A Summary of How to Measure Net Promoter Score® in British Columbia Communities

Introduction

Over the past decade, there have been substantial shifts in the tourism marketplace that have resulted in the growing importance of the delivery of outstanding travel experiences. High satisfaction with travel experiences is critical to achieve increased visitor spending, longer stays, repeat visits and positive word of mouth referrals. And destination advocacy, either face-to-face or through electronic media, is critical to attract first time visitors to British Columbia.

To address these shifts, in late 2014, Destination British Columbia (DBC) released a new corporate strategy. A key goal of the strategy is for British Columbia to become the most highly recommended destination in North America. The Net Promoter Score® (NPS®)[1] measures the intention to recommend or refer a travel destination and is also an indicator of overall satisfaction with the travel or customer experience.

Satisfaction with the travel experience and the intention to recommend greatly increase the likelihood of a return visit to a destination. Therefore, DBC actively encourages its tourism partners (e.g. businesses, communities, sectors) to measure and increase their NPS. This summary outlines a research framework that will provide a consistent, credible and robust measure of NPS for British Columbian communities. This summary also provides an overview of the details to consider at project initiation, how to determine the best visitor intercept methodology, discusses survey administrative tools, questionnaire development and how to complete the NPS calculation and recommended data analysis.

DBC has also developed a more detailed guide, "*Measuring NPS in BC Communities"* which provides detailed guidelines on the major tasks needed to implement a visitor study and to measure NPS. This guide provides details on project initiation, planning for data collection, phase one data collection (intercept), phase two data collection, data analysis, reporting and project wrap up. The guide "*Measuring NPS in BC Communities"* can be obtained by contacting Research, Planning and Evaluation at TourismResearch@destinationbc.ca.
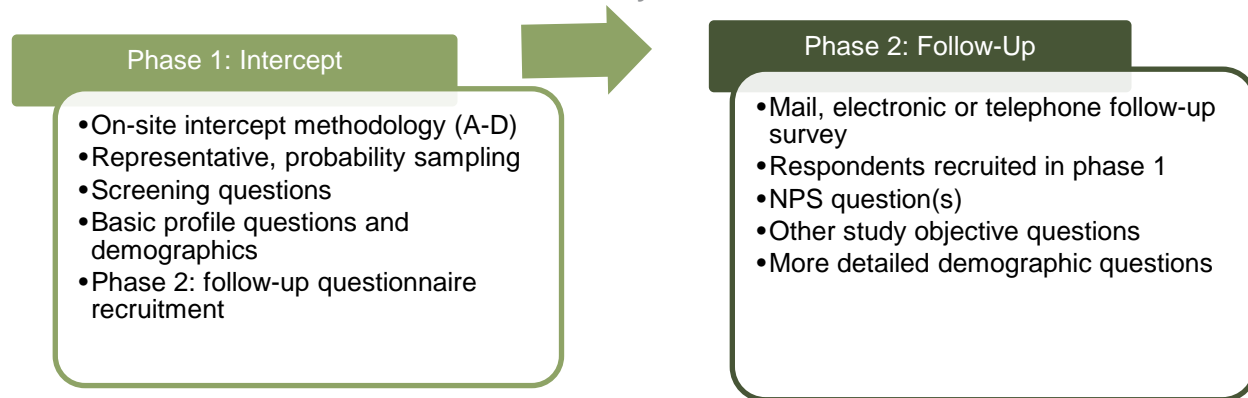
Recommended Research Framework

Using insights gained from past NPS work and tourism research best practice, DBC has developed a research framework that outlines a two-phase visitor survey methodology that communities can use to measure NPS. Six recommendations shape the research framework:

1. Conduct a two-phase study to measure NPS. Phase 1 consists of an on-site, intercept survey that collects preliminary information and recruits participants for phase 2. Phase 2 collects information post-trip, including the NPS questions via online, mail or telephone.

---

[1] Net Promoter, NPS and the NPS-related emoticons are registered service marks, and the Net Promoter Score and Net Promoter System are service marks, of Bain & Company, Inc., Satmetrix Systems, Inc. and Fred Reichheld.

Recommended Framework to Measure Community NPS

Phase 1: Intercept	Phase 2: Follow-Up
• On-site intercept methodology (A-D) • Representative, probability sampling • Screening questions • Basic profile questions and demographics • Phase 2: follow-up questionnaire recruitment	• Mail, electronic or telephone follow-up survey • Respondents recruited in phase 1 • NPS question(s) • Other study objective questions • More detailed demographic questions

2. Consider using project partners to share costs and develop ownership of results.

3. Spend time to carefully plan the study and customize the framework presented here to best fit community characteristics. This includes allocating time to develop clear business objectives, a representative sampling plan and thoroughly train the intercept researchers.

4. Ask questions and perform analysis that ensures maximum insight is gained from the NPS research. Using the framework outlined here, adapt the questions and analysis to fit your community's characteristics, as appropriate. This will allow specific management actions to improve visitor experiences in your community.

5. Be sure to define the target population. This will require the intercept researchers to ask screening questions to ensure they are speaking with members of the target population (e.g. adult tourists) and that the travel party has not already participated in the study.

- DBC recommends using the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) definition of tourist (see below).

- Only adults should be included because they make the majority of travel planning and expenditures decisions.

- Travel parties should be the unit of analysis. This means intercept researchers should only speak with one person of each travel party as individuals within that party share, travel planning activities and expenditures.

- The target population may further be defined by the project objectives. For example, a community may want to target only overnight, day or leisure visitors.

> **UNWTO Definition of a Tourist**
>
> A *visitor* is a traveller taking a *trip* to a main destination outside his/her *usual environment*, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited. A *visitor* (*domestic, inbound* or *outbound*) is classified as a *tourist* (or overnight *visitor*), if his/her *trip* includes an overnight stay, or as a same-day *visitor* (or excursionist) otherwise.
>
> *http://media.unwto.org/en/content/understanding-tourism-basic-glossary*

6. Thoroughly document the study's methodology; this will enable easier replication of the work in subsequent years.

Project Initiation

The NPS is affected by the study design. Every decision made when planning the project influences the outcomes. The foundation to good research study design is to determine clear study objectives which are feasible given the project budget and community characteristics.

The project budget and scope are linked and both must be considered upon project initiation. The scope of the project includes defining the time period, study area and target population. The budget often determines the scope of the project. For example, typically it is too expensive for a community to conduct a year-round visitor survey therefore peak-season (e.g. summer or winter) is chosen to conduct the survey. Another option for limited budgets is to focus on visitors that are most important (bring in the most revenue, for example) to the community. The scope of the project is translated into words with research objectives which are clear, concise statements that focus data collection efforts.

Once the project objectives are determined, the next step is to identify possible sites (i.e. locations) to intercept visitors. Site selection is based on project objectives and characteristics of the community. Good intercept sites have a steady flow of visitors with the opportunity for a few minutes to talk with the researcher. Intercept sites could include:

- Rest areas
- City parks
- Transportation terminals (e.g. BC Ferries, airports)
- Visitor centres
- Town/city centres

- Tourism attractions
- Fixed roof accommodation
- Campgrounds
- Popular walking trails/trailheads
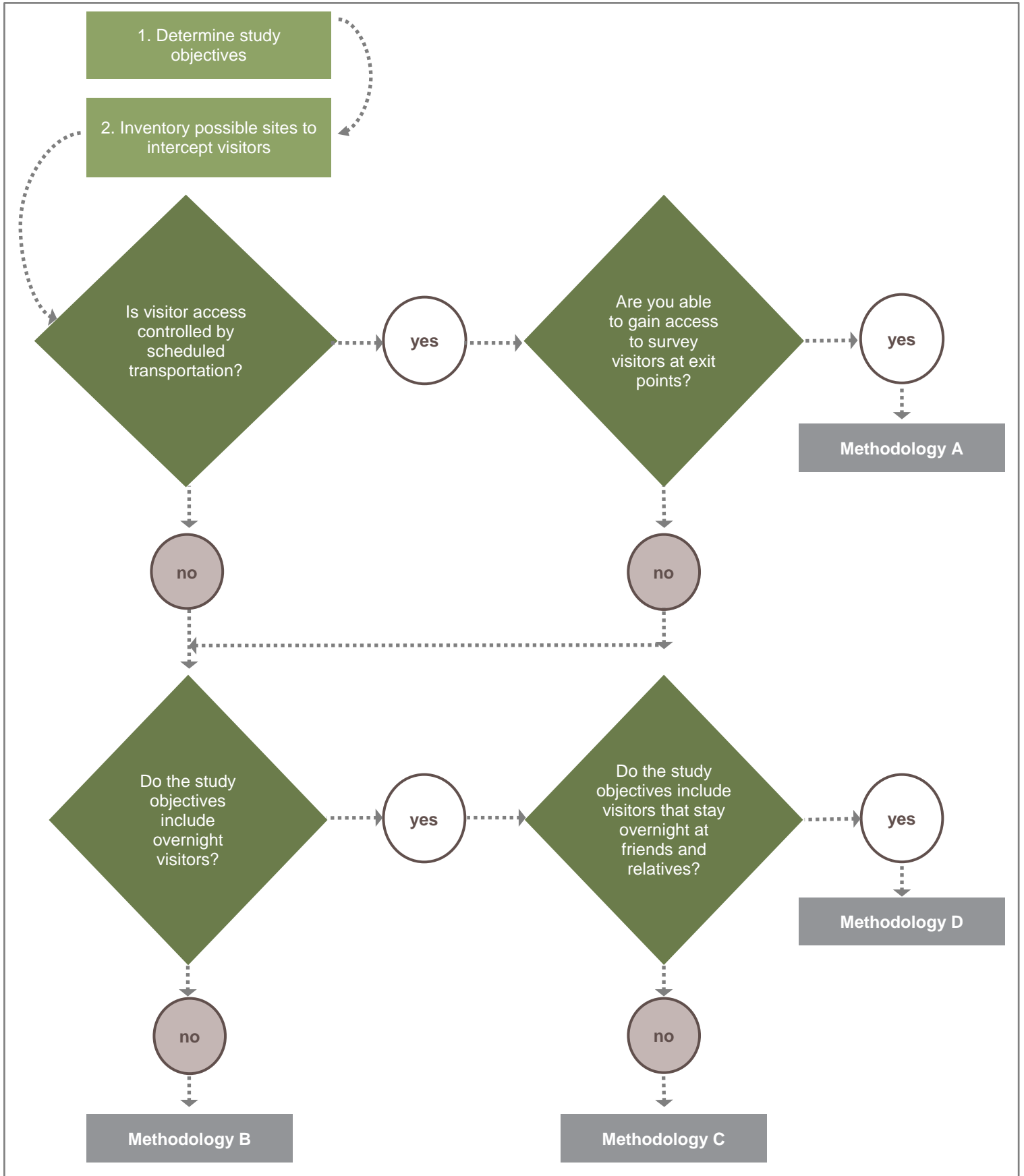
Determining Intercept Methodology (Phase 1)

The decision tree diagram on the next page has been built to help communities choose which intercept methodology best fits the community's tourism characteristics. These methodologies have been built on knowledge of the characteristics of the tourism industry and techniques tried and tested for previous tourism research studies. It should be noted that communities may need to adapt one of these to meet their circumstances.

The decision tree asks three key questions about intercept sites and the research objectives. They are:
1. Where do tourists/visitors congregate in your community? Where are the possible sites that you could intercept visitors?
2. Does visitor access to your community/region depend on scheduled transportation (e.g. BC Ferries)? If so, are you able to obtain access to conduct surveys of visitors as they exit your community?
3. Do both day and overnight visitors come to the community? If so, do your research objectives include overnight visitors? If so, are overnight visitors that stay at friends and relatives included in your objectives?

Following the decision tree, there is a table with a brief description of each kind of intercept methodology (Methodology A, B, C and D). The intercept methodology chosen will impact the way the project partners are determined, the sampling plan, the questionnaire contents and data analysis and reporting.

1. Determine study objectives

2. Inventory possible sites to intercept visitors

Is visitor access controlled by scheduled transportation?

yes

Are you able to gain access to survey visitors at exit points?

yes

Methodology A

no

no

Do the study objectives include overnight visitors?

yes

Do the study objectives include visitors that stay overnight at friends and relatives?

yes

Methodology D

no

no

Methodology B

Methodology C

Methodology **A**	**Exit point intercept of all visitors** **General Approach:** Intercept visitors at community exit point(s) **Works Best For:** Communities where the majority of visitors depart by organized transportation systems (e.g. ferries, airplanes) **Study Population:** All overnight (paid and unpaid) accommodation and day visitors **Survey Site Location(s):** All exit point(s) - usually ferry terminal(s) or airport **Sampling Approach** Stint (due to transportation schedules) **Partners:** Exit point site managers
Methodology **B**	**Mid-trip intercept of day visitors** **General Approach:** Intercept visitors at popular tourism sites **Works Best For:** Communities where the majority of visitors stop at one or several locations and are for the most part, day visitors **Study Population:** Day visitors **Survey Site Location(s):** One or multiple popular visitor sites **Sampling Approach:** Site Rotation **Partners:** Visitor site managers
Methodology **C**	**Mid-trip intercept of paid overnight visitors** **General Approach:** Intercept visitors at paid accommodation sites **Works Best For:** Communities where the majority of visitors stay overnight in paid accommodation **Study Population:** Overnight paid accommodation visitors **Survey Site Location(s):** Accommodation properties **Sampling Approach:** Site Rotation or Stint **Partners:** Accommodation property managers
Methodology **D**	**Mid-trip intercept of all visitors** **General Approach:** Intercept visitors at paid accommodation sites and other visitor sites **Works Best For:** Larger communities where there is a mix of visitor types, including a substantial number that visit but stay overnight at friends or relatives, also communities that have poplar visitor sites (e.g. town centre or attractions) and paid accommodations **Study Population:** All overnight (paid and unpaid accommodation) and day visitors **Survey Site Location(s):** Accommodation properties and popular visitor sites **Sampling Approach:** Site Rotation **Partners:** Accommodation property and other visitor site managers

Intercept Tools for Phase 1

There are several administration tools for both the intercept and follow-up questionnaires. To help evaluate each option, the resources required, strengths and weakness and estimated costs for each data administration tool is summarized in the table below.

| | Face-to-Face Interviews | | Self-Administered Surveys | |
	Paper	Electronic	Paper	Electronic
Description	Researchers conducts interview with tourists and records responses on paper questionnaires	Researchers conducts interview with tourists and records responses via software on a smart phone or tablet	Paper questionnaire booklets or postcards are put in central location where tourists can find and complete. Tourists must take initiative to complete.	Tablet is put in a central location and tourists complete survey at the 'kiosk'. Tourists must take initiative to complete.
Resources Required	• Trained researchers • Data entry and analysis software • Human resources to format paper questionnaire, photocopy and perform data entry • Printed paper questionnaires	• Trained researchers • Tablets (recommended) or smartphones • Software to program survey questions • Human resources to learn and program software	• Central location where paper surveys can be distributed • Printed paper questionnaires • Software for data entry and analysis • Human resources to format paper questionnaire, photocopy and perform data entry	• Central location where tablet can be mounted • Tablets • Software to program questionnaire • Human resources to program questionnaire and download responses
Strengths	• Trained researcher(s) randomly approach respondent • Can recruit respondents for follow-up survey • Not reliant on technology • Higher acceptance rates and better representation of target population	• Trained researcher(s) randomly approach respondent • Can recruit respondents for follow-up survey • Skip patterns easily programmed into questionnaire • No data entry and 'real time' results available • No interpretation of paper survey responses • No paper questionnaires to manage	• Less expensive • Not reliant on technology	• Less expensive • Skip patterns can be easily pre-programmed
Weaknesses	• Cost of researchers • Data entry requires human resources and interpretation of hand-written responses • Skip patterns sometimes difficult for researcher to follow • Data entry delay to allow before data analysis • Potential interviewer bias • Potential to lose paper questionnaires	• Cost of researchers and tablets/smartphone • Reliant on technology; have to revert to paper if there are problems • Potential interviewer bias • Technology issues can disrupt study	• Visitors are **not** randomly selected; therefore there is a higher risk that results are not representative of the study population • Will likely result in small sample sizes because of lower survey completion rates • Complex skip patterns can be difficult to understand	• Visitors are **not** randomly selected; therefore there is a higher risk that results are not representative of the study population • Will likely result in small sample sizes because of lower survey completion rates

	Comparative Cost			
Comparative Cost	$$	$$	$	$

Although summarized in the above table, the self-administered options are not recommended as they do not achieve high participation rates and do not guarantee random selection of survey respondents. DBC recommends using face-to-face interviews (with electronic data collection on tablets).

Follow-up Tools (Phase 2)

There are several administration tools for follow-up questionnaires. To help evaluate each option, the resources required, strengths and weakness and estimated costs for each data administration tool are summarized in the table below.

Follow-up Questionnaire Administrative Tools

	Mail		Email	Telephone
	Distributed On-Site	**Sent to Respondent**	**Email**	**Telephone**
Description	Questionnaire distributed on-site then instructions given to respondent to complete and drop in mail just before leaving BC/or when they return home	Questionnaire mailed to respondent's home soon after their trip when they return home	On-site participation requested, email address collected and email questionnaire sent to visitor when they return home	On-site participation requested, telephone number collected and visitor called when they return home
Resources Required	• Printed paper questionnaires • Business reply envelopes • Data entry and analysis software • Human resources to format paper questionnaire, photocopy and perform data entry	• Printed questionnaires • Business reply envelopes • Data entry and analysis software • Human resources to format paper questionnaire, photocopy and perform data entry and manage mail out	• Online survey software, which usually includes analysis applications • Human resources to program and manage online survey system	• Human resources to make telephone calls (usually research professionals) • Data entry or survey software and analysis software
Strengths	• Cost is only related to business reply envelopes	• Requires multiple mail-outs (reminders)	• Less expensive • No paper waste • Can easily program skip patterns with no impact on the respondent • Easy ability to send reminders • Data collection occurs relatively fast • Progressive technology and a 'greener' alternative	• Can collect more in-depth information • Telephone researcher can better interpret tone/feeling of respondent • Data collection occurs relatively fast • Easy to make multiple phone calls resulting in higher response rates
Weaknesses	• Little control of when respondent actually returns survey, therefore it may not collect completed trip information • Not possible to send reminders to	• Mail outs and business reply envelopes are expensive • Could result in wasted paper • Skip patterns are sometimes difficult	• Reliant on technology; have to revert to paper if there are problems • People may be 'inundated' with research and marketing emails, leading to leading to low response	• Very expensive • Human resources to select market research business to conduct call • Potential that respondents don't like to complete

	complete questionnaire, which leads to low response rates • Complex skip patterns can be difficult for the respondent to follow • Could result in wasted paper • Long time horizon	for the respondent to follow • Requires accurate interpretation of responses • Long time horizon	rates • Technology issues can disrupt study	telephone questionnaires which leads to lower response rates • Potential telephone surveyor bias, some people feel uncomfortable evaluating/providing feedback to someone on the phone
Comparative Cost	$$	$$	$	$$$

Although summarized above, telephone call follow-up questionnaires are extremely expensive and likely too costly for most communities.

Questionnaire Development

Below is a short summary of recommendations that will guide questionnaire development to best measure and understand the NPS.

Overall, the intercept _interview_ (i.e. questionnaire) is used to explain the study, gather responses to basic profile questions and recruits respondents to participate in the follow-up questionnaire. The follow-up questionnaire asks those more in-depth questions that the visitor can provide better responses to when they get home (or post-trip). This includes the NPS and follow-up questions.

The NPS question should use the following wording:

How likely are you to recommend [Community X in British Columbia] as a travel destination to a friend, family member[2] or colleague?"											
Not at all Likely- 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 –Extremely Likely	
Detractors							Passives		Promoters		

---

[2] The phrase 'family member' has been added to this original NPS question.

Destination British Columbia ™

With one of the optional, but recommended, follow-up questions,
Follow-up 1. Why?
Follow-up 2. Why did you respond this way?
Follow-up 3. What led to your [insert value] out of 10 rating?
Follow-up 4. What is the primary reason for the score you just gave?

Given that visitor characteristics influence the NPS scores, questions that identify those characteristics should also be asked. Specifically, questions about visitor characteristics should include origin, repeat vs. first time visitors, primary trip purpose (e.g. business/leisure), community characteristics (i.e. factors) that drove destination selection, length of stay, trip activities and travel party/household composition.

Analysis: NPS Calculation

The approach to calculate the NPS as well as options for data analysis that will provide further insight into study results are described in this section. One advantage of the NPS is that the calculation is simple. A step-by-step example of how to calculate the NPS is provided below, which corresponds to accompanying table.

1. The first step to reporting the NPS for the study is to summarize all responses from the NPS question. The easiest way to do this is with frequency analysis.

2. The second step is to remove the "Don't Know/No Responses" from the analysis and re-calculate the percentage of each response category (if applicable).

3. The third step is to assign each response category a NPS category. Question response categories between '0' and '6' are 'Detractors', question response categories of '7' and '8' are 'Passives' and question response categories of '9' and '10' are 'Promoters'. In the example on the following page, there were 28% '9s' and 21% '10s'.

> ### Tip
> The NPS is the difference between two percentages and is not itself a percentage. Therefore, it should not be displayed with a percentage sign. Further, when summarizing the difference between two or more NPSs, the correct terminology is 'points' rather than percentage change.

4. In step 4, the proportion of responses in each NPS category is summed. For example, below, response category '7' – 17% is added to response category '8' - 16% to equal 33%. This is the proportion of 'passives'. Repeat with the appropriate categories for promoters and detractors.

5. To calculate the final NPS subtract the proportion of all detractors (18%) from the proportion of promoters (49%). In the example below, this results in a NPS of 31.

Display your NPS, with the promoter, passive and detractor scores in a table or figure similar to the donut pie graph in the figure.

How likely are you to recommend [community in British Columbia] as a travel destination to a friend, family member or colleague?"

| Not at all Likely- 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 –Extremely Likely |

1

Question Response Category	n	%
0	10	2%
1	8	2%
2	6	1%
3	12	2%
4	21	4%
5	11	2%
6	14	3%
7	81	16%
8	75	15%
9	132	27%
10	98	20%
Don't Know/No Response	26	5%
TOTAL	**494**	**100%**

2

Question Response Category	n	%
0	10	2%
1	8	2%
2	6	1%
3	12	3%
4	21	4%
5	11	2%
6	14	3%
7	81	17%
8	75	16%
9	132	28%
10	98	21%
Don't Know/No Response	-	-
TOTAL	**468**	**100%**

3

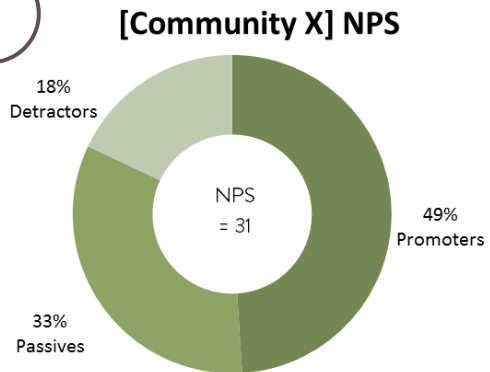| Question Response Category	%	NPS Category
0	2%	**Detractors**
1	2%	**Detractors**
2	1%	**Detractors**
3	3%	**Detractors**
4	4%	**Detractors**
5	2%	**Detractors**
6	3%	**Detractors**
7	17%	**Passives**
8	16%	**Passives**
9	28%	**Promoters**
10	21%	**Promoters**
Don't Know/No Response	-	-
TOTAL	**100%**	

4

Detractors = 2% + 2% + 1% + 3% + 4% + 2% + 3% = **18%**
Passives = 17% + 16% = **33%**
Promoters = 28% + 21% = **49%**

5

NPS = % Promoters - % Detractors
NPS = 49% - 18% = 31

6

[Community X] NPS

18% Detractors

49% Promoters

33% Passives

NPS = 31

To use NPS to inform management actions further analysis of the study is needed. Further analysis can be conducted in four broad categories:
1. Summarize the proportion of promoters, passives and detractors;
2. Explore characteristics of promoters, passives and detractors;
3. Summarize 'why';
4. Summarize over time.

1. Summarize the Proportion of Promoters, Passives and Detractors
First, it is essential to report the proportion of promoters, passives and detractors along with the final NPS. This is needed because a number of scenarios could lead to the same NPS. The table below highlights three different scenarios that result in the same NPS. Each scenario leads to a different interpretation and possible management actions. For example, scenario 1 has a moderate amount of passives and detractors while scenario 2 has the most promoters, very few passives but a high proportion of detractors. Scenario 3 has the highest proportion of passives and very few detractors. In scenario 2 researchers might focus on identifying and remedying whatever is creating so many detractors, whereas in scenario 3 one might focus on what little extra you need to do to convert some "8"s to "9"s.

Examples of Varying Scenarios that lead to the Same NPS

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Promoters	49%	62%	38%
Passives	33%	7%	55%
Detractors	18%	31%	7%
NPS	**31**	**31**	**31**

2. Explore Characteristics of Promoters, Passives and Detractors
Second, for promoters, passives and detractors, researchers should summarize the characteristics of the study population. The summary should include characteristics that have been demonstrated to impact the NPS, like market of origin, repeat and first time visitor, household composition, community length of stay, primary trip purpose, community characteristics that drive destination selection and primary activity. The examination might find, for example, that most of the promoters engaged in a particular activity or experience, while the detractors did not.

3. Summarize the 'Why'
Third, one should summarize the follow-up, open-ended question to help identify why visitors were likely to recommend (or not). Again, in order to gain the most value of the NPS question, researchers should summarize the results by promoters, passives and detractors. This might identify action items that could help improve NPS scores.

4. Summarize Findings over Time
Fourth, if possible, one should report the NPS and percentage of promoters, passives and detractors over time. This might help to correlate changes in promoters, passives and detractors to changes in the community over time. To allow for year over year comparisons it is important to ensure that similar research methodology was used from year to year.

Reporting
There are different options available for sharing the results, ranging from a presentation to written report. The objective of reporting is to ensure the research will be interesting, properly understood, useful, meaningful and practical to end-users (i.e. target audience). Most tourism studies have the following sections:
- Executive summary with report highlights;
- Introduction including study objectives, acknowledgement of project partners;
- Research methodology with a brief overview of research process, sampling plan and analytical methods (possibly in an appendix);
- Key findings presented with written text, tables and graphs;
- Conclusions and recommendations;
- Appendices (Technical Appendix and Questionnaires).

Given the importance of a consistent research methodology over time, the technical appendix should include enough detail about the methodology that the study can be repeated and results can be compared from one year to the next. It is recommended the technical appendices include[3]:

- Study timing and survey dates;
- Description of data capture methods;
- Description and definition of the study population;
- The sampling plan;
- The data collection procedures;

- Response rate calculations;
- Bias testing procedures;
- Details about data weighting (if conducted);
- Data cleaning and coding procedures;
- Data analysis methods and procedures.

Researchers should keep in mind that NPS is a registered trademark and as such requires proper documentation and acknowledgements when used. When referring to NPS (on a website, in a brochure, in an article, questionnaire or report) researchers should please:

- Capitalize all words in the marks, and ensure that they used accurately. For instance, one should not use NPS Score, as that is essentially saying "Net Promoter Score Score";
- Include a "Registered" symbol (®) after the first use of the registered marks (Net Promoter, NPS, any of the individual emoticons or the combined emoticon logo);
- Include a "Service Mark" symbol (SM) after the first use of the service marks (Net Promoter System, Net Promoter Score);
- Note that the ® and SM symbols only need appear after the first use of the marks:
- Include the attribution language below in a footnote at the bottom of any page with a first use of a registered term. This footnote cannot be smaller than 8pt font.

    "Net Promoter, NPS, and the NPS-related emoticons are registered service marks, and Net Promoter Score and Net Promoter System are service marks, of Bain & Company, Inc., Satmetrix Systems, Inc. and Fred Reichheld"

For more information about proper documentation please review the Net Promoter System website. http://www.netpromotersystem.com/resources/trademarks-and-licensing.aspx

For more information or to obtain the complete guide "*Measuring NPS in BC Communities"*:

Email: TourismResearch@DestinationBC.ca
Website: http://www.destinationbc.ca/Research.aspx

For updates, invites and our industry newsletter, *Destination BC News*, sign up here: www.destinationbc.ca/Subscribe.apsx.

© 2016 – Destination BC Corp. – All rights reserved. "DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA" is an Official Mark of Destination BC Corp.

---

[3] This section is adapted from: Research Resolutions and Consulting (2007). Guidelines: Survey Procedures for Assessment of On-Site Spending at Gated Events and Festivals.