

THiNK NOW^{research}

Hispanic Traveler Study Summary

Prepared for:



VisitBritain™

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Background/Objectives

VisitBritain commissioned a consumer research study to uncover insights about the international travel behavior of Hispanics living in the US, their sentiment towards Britain and a select number of competitor destinations and, to determine if this segment offers a realistic prospect to grow the volume and value of travel from the US to Britain. Assessing whether or not messaging and channel choice for marketing should be distinct to that used for non-Hispanics in the US was also key objective.

The study also focused on:

- Ranking of various life priorities
- Attitudes towards taking holidays
- Past travel behaviors
- Research and Booking behaviors
- Awareness of and Interest in vacationing in Britain
- Comparison Britain to other travel destinations
- Perceived cost of traveling to Britain
- Sentiment related to Britain as a vacation destination
- Interest in different Britain-centric activities

ThinkNow Research was tasked with conducting qualitative and quantitative research among U.S. Hispanic travelers to help uncover insights related to the above objectives.

ThinkNow Research initially conducted a Focus Group among 10 Hispanic international travelers in Los Angeles in February of 2013. The qualitative research was exploratory and led to the development of a quantitative survey one month later among a nationally representative sample of 364 U.S. Hispanic international vacation travelers. The quantitative survey tested some of the findings the focus groups seemed to be suggesting and further fleshed out the overall preferences and behaviors of the target segment. Reports for both phases of the research were compiled and can be viewed separately. This short document summarizes some of the key findings from both phases of the research.

Key Findings

Life Priorities

U.S. Hispanics place a high value on interpersonal relationships, starting with family, which tops their list of life priorities. Subsequently, family is taken into consideration during their travel decision making process, and affects group size and total spend per vacation.

Qualitatively, Hispanics mentioned that they would most likely go on vacation with all of their family members. Over 50% of last foreign vacations taken by Hispanics in the quantitative survey involved parties of 3 or more.

Aside from the importance of family, self-improvement, education and retirement planning were mentioned during the focus group as being important life priorities. International travel was not mentioned as a top life priority among the focus group participants. However, when international travel was included among priorities for respondents to rank during the quantitative phase of the research it ranked 3rd among 16 life priorities; ranking just after family and health. This would indicate that international travel may not be top-of-mind among 'day-to-day' life priorities but when included among a wider list, it beats out 80% of other potential priorities.

Motivations to take holidays

This area was explored both in the focus group as well as the quantitative survey. Participants in the focus group were asked to list a few words that came to mind when they heard the word vacation. Responses included relaxation, time-off, spending time with family, unwinding, exploring & learning about new cultures.

The quantitative results supported these findings as U.S. Hispanics travelers expressed strong agreement with attitudes about vacation travel related to attractive destinations, exploring new places, experiencing history and culture, seeing famous locations and places of natural scenic beauty. We feel these attitudes mesh well with what Great Britain has to offer as a vacation destination.

Concerns surrounding the taking of vacations mentioned in the focus group included safety, language barriers and cost. When compared to France and Italy, Great Britain was considered “safe and secure” by 33% of the sample vs. 29% for the other two. The ability, to speak English was mentioned as a reason for choosing Britain as a top vacation destination in the quantitative survey.

Perceptions of cost, however, were a potential barrier for choosing Great Britain as a vacation destination as Britain is perceived as relatively expensive compared to other destinations. Only France is perceived to have higher costs within the country.

Possible Vacation Destinations

Great Britain was not mentioned top-of-mind among Hispanics in the focus group as a potential vacation destination. This was a bit concerning. However, when the same question was asked of the 364 nationally representative Hispanic survey responders. Great Britain was ranked 4th in top-of-mind awareness (behind France, Italy & Spain) and 5th in terms of where they would like to visit. Britain’s rank as a potential vacation destination did not change based on whether respondents were asked to rank it based on their current budgets or as if money were no object.

During their last foreign vacation, the destination choice was most strongly influenced by recommendations from friends or relatives. Being a “world-renowned must-see” destination, information found online and a good deal or offer were also common mentions. Survey responders report having spent an average of \$6,414 or approximately \$2,138 per person, including transportation on their last foreign trip.

Hispanic travelers express greater familiarity with and prior visits to Canada, Italy, Spain and France as vacation destinations as compared to Britain. Still, nearly one-third (31%) report having visited Britain in the past 10 years, although only 4% report visiting Britain on their last foreign vacation and over 70% of Hispanic travelers would consider visiting Britain in the next 5 years.

Research & Booking

The qualitative and quantitative findings with regards to the research and booking of vacations were nearly identical. Extensive research is conducted mostly online prior to booking trips (averaging 12 weeks prior to trip). Using Expedia, Trip Advisor, Travelocity and Kayak, some look for destinations offering all-inclusive tours hoping to cut on cost associated with transportation, accommodation and food. 90% of Hispanics use the English language versions of the research and booking websites when making travel arrangements.

Online reviews are important to U.S. Hispanics; they give them the necessary confidence to book

online, which they do as early as 9 weeks in advance in order to take advantage of the best deals. The quantitative research showed that travel agents or someone known to the traveler are relatively important in booking package deals. This is relevant because packaged deals were mentioned in the focus group as a strategy to lower costs. VisitBritain may be able to leverage this finding in order to highlight the affordability of a GB vacation. Activities are also booked in advance, mostly online (44%) or thru an agent (34%).

Perceptions of Britain

When the focus group participants were asked why GB had not made it to the list of places they would wish to visit or go back to they mentioned that unlike Italy and France, which may be associated with a particular experience such as food, and romance, respectively, they felt that the U.K lacks such an element.

A majority of Hispanic travelers in the quantitative survey definitively associate Britain with having famous landmarks to visit and being historical. For marketing purposes, this perception can potentially be linked to the aforementioned desire by Hispanics in seeing famous, historical or cultural locations in order to increase interest in visiting Great Britain. The attributes where France and Italy both have significant perceived advantages over Great Britain are world class restaurants, good food and being a romantic destination.

The U.S. Hispanic traveler however, does not rule out Britain as a desirable destination. England quickly gained interest in the focus group when participants became engaged in discussing what London has to offer, citing many attributes and landmarks such as: the Royal Family, Buckingham Palace, Big Ben and David Beckham.

Quantitatively, the top attractions or activities in Great Britain of most interest to U.S. Hispanic travelers include visiting a castle in the Scottish highlands, Buckingham Palace, the English countryside, towns and cities outside of London and Stonehenge.

Conclusion

We feel Britain fits well within the mix of desirable international vacation destinations when compared with nearby European countries such as France, Italy and Spain. We also believe VisitBritain can increase U.S. Hispanic visitorship by:

- Conveying a message of affordability for the whole family.
- Conveying a message of family happiness.
- Convenience of the language
- Focusing on the country's great history and countless landmarks and museums that would be cultivating to the whole family.

Furthermore, the research seems to indicate that an effective campaign for American travelers in general (with the income and inclination to travel internationally) could resonate with Hispanic travelers if the campaign was inclusive of some of the themes important to this segment. Increasing the channel choice of the campaign to reach more Hispanics would also likely increase Hispanic awareness of Britain and subsequently more visitation to Britain among the target segment. Should, targeted messaging be created, it's important to remember that U.S. Hispanics with the means to travel to the U.K. may also be exposed to the "general market" campaign so the messaging in any Hispanic specific advertising would need to be congruent with the larger campaign.