Why Sustainable Tourism Makes Both Dollars & Sense

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GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM SUMMIT
Sustainability: “Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”
A Generation of Earth Days
Tourism and the Environment
Published by TIA in 1992
CLIMATE CHANGE
Aviation and Tourism in the Danger Zone of Climate Change Risk
Why the Sudden Urge to “Go Green” Now?

• The debate in Congress over the “science” of climate change is over

• Congress wants to move legislation to cap greenhouse emissions ASAP

• The “travel” experience is under attack (Is travel immoral or an “eco-crime”?)

• We can either be “at the table or be on the menu” (Michael Goo, NRDC)
The Consumer
Green Engagement

% of Adults

- Engaged Greens: 10%
- Green Supporters: 20%
- Neutral Greens: 40%
- Green Cynics: 20%
- Green Rejectors: 10%

Source: TGI and The CarbonNeutral Company
Geotourism: The New Way to Travel

Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of the place being visited – its environment, culture, heritage and the well-being of its residents

Source: National Geographic Traveler
One-Third of Americans Have Positive Geotourism Profiles

Source: National Geographic Traveler and Travel Industry Association
One-Third of American Travelers Report Sustainability-Relevant Motivations

**Experientials**

Enthusiastic travelers interested in exploration and discovery.  
22.4 million, 18% of leisure travel market

**Quintessential Travelers**

Want to do it all.  
8.6 million, 7% of leisure travel market

**Trail Blazers**

Outdoor enthusiasts; interest in experiences and adventure.  
12.2 million, 10% of leisure travel market
• 78% of adults consider themselves to be “environmentally conscious”

85% turn the lights off when leaving a room.

• Only 2% drive a hybrid car.

Feeling Green

66% - Try to be energy efficient at home
60% - Recycle trash
60% - Turn off water when brushing teeth
53% - Keep showers short
25% - Plant trees
22% - Buy environmentally safe products
20% - Walk/bike instead of drive when possible
9% - Car pool

Environmental Concerns

- 70% - Air pollution
- 70% - Water pollution
- 59% - Waste management
- 56% - Deforestation

Environmental Concerns

- 55% - Ozone depletion
- 54% - Global warming
- 48% - Soil erosion
- 42% - Sea level rising

Minority are Familiar with Concepts of Green Tourism and Carbon Footprint

Familiar with Green Tourism

- Yes: 9%
- No: 91%

Familiar with Carbon Footprint

- Yes: 12%
- No: 88%

Source: TIA and YPartnership’s TravelHorizons™
Those Familiar with Concept of Carbon Footprint Most Likely to Be:

- Male: 132
- Gen Y: 142
- Gen X: 110
- Late Boomers: 121
- College Educ: 197
- $100K HH Income: 154

Source: TIA and YPartnership's TravelHorizons™
Consumer Perceptions about Travel Industry’s Green Efforts

Green Efforts Major Influence on Supplier Selection

- Yes: 14%
- No: 86%

Preference for Eco-Friendly Companies

- Yes: 54%
- No: 46%

Source: TIA and YPartnership’s TravelHorizons™
More Likely To Select Suppliers Who Demonstrate A Commitment To Environmental Responsibility

56% - Car rental company
54% - Hotel
53% - Attraction
50% - Airline
50% - Cruise line

Those Influenced by Travel Industry’s Green Efforts Most Likely to Be:

- Male: 109
- Gen Y: 118
- Early Boomers: 125
- College Educ: 118

Source: TIA and YPartnership’s TravelHorizons™
Travel Characteristics of Those Influenced by Travel Industry’s Green Efforts

- Intern Traveler: Index 153
- Luxury/Upscale Hotel User: Index 112
- Air Traveler: Index 108
- Use Internet for Travel: Index 105

Source: TIA and YPartnership’s TravelHorizons™
Willing To Pay Higher Fares/Rates To Suppliers Who Demonstrate Environmental Concern

76% say <9% more.

Don’t Fake It

• There are lies, damn lies and then there’s “green-washing”

• Recycling the office paper does not an eco-friendly destination or company make!
Greater impact on market share than rate.
Those Most Likely to Pay More for Green Travel

- Gen Y: Index 138
- Early Boomers: Index 116
- Matures: Index 106
- College Educ: Index 125
- $100K+ HH Income: Index 114

Source: TIA and YPartnership's TravelHorizons™
Travel Characteristics of Those Most Likely to Pay More

Source: TIA and YPartnership's TravelHorizons™
### International Visitors to the U.S. And Projections (2000-2010f)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Arrivals in Millions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009f</td>
<td>61.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010f</td>
<td>63.0</td>
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</tbody>
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Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, ITA, Office of Travel & Tourism Industries; Secretaria de Turismo (Mexico); Statistics Canada

f = forecast; one or more nights
Conclusions

• Core market for sustainable travel ~10%
• Another 20% have positive attitudes
• 40% now neutral but could be attracted
• Affluent, educated and higher-end travelers are the most sustainability-oriented
Conclusions

• General lack of awareness and knowledge

• Travelers are becoming more sustainability-conscious and are beginning to make decisions based on sustainability criteria

• Make it personal and relevant, stress functional benefits, as well as sustainability

• Trust, honesty and relationships matter
The Time to Learn, Collaborate and Act is Now

- Increase financial competitiveness - becoming sustainable can save you money
- Can also help you gain market share among sustainability-minded travelers
- Enhance the travel experience
- Prepare for legislation that is sure to come
- Tourism has potential of increasing public awareness and appreciation of environmental and sustainability issues