agreement between two or more parties that have agreed to work together in the pursuit of common goals.

### **Population**

A set of entities which statistical inferences are to be drawn.

### **Primary research (or raw data)**

The collection of new or original data, i.e. information that does not yet exist.

### **Product research**

The gathering and review of information about products and services.

### **Psychographics**

The study and classification of people according to their attitudes, aspirations, and other psychological criteria.

### **Public opinion poll**

An inquiry into public opinion conducted by interviewing a random sample of people.

### **Qualitative research**

Used to find out more in-depth information about a topic, issue, type of person, particular behavior(s) and/or the reasons that lead to the behaviour(s).

### **Quantitative research**

Involves the measurement of quantities or amounts; requires considerable attention to the measurement of trends, opinions, responses and patterns, and often involves statistical analysis.

### **Questionnaire**

The data collection tool used to accomplish the survey.

### **Random sample**

Each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected in the sample.

### **Ranking question**

Questions that requires participants to rank responses (i.e. select your first, second, third choice, etc.).

### **Rating question (or scale question)**

Questions that allow participants to evaluate statements either by giving a grade or rating along a set scale.

**Recommendation(s)**

An action plan to address the key business/ research issue using answers provided from conclusions.

**Research**

The process often consists of gathering information about peoples' ideas, attitudes and preferences towards a selection of topics or concepts for the purpose of answering a question(s). The systematic process of finding and analyzing information.

**Research method****(or research methodology)**

Defines the activity of research, how to proceed, how to measure progress, and what constitutes success.

**Research objective**

A specific list of information needs designed to support the business objective.

**Research problem**

The stimulus that drives the research process, and the foundation of any research method, whether quantitative or qualitative, using primary or secondary data.

**Participant (or respondent)**

A person(s) who responds or replies to something; i.e. one supplying information for a survey or questionnaire.

**Response rate****(or completion rate or return rate)**

Refers to the ratio of people who completed the survey divided by the number of people in the sample; usually expressed as a percentage and used to determine the reliability of survey results.

**Results**

What was learned from the analysis; also known as outcomes.

**Sample**

A subset of a population.

**Sample bias**

Occurs when a sample is collected in such a way that some members of the population are less likely to be included than others.

**Sample size**

Refers to the number of people in a particular sample; in most research, it is represented with a lower-case "n"; n = sample.

**Sampling error**

The difference between the results of a survey sample and a census.

**Secondary research (or desk research)**

The summary, collation and/or synthesis of research that already exists.

**Self-administered survey**

A survey that is administered by the participant, without the guidance of an interviewer.

**Stakeholder**

A person (representing an organization or group) with an interest or concern in something; e.g. a business matter.

**Standard deviation**

A measure of variability or diversity used in statistics and probability theory to show how much variation or "dispersion" there is from the average.

**Survey**

The process of describing some aspect(s) of a population or group of people based on a sample of the total people.

**Survey method**

The actions of administering a survey and collecting information.

**Target market**

A group of people which a business has decided to aim its marketing efforts.

**Topic guide (or interview guide)**

An outline of key issues and areas of questioning used to guide an interview or group discussion.

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## APPENDIX: Research Glossary

### **Tourism market research**

The systematic process of gathering, recording, processing and analyzing tourism market data to improve the quality of tourism business and planning decisions.

### **Tracking**

The actual gathering and recording of existing information for use in research analysis and evaluation.

### **Trip diary**

Recordings by a visitor of certain specified trip details, such as expenditures, travel route, sightseeing, enjoyment and other trip activities.

### **Value**

An assigned or calculated numerical quantity.

### **Variable**

A variable is a characteristic that may assume more than one set of values to which a numerical measure can be assigned; e.g. age, sex, income etc.

### **Visitor expenditures**

The dollar amount spent by a visitor(s).

### **Visitor perceptions**

The insight, intuition, or knowledge visitors and potential visitors have of a tourism product or experience, destination, service, etc.

### **Visitor profile**

The collection of visitor descriptions based on demographics and behavioural characteristics such as origin, party size, length of stay, frequency of visit, etc.

### **Visitor survey**

#### **(or guest survey or customer survey)**

A survey used to describe visitors of a tourism business and/or destination and to predict attitudes and behaviours of a target market, plan marketing actions and to estimate economic effects.



# 4

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