The New Charleston Tourist

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June 2, 2010
King Street Marketing Group Presentation

Generous support from the Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
The Myths about Charleston Tourists

1. Are they mostly history buffs?
2. Are they mostly retired couples?
3. Do most of them come from Ohio?
Content of this Talk

1. Methodologies
2. Tourist Demographics
3. Tourist Behavior
Methodology

Intercept / mail-back survey
Downtown attractions
CofC student researchers
Every year since 2004
Methodology

Random days in a week
Random time in a day
Pre-qualify tourists as out of tri-county
Response rate: 1 in 4 or 1 in 5
887 usable surveys from Jan-Dec 2009
Origin States of Charleston Visitors

[Map showing the origin states of Charleston visitors]
Age Distribution

- Mean = 52.88
- Std. Dev. = 13.064
- N = 854
Marital Status

- Married/Living with a Partner: 86.7%
- Single: 7.5%
- Separated/Divorced: 4.4%
- Widowed: 1.5%
Educational Levels

College Grad or above >70%

- Less than 12 years: 1.0%
- High School Graduate: 9.1%
- Technical/Trade School: 4.9%
- Some College: 14.1%
- College Graduate: 35.1%
- Some Graduate School: 3.9%
- Masters/Graduate: 25.1%
- Doctoral Degree: 6.8%
Employment Status

- Employed Full-Time: 44.5%
- Retired: 27.3%
- Full Time Homemaker: 8.4%
- Employed Part-Time: 7.7%
- Self-Employed: 6.4%
- Student (Full-Time): 2.0%
- Student (Part-Time): 2.0%
- Unemployed: 0.9%
- Other: 0.8%
Annual Household Income

- Up to $44,999: 8.1%
- $45,000 - $59,999: 9.8%
- $60,000 - $74,999: 9.1%
- $75,000 - $99,999: 12.9%
- $100,000 - $124,999: 12.8%
- $125,000 - $149,999: 10.3%
- $150,000 - $199,999: 12.9%
- $200,000+: 17.8%

$60K or above > 75%

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON
OFFICE OF TOURISM ANALYSIS
Travel Party Size

Average = 2.8 adults; 27.3% with children
Repeated Visitor Vs. First Timers

- 52.9% Repeated Visitors
- 47.1% First Timers
Major Attractors of Charleston

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractions</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Things They Enjoyed Most

- Visiting Historic Sites: 39.5%
- Food/Restaurants: 38.8%
- Historic Ambiance/Atmosphere: 37.0%
- Attractions: 36.6%
- Beaches/Waterfront: 25.7%
- Local Hospitality: 19.0%
- Tours: 15.0%
- Shopping: 13.3%
- Other: 4.0%
Things They Enjoyed Least

- Parking: 23.2%
- Weather: 18.5%
- Traffic: 12.4%
- Other: 10.8%
- Uneven Pavement/Sidewalks: 10.3%
- Overall Cost/Expense: 7.4%
- Public Restrooms: 6.4%
- Time Share Representatives: 6.4%
- Signage: 5.4%
- Maps/Guidebooks: 0.7%

*Source: College of Charleston, Office of Tourism Analysis*
Average Spending Per Overnight Visitor Per Day, 09

Total $168 per person per day local spending

- Accommodation, $71
- Dining, $38
- Shopping, $20
- Attractions, $17
- Local Transportations, $13
- Other, $7

7% of drop in daily spending from 07
# Purpose of Trip, 07 versus 09

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFR</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending a Conference or Meeting</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Multiple selection allowed.*
The Myths about Charleston Tourists

1. Are most of them history buffs?
   - Yes

2. Are they mostly retired couples?
   - No

3. Do most of them come from Ohio?
   - No
Summary
1. Charleston tourists are college educated, higher income, full-time employed couples, and from adjacent areas;
2. They like the history, attractions and ambience; dislike parking, weather, and traffic;
3. In 2009, we have more vacationers, less business travelers and they spent less.
Acknowledgements

The hard work of Kevin Smith, Brigid Ventura, and numerous College of Charleston student researchers

Financial Support from the Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
Thank you!

Email me for these slides or a full report

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