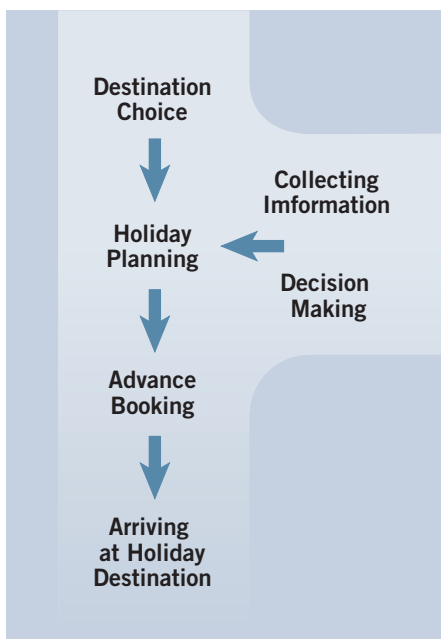




100% PURE NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand's Ideal Visitor = Interactive Traveller = New Zealand's Target Market

Interactive Travellers: How do they plan their holidays?



To understand how Interactive Travellers decide on holiday destinations and how they plan and book travel, research was conducted into holiday decision making.

Is there a pattern to the Interactive Traveller's decision making behaviour?

Interactive Travellers typically exhibit short planning times with 42% having less than 6 months between the actual holiday and first considering it as a possible holiday destination (36% having a 6-12 month lag).

Interactive Travellers do much of their information gathering on the web and find on-line information (including travel agents' websites, airlines' websites, tourist information centres' websites and other websites) most helpful in their choice of a holiday destination. However, word-of-mouth from friends and relations is still the most important single source.

Holiday Planning

After deciding on the holiday destination but before leaving home, Interactive Travellers plan their holiday by collecting information about the places to go, places to stay, how to get around, and things to see and do. They roughly plan their itinerary by making some firm decisions, which result in certain advance bookings. However, some of the holiday planning is left until arrival at the destination.

Interactive Travellers still find internet based information sources relatively more important than other sources in planning their holiday. Nevertheless, travel books



and guide books, maps and advice from friends and relations are more important single sources in helping them decide in advance about places to visit, places to stay, how to get around and things to see and do. In fact, travel guides and travel books increase in importance and usage during the planning stage (vs. during the process of choosing the holiday destination).

What sort of information do they collect about their chosen destination before they travel?

Interactive Travellers generally collect lots of different types of information before departure on activity products (i.e. places to go and things to see and do), as opposed to places to stay and how to get around. For Interactive Travellers who enjoy learning about and visualising the holiday destination, collecting information is considered a key part of the holiday experience. This process also helps ensure the best holiday experience and reduces any chance of disappointment.



What decisions do they make before they travel?

Interactive Travellers tend to make more firm decisions about accommodation and transport, but are more flexible about activity products and leaving the details relatively open until they get to the holiday destination. This is in contrast with the amount of information collected about the holiday destination, where more information is collected on activities.

As the information gathered highlights key attractions of the holiday destination, travellers are able to identify the key “big adventures” that interest them and plan their itinerary around these. Hence, the icons of the holiday destination become important drivers of location and accommodation choice.

Interactive Travellers believe that making some firm decisions before going on holiday would eliminate stress. This would also mean being able to make the most of their time at the destination, rather than spending holiday time planning and deciding. However, of those who do not make any firm decisions before departure, the majority feel confident or prefer to look around when they arrive.

What do the Interactive Travellers book and why or why not?

The amount of advance booking done by Interactive Travellers closely reflects the extent to which firm decisions are made for their holiday. In light of this, more advance bookings are made for accommodation and

transport, mainly for re-assurance that they will have somewhere to stay and be able to get where they want. These decisions and bookings are driven by the things to see and do in the region.

In terms of who they book with, Travel Agents have an important role in holiday bookings, primarily for accommodation and transport and some activities. Interactive Travellers state a preference for using the internet rather than visiting their travel agent in person or talking to them over the phone. Thirty-seven percent would make bookings as part of a pre-paid package mainly through Travel Agents. Popular packages purchased by Interactive Travellers generally include airfares, accommodation and some holiday activities.

Interactive Travellers also book large proportions of their holiday activities directly via other websites, where tourism service operator sites are used.

What happens after arrival

Interactive Travellers leave most of the decision-making and bookings for activity products until after arrival. They typically rely on word-of-mouth from friends and relations and advice from local people. The Visitor Information Network (iSite) and well equipped accommodation providers are valuable sources of information for travellers.

Interactive Travellers require far more information on activity products compared to accommodation and transport before departure. However, more firm decisions are made on accommodation and transport compared to activity products before departure.



Interactive Travellers are regular international travellers and use technology to make their lives easier

Robert and Dawn

Although much of the background research for their travels has always been done by Dawn on the web, Robert and Dawn's next trip to New Zealand has resulted from a recommendation of some friends who visited New Zealand last year. Having searched around on the web and read their Lonely Planet guide, they have put together a rough itinerary featuring some key “big adventures”.

Dawn has made direct reservations via the web for them to stay at the Grand Chateau for a few nights before and after their Tongariro Crossing walk. They imagine it would be a unique experience to stay in this historical hotel. Accommodation at a lodge in Te Anau has already been arranged as part of their Doubtful Sound sea kayaking package that they booked through their travel agent online, together with their airfares.

Being experienced travellers, while making sure they don't miss out on the key attractions, Robert and Dawn have decided on where they will generally go in New Zealand, but prefer to leave the detailed decisions on things to see and do until they get there. However, they have noted down the highlights of their friends' trip to New Zealand. As their friends advised, Robert plans to ask the local people in Eastland about a marae stay when they arrive. Although there are a few local operator listings via the Tourism New Zealand website, he also believes that there would be more choices and better deals than what is available through travel agents or via the internet.