

# Marketing Profile of Cultural and Historical Travelers

## to the Twin Cities Metro Area

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### INTRODUCTION

Cultural and historical tourism in the Midwest has increased in recent decades and is expected to continue growing (Wolfe et al., 2009). The long-term sustainability of cultural and historical attractions requires targeted marketing based on an understanding of visitor characteristics and travel planning (Collison & Spears, 2010; Fullerton et al., 2010).

The purpose of this study is to provide research-based information to cultural attractions in the Twin Cities Metro Area to inform marketing decisions. This information includes visitor and trip characteristics as well as travel planning processes and information sources used.

### METHODS

Data for the study was collected during the summer of 2012 throughout the Twin Cities Metro Area as part of a larger study profiling visitors to the Twin Cities (Oftedal & Schneider, 2012). A convenience sample of 2,106 visitors to the Twin Cities Metro Area were administered a questionnaire addressing the following tourism aspects:

- Purpose of travel
- Information sources
- Transportation/lodging
- Activities
- Previous visits
- Trip planning time
- Group type and size
- Demographics

For this study, cultural and historical travelers were defined as visitors who participated in one or more of the following activities:

- Visiting art museums or other museums
- Visiting historic sites
- Visiting wineries or breweries
- Attending classical music concerts.

Of all visitors to the Twin Cities Metro Area, 32.1% (N = 677) met the definition of cultural or historical travelers.

### RESULTS: CHARACTERISTICS

When compared to other travelers, cultural travelers were significantly more likely to:

- Be 55 to 69 (+5.2%) or older than 70 (+2.1%) and younger than 25 (+1.2%)
- Come from countries outside North America (+5.4%)
- Travel in small groups of 1-2 people (+16.0%)
- Prefer traveling alone (+4.4%), with a partner (+6.6%), or with friends (+2.2%) but not with family (-7.9%)

Table 1. Group size of cultural travelers compared to other travelers

	Cultural travelers (N = 677)	Other travelers (N = 1429)
1 to 2	44.7%	28.7%
3 to 5	44.4%	52.9%
6 to 10	8.5%	12.6%
11 or more	2.4%	5.8%

### RESULTS: TRAVEL PLANNING

When compared to other travelers, cultural travelers were more significantly likely to:

- Rely on traditional information sources (+11.9%)
- Rely on friends and family for information (+5.3%)
- Use an iPad while traveling (+4.7%)
- Plan their trip 9-13 weeks in advance (+2.9%) or more than 13 weeks in advance (+4.2%)

There was no significant difference between groups when it came to: most important information sources, online sources, social media, smartphones, or QR codes.

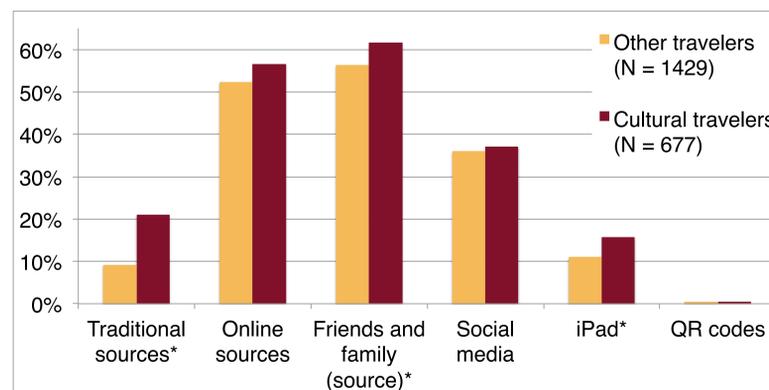


Figure 1. Information sources used by cultural travelers and other travelers (\* denotes significance)

Table 2. Planning time for cultural travelers compared to other travelers

	Cultural travelers (N = 677)	Other travelers (N = 1429)
Less than 2 weeks	24.4%	28.6%
2 to 4 weeks	18.3%	20.8%
5 to 8 weeks	18.5%	19.1%
9 to 13 weeks	18.5%	14.3%
13+ weeks	20.3%	17.2%

### IMPLICATIONS

Given the differences between cultural travelers and other travelers, marketing efforts by cultural and historical attractions in the Twin Cities Metro Area should focus on the core group of cultural travelers. Promotions should be targeted to:

- Visitors over 55, with a secondary emphasis on the emerging market of travelers younger than 25
- Travelers from outside of North America
- Groups of 1-2 visitors, with minimal emphasis on family travel

The timing and placement of marketing efforts and advertisements should reflect the travel planning habits of the core group of cultural and historical travelers.

- Advertisements should be placed in traditional media (i.e. visitor guides, magazine ads, newspapers, radio, and travel agents)
- Online sources are just as likely to reach other travelers as cultural travelers, but are still important
- Websites should be iPad and smartphone friendly (roughly one-third of cultural visitors use smartphones)
- QR codes should not be used in exhibits or promotions
- Information needs to be available to visitors at least 9 weeks in advance of anticipated visits and ideally more than 13 weeks in advance

### RESOURCES

Collison, F.M. & Spears, D.L. (2010). Marketing cultural and heritage tourism: the Marshall Islands. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 4(2), 130-142.

Fullerton, L., McGettigan, K., & Stephens, S. (2010). Integrating management and marketing strategies at heritage sites. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 4(2), 108-117.

Oftedal, A., & Schneider, I.E. (2012). Twin Cities metropolitan area summer visitor profile. *University of Minnesota Tourism Center*. Retrieved from <http://www.tourism.umn.edu/ResearchReports>

Wolfe, K.L., Hodur, N.M., & Leistriz, L. (2009). Visitors to North Dakota heritage and cultural tourism sites: Visitor profile, motivation, perceptions, and family decision making. *North Dakota State University Department of Agribusiness and Applied Economics*. Fargo, ND.

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