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American Recreational Cycling & Mountain Biking

- ◆ At nearly 3 million, cyclists and mountain bikers—American adults who take vacations in order to go cycling and/or mountain biking—are an important tourism market.
- ◆ This sector represents about 6% of the 5.3 million American adults with pleasure travel experiences in British Columbia over a two-year period.
- ◆ BC has attracted 12.8% of the U.S. mountain bike market and 9.9% of the US cycling market.
- ◆ Significantly more cyclists and even more mountain bikers live in the three Pacific States: **California, Oregon, and Washington**. The highest concentration of mountain bikers can be found in **Colorado**, with 1-in-3 residing in this state.



Many outdoor experiences are popular among cyclists and mountain bikers:

MOUNTAIN BIKERS	CYCLISTS
<i>Land Based Activities</i>	
Hiking	Hiking
Visiting a park	Visiting a park
Camping at a park	Visiting well-known natural wonders
Alpine skiing	Viewing flora and fauna
Climbing	Jogging
<i>Water Based Activities</i>	
Sunbathing or sitting on a beach	Sunbathing or sitting on a beach
Swimming in oceans	Swimming in lakes
Diving & snorkelling	Fishing, especially in freshwater
Swimming in lakes	Motor/sail boating
Motor/sail boating	
Fishing, especially in freshwater	
Kayaking/Canoeing	

With their particular constellation of outdoor interests and, for many of them, geographic proximity to British Columbia, U.S. cyclists and mountain bikers seem an ideal market for the province.

Source: Travel Activities and Motivations of U.S. Visitors to BC: Activity Profile—Focus on Recreational Cycling and Mountain Biking

For the full report, please visit:

http://www.tourismbc.com/pdf/TAMSUS_to_BC_2006_CyclistsandMountainBikers_NDandRR.pdf



User-Generated-Content (UGC)

User-Generated-Content (UGC) (also referred to as “Consumer Generated Media”, “Consumer Generated Content” or “User Created Content”) originated as a reference to posts made by consumers within online venues such as internet forums, bulletin boards, blogs, wikis, discussion lists etc., on products that they have purchased. Shoppers who are researching products often use other consumers’ opinions when making buying decisions. The term has evolved to include video, audio and



multimedia posts created by consumers in support (or negative parody/in-protest) of products, brands and corporate institutions. Often UGC is partially or totally monitored by website administrators to avoid offensive content or language, copyright infringement issues, or simply to determine if the content posted is relevant to the site’s general theme

“over \$10 billion per year in online travel is influenced by UGC. ”

In a study completed by Compete, Inc. it was found that over \$10 billion per year in online travel is influenced by UGC. The interactive nature of sites such as Trip Advisor, IGoUGo.com and TripPost.com have demonstrated successfully that consumers want more than just ad copy to help influence their purchasing decision. Not only that, search engines also recognize and reward the candid nature of UGC. The impact of UGC can also be seen in the redesign of sites such as www.sheraton.com, where user reviews and stories are featured prominently on the home page.

Tamar’s “The 2007 Social Media for Brands Report” revealed that travel products and services were identified as the sector most at risk from negative comments on social networks, with almost six out of ten (58 percent) saying that negative comments would lead to them abandoning a purchase.

According to a study by Ipsos Reid the number of Canadian adults who have visited a social networking site has surged in the past few years, creating a market of people more likely to buy things online and respond to internet advertising. About four out of 10 Canadian adults have visited an online social network site, with about half visiting daily. Three quarters of visitors have comparison shopped for products and services online (compared to only just over half among those who have never visited such sites), and a similar number have bought products or services online. Canadian social network users are also more likely to click a website advertisement.

“The study found that 37% of adults have visited an online social “network or online social community ”

Facebook is the most popular online social network among Canadian adults. Two-thirds of adult Internet users who have a personal profile on an online social network have one on Facebook, compared to one in five with a personal profile on Classmates.com and one in seven with a profile on MySpace. Facebook users spend the most time using the site per week, an average of 5.9 hours. The study found that 37% of adults have visited an online social network or online social community and 29% have placed a profile on at least one such site.

With so many consumers actively commenting on brands through social networks, online reputation is becoming even more important. Social networks are a large and unregulated channel with a massive user base, through which brands could see their good reputation built through other channels, undone very quickly.

Everyone needs a little Island time.

Hotels have an incredible opportunity, should they seize it, to be the channel through which others can communicate about their product. Blogs are one of the best ways to facilitate that dialogue. If you don’t have one already, you may want to consider adding a channel through which consumers can interact.

10 Things you can do in response to reviews in UGC sites:

Read them: It is recommended sites be visited at least weekly for new reviews and photos.

Audit them: Are there any errors in the review?

Study them: Patterns of poor reviews are of particular concern. If you see the same issues arise on a site, or across several sites, one might identify operational deficiencies.

Celebrate them: As with any feedback system, the positives must also be rewarded. Posting these comments, offering employee incentives for improvements, and reading positive comments in meetings allows one to focus and enhance strengths, not just see vulnerabilities.

Correlate them: Public comments should be married to existing internal comment card scores and not taken as isolated. The issues of one may be illuminated by commentary on the other.

Distribute them: Website comments should be shared at all levels, from housekeeper to regional manager. If each is aware of comment card scores, each should be aware of virtual scores (especially since these are seen by many more people).

Compare them: A smart hotel analyzes their scores and those of their competitors.

Analyze them: It is critical to know that rate is just one factor in a buying decision. Each set of comments, when compared to rate, creates a competitive ranking in perceived quality and/or possible risk. Perceived quality is the real issue, and perceived quality is affected by public commentary. It is critical to know the nexus between rate and perceived quality, the result of which should be better than your competitive set. Remember, the goal is to be the most attractive to a client, not necessarily the lowest priced.

Track them: Trends are more valuable when viewed over longer periods of time.

Respond to them: TripAdvisor.com allows posted responses from hotels and studies show those who respond are viewed favorably. Other sites will soon follow.

SOURCES:

37% of Adults Use Social Networking Sites: Study, Grant Surridge, Financial Post, Oct. 4, 2007-11-14

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