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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The demand for what the NWT has to offer has increased as people are drawn to wide open spaces, wilderness and adventure. The tourism industry of the Northwest Territories is poised to leverage the increasing demand for the unique experiences offered.

In 2023 visitors who travelled to Canada were faced with an unprecedented summer. Wildfire swept many parts of the country in the worst summer on record. The extensive media coverage left an impression that much of Canada and the Northwest Territories was unsafe, and inaccessible due to wildfire damage, leaving lots of work for the industry to market the NWT as a great place to visit. As the fire subsided into the fall and toward winter, Northwest Territories Tourism encouraged travellers to visit the Spectacular Northwest Territories and to embark on an unforgettable journey, one that would also help NWT businesses recover from the economic impacts caused by evacuations due to this summer's wildfires.

The tourism industry, and the people of the NWT, have endured much over the past few years and 2023 really tested the limits of the resilience residents have shown. But at the time of writing, the winter season has begun with people from all over the world coming to experience the Spectacular NWT for themselves. As we close the door on 2023 we celebrate and look to a new year where work continues, sharing our spectacular with potential visitors through marketing efforts.

The NWT Tourism marketing plan is a rolling three-year strategic approach, updated annually. The plan outlines marketing across channels, connecting with potential visitors wherever they engage - on and off line, using our media and content to share the spectacular brand, and building a desire to come and visit.

The marketing plan aligns with the Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment Tourism 2025 Plan. In response to major trends impacting the tourism sector, such as reduced transport connectivity, labour and skills shortages, and a growing importance on domestic and nature-based travel, we have outlined several strategic priorities. These include targeting high-value guests, encouraging repeat visitation, growing the domestic and United States markets, reducing travel barriers, and creating more opportunities for tourism businesses to be successful.

Marketing efforts focus on direct-to-consumer, travel trade, and media channels. We will use content marketing across a variety of channels to engage with our target audiences and maintain an "always on" digital approach. We will also focus on building and maintaining relationships with key accounts and include familiarization tours in our trade and media programs.

Our goal is to connect our guests with epic Northern journeys and experiences, from the Midnight Sun to the dancing Northern Lights, from authentic Indigenous experiences to iconic adventure experiences. We will continue fostering and maintaining strategic partnerships to help us leverage our investments and support the growth of the tourism sector in the NWT. We invite you to connect with us, share your spectacular, and tell the world;

Something in the Spectacular Northwest Territories will change you.

Donna Lee Demarcke

CEO NWT Tourism



ABOUT US

Northwest Territories Tourism (NWTT) is a notfor-profit organization and Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the Northwest Territories. It is a role mandated by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).

NWT Tourism was established in 1996 to represent the NWT tourism industry. Funding provided by the GNWT established a DMO and Tourism Industry Association (TIA). The GNWT continues to mandate NWT Tourism to market the territory on its behalf. Our work is made possible through core funding agreements established with the GNWT. We leverage these resources through other publicly funded partnerships, which include the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor), Destination Canada (DC), and the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC). Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreements with further partners, including Le Conseil de Développement Économique des Territoires du Nord Ouest (CDÉTNO) are in place. NWT Tourism serves over 180 member businesses connected to the tourism industry. The organization is governed by a Board of Directors that includes elected representatives from the tourism industry, reflecting the varied sectors and regions, and appointed directors representing Indigenous governments across the Northwest Territories, as well as two ex-officio directors, a representative from the GNWT, department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) and Parks Canada. Marketing plans are presented to the board, our members, and funding partners.

NWT Tourism's main office is located in Yellowknife, where we have an experienced team specialized in direct-to-consumer marketing, travel trade, travel media, including social media, and MCIT (Meetings, Conferences, & Incentive Travel). Our team is proudly supported by a professional northern Agency of Record (AOR), Outcrop Communications. In addition, we retain vital contractors in primary markets, communicating to consumers in North America and around the globe in multiple languages, including French, German, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, and English.

We work closely with local, regional, national, and international partners to promote the Spectacular brand, uphold our destination's reputation, increase awareness of the NWT as a travel destination, and ultimately increase visitation and visitor revenues to the NWT.

OUR VISION:

A thriving, vibrant, sustainable and successful tourism industry.

MISSION:

To grow a visitor economy for the NWT that supports a strong and sustainable economy.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES TOURISM

Box 610, Yellowknife, NT, Canada, X1A 2N5 T: 867-873-5007; 1-800-661-0788 F: 867-873-4059 E: info@spectacularNWT.com

You can find us online at: www.SpectacularNWT.com













OUR SPECTACULAR BRAND

The spectacular brand promises visitors a destination to immerse themselves in a world of multi-sensory, surprising and rejuvenating experiences. These experiences leave a visitor forever changed. In a time when they are so precious, the NWT gives its visitors wide open spaces, open roads and spectacular landscapes that evoke a sense of calm. Our people are friendly, hospitable, and generous. They are also natural storytellers. Like the land they live in, Northerners can be funny, honest, and full of surprises.

The Northwest Territories is building a reputation as an iconic tourism destination. It is the third largest jurisdiction in Canada by area and one of the smallest by population, resulting in abundant wide-open space and spectacular scenery.

The Northwest Territories offers amazing skies, hundreds of lakes and rivers, towering mountains, vast plains, expansive ocean coastlines, and abundant wildlife. Its enormity, geographic diversity, northern location, Indigenous cultures, and friendly people offer something extraordinary to visitors in a land that grants so many spectacular moments. The Spectacular NWT brand promises a Northwest Territories with spectacular scenery, experiences, and adventure.

OUR BRAND PROMISE:

The Northwest Territories offers visitors discovery – a wonderfully child-like type of discovery. For many, the North offers the thrill of a first-time experience, the surprise of discovering something new, and the reward of trying something you have never done before;

It's the Spectacular NWT. True wilderness, nature on a grand scale, wide-open spaces, genuine Indigenous culture, and the northern way of life.

The Northwest Territories will leave you speechless and in awe.

Something here will change you.



FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Tourism supports and is supported by Northerners. It touches all other sectors of the NWT. The NWT relies on tourism, which plays a vital role in the social, cultural, and economic strength of the Territory. Tourism is a driver for good. The tourism industry's success depends on the teamwork of many people, communities, regions, and partner organizations. NWT Tourism keeps close relationships and funding agreements with organizations that share NWT Tourism's interests in a vibrant tourism economy. Our primary funding partner, the Government of the Northwest Territories, is at the heart of this. A like-minded partnership approach to marketing provides greater strength, unity, and leveraged results, which will more effectively market the destination together compared to individual efforts.

Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT)

The GNWT is an essential partner for NWT Tourism. The Department of Industry, Tourism and Investments (ITI) provides core funding for NWT Tourism to conduct marketing and sales activities. ITI also conducts tourism market research, which helps NWT Tourism and our local tourism businesses to make informed marketing decisions. ITI provides product development, training, mentorship, and funding programs to support destination development initiatives throughout the territory. NWT Tourism works with the GNWT's regionally-based tourism staff to focus specifically on marketing the products, experiences, and activities unique to each Region. While these elements may be showcased collectively, ensuring a balance of regional content in marketing activities is essential. Regional partnerships are crucial in aligning NWTT objectives and strategies to the goals of communities and local tourism economies. Regional tourism offices collaborate on regionally focused projects ranging from content development marketing programs to FAM tours and marketing campaigns.

NWT Conference Bureau

The Government of the NWT provides funding to NWT Tourism in partnership to operate the NWT Conference Bureau (NWTCB). The Bureau works to attract meetings,

events, conferences and business travel to the NWT. The primary activities aim to solicit, prepare, and submit bids to host conferences and events in the NWT. This objective is primarily achieved through follow-up on sales leads generated through marketing efforts and attendance at industry trade show events. The NWT Conference Bureau continues to build resilience in the meetings, conferences, and incentive travel (MCIT) markets by continued investment in online digital advertising coupled with the development of modern visual assets such as virtual tours and virtual experiences.

Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor)

CanNor was established in 2009 to develop a diversified, sustainable, and dynamic economy across Canada's three northern territories. CanNor fosters growth and economic development in Canada's North by delivering programs that respond to our financial challenges and create economic opportunities in the North. Since its inception, CanNor has been a valued partner to NWTT and has contributed funding to support diverse marketing activities that target critical domestic and international markets. CanNor funding has enabled NWT Tourism to explore and open new geographic markets without reducing efforts in existing and proven markets. NWT Tourism continues to partner with CanNor to





undertake market research and destination marketing efforts beyond our scope. CanNor works with NWTT, GNWT and other tourism partners, supporting the Northern economy by collaborating on the development and promotion of the tourism industry of the Northwest Territories.

Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)

ITAC is a national not-for-profit organization that creates partnerships between associations, organizations, government departments, and industry leaders across Canada to support Indigenous tourism growth. They also seek to address the demand for Indigenous experiences, by developing campaigns and marketing authentic Indigenous experiences. ITAC allocates funds for each province and territory to support Indigenous tourism activities. NWT Tourism's partnership with ITAC aims to promote Indigenous Tourism in the NWT. Focusing on improving the representation of authentic Indigenous experiences, NWT and ITAC collaborate to develop marketing activities highlighting unique Indigenous experiences in the NWT.

Destination Canada (DC)

The Canadian Tourism Commission operates as Destination Canada (DC) - Canada's Destination Marketing Organization (DMO). DC has historically been promoting tourism to Canada in international markets in collaboration with its Canadian tourism industry partners. While always providing pivotal market intelligence and industry data to its partners, DC's marketing during the pandemic had increased its focus on the domestic tourism economy and building ambassadors and resilience in the tourism industry. Currently, NWTT's work with DC provides a heavy focus on North America and, in particular, the USA and Mexico. Destination Canada leads by example and unites partners in a Team Canada approach to promote Canadian tourism. DC shares Canada's collective voice with people across the nation and around the world. Destination development and recovery of the business and events sector will both be DC-supported areas that will be integral parts of the recovery of the visitor economy of the NWT. DC offers partnerships and works with its partners to enable shared marketing activity, specifically with NWTT, to leverage additional funding for core marketing efforts. NWTT works closely with DC and its team of experts.

Conseil De Développement Économique Des Territoires Du Nord Ouest (CDÉTNO)

CDÉTNO is a territorial non-profit organization that develops services in support of the economic development and employment of Francophones in the NWT. NWTT works in partnership with CDÉTNO to engage with a Francophone audience where possible. Previous domestic market research conducted by Environics on behalf of NWTT indicates a lack of destination awareness and French-speaking experience providers. Past research and more recent studies conducted on the psychological profile of the targeted domestic Francophone market have been used to inform the French social media activities.

Industry Partners

The private sector plays a crucial role in supporting the growth of the tourism industry in the NWT. NWT Tourism has formed strategic partnerships with various businesses such as airlines, accommodations, food and beverage providers, local tour operators, and

travel planning services. These businesses support a variety of NWT Tourism marketing initiatives, such as offering discounted rates to host trade and media familiarization (FAM) tours and for contests that are tied to integrated marketing campaigns. These discounted rates allow NWT Tourism to stretch the marketing budget, effectively creating more opportunities to attract visitors to our territory. Local tourism businesses are also a valued source of information on visitation statistics and may share their insights on changes in the marketplace as they occur in real-time.

To support tourism businesses, NWT Tourism offers a wide variety of collaborative marketing opportunities, including discounted rates to participate in consumer travel shows and marketing events, as well as digital, print, and social media advertising. Although the cooperative program is built around the tour operator, the program also promotes engagement with ancillary organizations such as Parks Canada and regional and community tourism development offices. Cooperative marketing partnerships are included in NWT Tourism's overall budget to help build the NWT tourism economy.



MUSKOXEN BULLS WAYNE LYNCH/ NWTT

PRODUCT OFFERINGS

The Northwest Territories has a wide range of product offerings that attract visitors from all over the world. These "offerings" include Aurora viewing, Indigenous/Cultural tourism, Fishing, Outdoor Adventure, General Touring, Hunting, Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) and Business Travel. Each sector significantly contributes to the NWT economy and attracts a diverse visitor base that supports the tourism industry throughout the year. Each sector has unique strengths, challenges, and needs, which explains why target markets and marketing tactics can differ considerably. The following snapshot is a high-level overview of each sector.

*Note - Many statistics are pre-pandemic and research is underway on the post-pandemic/future value of these sectors.





Fishing Seasons Offered Primary Season: June-September Ice Fishing: December-April Average Length of Stay 5-7 days Visitation Statistics (2019-2020) Number of Visitors: 5,300 Percentage of total visitors: 4.5% Total visitor spend: \$13.7 Million Percentage of total visitor spend: 6.7% Average spend per trip per visitor: \$2,584.91 **Number of NWT Businesses** All Inclusive Lodges (33) **Actively Marketing Fishing** Housekeeping Lodges (No Food Provided) (9) Day Tours (33) **Target Markets** Primary: Canada, United States Secondary: Australia, Mexico and Europe Ice fishing for all international markets Market Positioning Statement(s) World's best freshwater fishing Trophy fishing/large fish/records Clean waters and pristine nature Fishing under the Midnight Sun Consumer Direct (Canada, United States) **Marketing Channels** Travel Trade: United States Travel Media (Canada and international markets) Changes in the Marketplace Issues with reduced airline capacity Economic impacts of inflation/recession Strategy and adaptations • Focus on high-value guests Appeal to and provide incentives for repeat guests to focus on Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) Target markets with the best (most convenient) air access to the NWT





Indigenous Experiences

Seasons Offered	■ Year Round
Average Length of Stay	 1/2 Day to Multi-day Experiences
Visitation Statistics:	 In the past, statistics specific to Indigenous Tourism have not been gathered. Moving forward, efforts will be made to collect visitation data specific to Indigenous Tourism.
Number of NWT Businesses Actively Marketing Indigenous Experiences	 Number of Indigenous tourism operators (16)
Target Markets	 Primary: Canada, United States, Germany, France, UK, German Speaking/Europe, Asia-Pacific, Australia, Mexico
Market Positioning Statement(s)	 Genuine culture and authentic Indigenous experiences Warm and welcoming communities Immersive experiences Reconciliation in action The Original Original
Marketing Channels	 Consumer Direct (Canada/United States) Travel Trade (Canada and international markets) Travel Media (all markets)
Changes in the Marketplace	 Growing interest in connecting with Indigenous cultures Limited number of export-ready projects Challenges with limited air access National Original Original designation
Strategy and adaptations	 Build Indigenous experiences into package offerings to raise the profile of the sector NWT Tourism supports the idea of 'Nothing About Us Without Us', working with the Indigenous tourism operators of the NWT, NWT Arts members, as well as the board of Directors and ITAC for sharing Indigenous tourism 'by', rather than 'about', Indigenous people. NWT Tourism works with NWT communities in a collaborative approach to develop content with all involved parties Highlight Indigenous experiences through content Target repeat visitors for extended-stay Indigenous experiences Incorporate Indigenous tourism experiences into Meeting and Incentive Travel (MCIT) request for proposals
) \	Support business development in marketing and industry standards

through business, market, and export-ready training (GNWT)





Outdoor Adventure

Seasons Offered	 Primary season is June-September (paddling, hiking) Winter activities are typically sold as an add-on to Aurora viewing packages (dog sledding, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing)
Average Length of Stay	 Paddling trips typically run between 10-14 days
Visitation Statistics (2019-2020)	 Number of Visitors: 7,300 Percentage of total visitors: 6.2% Total visitor spend: \$14.4 Million Percentage of total visitor spend: 7.0% Average spend per trip per visitor: \$1,972.60
Number of NWT Businesses Actively Marketing Outdoor Adventure Activities	 Guided Canoe Trips (11) Self-Guided Canoe Trips (6) Rafting (3) Stand-Up Paddle Board (1) *Dog Sledding (17) *Snowmobiling (25) *Snowshoeing (9) Cross Country Skiing (3)
	* Including tour operators that contract out the services of licensed tour operators providing these services
Target Markets	 Paddling: Canada, USA, German-Speaking/Europe, Australia Winter activities: Canada, USA, Mexico, Asia-Pacific
Market Positioning Statement(s)	 Best paddling in the world (iconic rivers) Pristine wilderness Authentic winter activities The home of winter
Marketing Channels	 Consumer Direct (Canada/United States) Travel Trade (Asia-Pacific, German-Speaking/Europe) Media (all Markets)
Changes in the Marketplace	 Increased costs of travel Challenges with flight schedules and air capacity Challenging economic time
Strategy and adaptations	 Focus on high-value guests Promote longer trips with built-in buffer days in communities to ease travel pressure and increase the local visitor economy Highlight the wide-open spaces as a measure of health and safety

Road Touring Seasons Offered Year-round (with most road touring taking place during the summer months) Average Length of Stay 1-2 weeks Visitation Statistics (2019-2020) Number of Visitors: 20,100 Percentage of total visitors: 17.1% Total visitor spend: \$ 20.5 Million Percentage of total visitor spend: 10% Average spend per trip per visitor: \$1,019.90 **Number of NWT Businesses** Vehicle Rentals (7) **Actively Marketing General Touring Target Markets** Primary: Canada, United States, German-Speaking/ Europe Secondary: Australia Market Positioning Statement(s) Iconic Highways (Dempster Highway)

Marketing Channels Consumer Direct (Canada/United States) Travel Trade (German-Speaking/Europe, Australia) Media (all markets) Changes in the Marketplace Rising fuel costs Limited availability of rental vehicles Limited support for Campervans in NWT

Decline in economy/inflation

Unique Northern Scenery

Territorial and National Parks, E.g. Waterfalls and Wood Buffalo

Epic Road Trips

Strategy and adaptations

Target high-value guests
Focus on nearer markets (i.e. Northern Alberta/BC)



Outfitting	
Seasons Offered	Year Round
Average Length of Stay	■ 1-2 weeks
Number of NWT Businesses Actively Marketing Hunting	Licensed outfitters (18)
Target Markets	Primary: Canada, United StatesSecondary: German-Speaking/Europe
Market Positioning Statement(s)	Pristine wildernessUnique Northern WildlifeAuthentic Indigenous culture
Marketing Channels	Consumer Direct (Canada/United States)Media (Canada, United States)
Changes in the Marketplace	Increased costs of travelLimited air accessDecline in the economy
Strategy and adaptations	 As most outfitters are in demand, the strategy will focus on maintaining long-term awareness

Visiting Friends and Relatives



Seasons Offered	Year Round
Average Length of Stay	■ 3 days to 1 week
Visitation Statistics (2019-2020)	 Number of Visitors: 15,000 Percentage of total visitors: 12.8% Total visitor spend: \$ 10.4 Million Percentage of total visitor spend: 5.1% Average spend per trip per visitor: \$693.33
Number of NWT Businesses Actively Marketing to the VFR Market (offering day tours)	 Community Tours (28) Scenic flight tours (11) Fishing Day Trips (33) Indigenous/Cultural Tours (16) Winter Activity Day Tours (30+)
Target Markets	 Friends and Family of NWT Residents
Market Positioning Statement(s)	 Share your Spectacular Enjoy Spectacular experiences in the NWT as part of your visit with friends and family members living here
Marketing Channels	Consumer Direct (Canada/United States)Media (Canada, United States)
Changes in the Marketplace	Increased cost of livingLimited flight availability
Strategy and adaptations	 Encourage people to plan their trips in advance Connect with residents to build awareness of the visitor economy



Business Travel



Seasons Offered	Year Round
Average Length of Stay	■ 3-5 days
Visitation Statistics (2019-2020)	Number of Visitors: 32,300
	Percentage of total visitors: 27.5%
	Total visitor spend: \$78.6 Million
	Percentage of total visitor spend: 38.4%
	 Average spend per trip per visitor: \$2,433.44
Number of Communities Actively	Conferences (3)
Promoting Business Travel	 Other business travel (most communities in the NWT)
Target Markets	Primary: Canada
	Secondary: USA, Asia-Pacific
Market Positioning Statement(s)	 Spectacular meeting locations, unique venues, authentic experiences Add a pre or post-vacation trip to your business travel
Marketing Channels	MCIT (Canada)
Changes in the Marketplace	Significant increase in business travel
Strategy and adaptations	Focus on air access for domestic and US markets.



THE MARKETING ENVIRONMENT

The assessment of the marketing environment is broken down into two areas. The first area offers a general industry overview of how the tourism industry performs from global, national, and regional perspectives. The other area takes a closer look at several trends that have emerged since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and how these trends are changing post pandemic and may impact how tourism business is conducted moving forward.

Industry Overview

Global

Following a decade of unprecedented year-on-year growth, which peaked in 2019, the global tourism economy experienced epic losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) reported that 2020 and 2021 were the worst years on record since the emergence of tourism statistics back in the 1950s. The UNWTO stated that during 2020 and 2021, international travel and visitor spending were less than 80% of what they were before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thankfully, with the impacts of COVID-19 decreasing and travel restrictions being loosened, international travel has seen a significant increase in 2022 and 2023. Tourism destinations worldwide hosted almost three times as many international overnight arrivals year over year during the first three months of 2022, resulting in an additional 76 million international arrivals. In 2023, many destinations have fully recovered to 2019 levels. Canada is almost there as tourism revenue in Canada is expected to exceed 2019 levels by the end of the year, and visitor numbers are expected to recover in 2024. For example, spending from the US and Mexico is set to exceed 2019 in 2023 at \$11.2 billion and \$754 million, respectively. Arrivals will follow suit in 2024.

Looking at 2024, globally, geopolitical tensions, including political instability, civil unrest and wars, have global impacts on travel and tourism. Further, global tensions between the West and China need to show signs of improving. Many tourism economies, including the NWT, are uncertain about what was, for many, the largest inbound audience. The global tightening of monetary policy aimed at curbing inflation will likely cause a brief technical recession towards the end of 2023 or the beginning of 2024. This downward trend is anticipated to ease by 2025, paving the way for continued growth in the tourism sector. Consumers are continuing to prioritize travel over other categories of discretionary spending. Leisure travel remains a priority, but business travel returns at a reserved pace. *(Tourism Outlook Fall 2023, Destination Canada)

* More information can be found on the International markets in Appendix C, on page 74 of this document.



Canada

Similar to what was taking place on a global scale, the tourism sector in Canada was hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Leading up to 2020, there was much excitement as the industry was reporting record numbers of visitation and visitor spending. Destination Canada (DC), the national organization responsible for marketing Canada as a tourism destination, reported that in 2019, Canada received 22.1 million overnight arrivals from international markets. This was an increase of 6% from the previous year. Tourism expenditures 2019 totaled \$82.9 billion CAD, a 2.9% increase of the prior year. During the pandemic recovery in 2021 and 2022, to mitigate losses, a greater emphasis was placed on local, regional, and domestic travel to offset losses from international markets. While this strategy helped to keep many businesses solvent through the crisis, it was not an effective long-term strategy. This is because the average spend from an international visitor is much higher than that of a domestic one.

While the sector is recovering overall, the recovery is not equal; many jurisdictions in Canada have yet to see the same level of recovery that other more frequented parts of the country have seen. Several factors are impacting the sector's recovery. These include a challenging economic environment driven by inflation and rising interest rates, fuel prices, and labour shortages. The team at Destination Canada is working hard to support geographic dispersion and drive visitors to areas still in need of recovery.

Canada's tourism sector has made significant strides since Destination Canada's previous outlook in Fall 2022. Canada is now moving past recovery to a muchwelcome rebound, with tourism spend set to return to pre-COVID levels in 2023, earlier than forecasted. The United States will remain the largest source of visitors and tourism spending.

Tourism in the Northwest Territories

Before the start of 2020, the tourism sector experienced a period of unprecedented growth. In the 2018/19 fiscal year, the NWT welcomed 87,000 leisure travellers. This was an increase of 58% over the previous five-year average. Total visitor spending including business travel also reached its top performance to date, with more than CAD \$201.5 million in revenue being generated in 2018-19. This outperformed the target goals that were identified in the Tourism 2020 strategy document by \$50 million.

As the 2020 tourism season began, no one could have predicted the devastating losses the industry would experience as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The tourism sector in the NWT was greatly impacted by this crisis as the NWT border remained restricted to visitors until March 2022. As a result of border restrictions, local tourism businesses were forced to rely on the local market to offset the decline in travel from outside the territory. Marketing focused on leisure travel 'Staycations' however, with the smaller market base and the apprehension for people to travel (even within their own region) most tourism businesses in the NWT experienced significant financial losses, and some of the businesses were forced to close.

Thankfully, the tourism economy in the NWT has experienced a significant increase in the number of visitors since the NWT border removed restrictions for leisure travel in early 2022. The Yellowknife Airport reported that in June 2022, it had over 40,000 passengers, a number that had not been that high since February 2020. The demand for what the NWT has to offer had increased during the pandemic as people were drawn to wild places and wide-open spaces with fewer people. While many visitors returned, and previous bookings were able to be honored, 2022 was by no means a recovery. The 2022/23 winter was steady for some, but operators did not see large numbers of visitors, as much of the air access and capacity had not yet returned, and the tourism business that did return saw many disruptions and inconsistencies.

While the recovery was on track, unfortunately, 2023 did not deliver what many NWT tourism businesses had hoped for. Visitors who travelled to Canada were faced with an unprecedented summer. Wildfire swept many parts of the country in the worst summer on record, impacting Canada's international reputation and the visitor economy of the NWT significantly. As the fires subsided into the fall and toward winter, Northwest Territories Tourism encouraged travellers to visit the Spectacular Northwest Territories and to embark on an unforgettable journey that would also help NWT businesses recover from the economic impacts caused by evacuations due to this summer's wildfires. The extensive media coverage left an impression that the Northwest Territories was unsafe, inaccessible due to wildfire damage leaving lots of work for the industry to market the NWT as a great place to visit.

At the time of writing the outlook is much better, the 2023 winter is seeing great numbers of international visitor arrivals and while the fires did have an impact on some winter bookings 2024 is looking to be a much better year. The highly esteemed travel publication Condé Nast, named the NWT as one of the best places to visit in 2024 and NWT Tourism is sharing this news widely and cannot wait to welcome guests to the Spectacular NWT this year and for years to come.

Key Trends

In November of 2021, Destination Canada released the document "Tourism's Big Shift: Key Trends Shaping the Future of Canada's Tourism Industry". The primary purpose of this report is to provide the tourism sector with key insights into how the industry is changing and how tourism businesses can adapt to take advantage of the opportunities that will arise from these trends. These trends have been divided into three categories: macro trends, industry trends and market trends. While this was developed as a road to recovery, many of these trends still have relevance to the tourism industry in the NWT and the below examples have been slightly adapted from 2021.





Key Macro Trends

Macro trends focus on the profound socioeconomic changes that affect businesses and communities on a greater scale. On a macro level, Destination Canada has identified five key drivers that will impact Canadian society and affect the tourism industry in both the short and long term. Furthermore, the global competitiveness of the Canadian tourism offering is a focus, and Marco trends are being closely monitored by the Canadian government to ensure Canada remains competitive.

Economic Change

As a result of restricted spending opportunities during the pandemic, household savings in many developed countries were at an all-time high. As travel restrictions were lifted, North America witnessed an accelerating increase in spending across multiple income tiers. At the same time, prices for airline bookings, hotel stays, food and car rentals have soared in response to inflation and supply chain issues. The balance between income and price increases will determine overall travel demand and has resulted in a focus by many destinations on higher-yield guests. While the NWT is attractive to a higher income audience, the product expectation is high, and experience providers need to ensure the expectations of High-value guests or 'HVG's' are being met.

Social Change

Canadian tourism has a renewed sense of commitment to Indigenous communities and the visitors who are eager to connect with them. Tourism has been presented by the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada as reconciliation in action, and the NWT continues to see increased engagement from Media and Trade partners to elevate Indigenous experiences.

Climate Change

As part of a commitment made by corporations worldwide to curb travel-related emissions, there will be a reduction in business travel. This will be achieved by limiting trip frequency and by relying more on online meetings while optimizing schedules to reduce the number of flights taken. The climate crisis has also increased the number of extreme weather events such as fires, floods, and debilitating heat waves.



Accelerated Digitization and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, digital technologies have increasingly been adopted when managing customer and supply chain interactions. Geotargeting and near-real-time data can be used in the decision-making process. This data will give destinations a greater understanding of their visitors and could help them be more strategic. Advertisers will need to have a more sophisticated approach focused on engaging content and brand promise. Also, the introduction of Generative AI is touted by many as the biggest impact on the tourism ecosystem since the internet. Keeping information up to date for large language models to process is an example of a step needed to be taken to be relevant in a fast-developing digital travel environment. Alternatively, the NWT provides a sanctuary from a digital world and somewhere people can truly disconnect.

Key Industry Trends

There are a number of trends that will impact the tourism sector. Many of these trends were identified post-pandemic by Destination Canada through interviews with inbound and outbound tourism stakeholders. Looking ahead, there is a lot happening,

with the introduction of Artificial Intelligence coming into its own in 2023 or persistent nationwide environmental challenges in the summer added to by negatively enforced media perceptions. NWT Tourism realizes that monitoring and adapting to these trends is vital and that doing so will help minimize risks and maximize market opportunities.

Change of Air Access & Transport Connectivity

The change in airline economics in 2021 and 2022 resulted in a significant decline in air capacity and large cost increases. Reduced frequency on routes within Canada and key international destinations will always have a profound impact on the travel sector. While access to ground transportation was limited across the country after COVID-19, many of these issues have given way to simply rising costs such as fuel. While rental vehicle fleets are recovering, it is not availability, but rather price, that is the main issue. Supporting airline routes to maintain stability is a key focus in destination marketing efforts since the frequent changing of airline connectivity coupled with high prices has provided challenges for consumers and trade partners alike; building stability in these routes is key to future success.

Labour & Skills Shortage

Recruiting, training, and retaining staff has been an ongoing challenge for the tourism industry of Northern Canada. The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified this issue, as many workers left the industry due to lack of employment prospects and chose not to return to the sector as they found stable employment in other industries. This diminished workforce will be a major challenge for the sector's recovery across all hierarchy levels.

Higher Costs

The current consumer demand for travel, coupled with reduced supply and capacity and rising fuel prices, have resulted in a significant increase in travel costs; add this to decreased spending power, and destinations are feeling the impact. Many destinations are targeting more affluent groups 'High Value Guests', meaning competition is high for this audience.

Reduced Business Travel

The corporate travel sector is facing a much slower recovery than leisure travel. The pandemic has reshaped how business is conducted, and there is a greater reliance on connecting with business colleagues remotely. Destination Canada has estimated that business travel will only recover to about 80% of prepandemic levels by 2024, and true recovery will not likely happen till 2028.

Product Degradation

As a result of the pandemic, financial reserves and access to capital from most tourism businesses are limited. As many providers have had to scale back on their business operations and services drastically, there has been a decline in the quality of experience delivered. This will have a long-term effect on the quality of tourism products in Canada, and in the long term, this could deteriorate travel experiences and gradually damage a destination's reputation.

Reduced Access to Capital & Limited Liquidity

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an additional strain on tourism and hospitality businesses that were already struggling with rising debt. Since the onset of the pandemic, capital assets are at an all-time low, with cash being directed towards supporting the survival of ongoing operations. There has been a significant uptake of the programs governments have put in place to help businesses access capital.

Key Market Trends

Over the past three years, there has been a transformational shift in consumer behaviors and values. Understanding these shifts can better prepare businesses to adapt to these changes, enhance product development and service channels, and make the best decisions related to their marketing budgets.

Frictionless Travel

Frictionless travel has been a buzzword for many years but as the industry has emerged from the pandemic, travel has become more complicated. Even seasoned travellers are struggling with the ever-changing travel regulations and requirements. Travellers are looking for more assistance through digital services and human interactions as they navigate their travel experience. The goal for tourism destinations and the tourism businesses that operate within them is to help remove the frustrations associated with travel and put visitors' needs front and center.

Domestic Travel

With growing uncertainty and uneasiness towards international travel, Canadians are taking more trips within their own regions. While typically not being as big spenders as international travellers, they have the potential to be repeat customers and to act as ambassadors for the destination.

Responsible Travel

The pandemic has also brought a shift in how people travel. There is a desire to connect with the destination in a meaningful way while also being respectful of the environment and the local culture. Changes to travel behavior translate into travelling less, but for longer and more immersive experiences. Many travellers want to reduce their carbon footprint and benefit the host community economically and socially.

Ascendance of Communities

Destinations are taking a closer look at how tourism is delivered in their region, making sure to find a balance between economic benefits while minimizing pressure on community resources. Moving forward, the long-term focus will be on more sustainable goals to ensure quality of life for residents living in the region.

Indigenous Connection

Indigenous experiences are continuing to grow in popularity with both domestic and international travellers. The desire of travellers is to have a meaningful connection with Indigenous people and to ensure that the communities they are visiting are benefiting from their visit. While Indigenous tourism has a huge potential for growth, it was one of the hardest-hit sectors and will require support for businesses to recover and meet growing demand.

Wild for Wilderness

As the world emerges from the pandemic, there has been a greater appetite for wide open spaces and wilderness travel. This has driven visitation to National Parks and other nature-based destinations. Since Canada is known as a place that offers outstanding wilderness adventures, there is an opportunity to capitalize on this trend.

Health & Wellbeing

The past few years have also seen a significant shift towards wellbeing and personal enrichment, and this was only enforced post pandemic. There is a greater focus on escape, rejuvenation, and nature-based healthfulness as part of the travel experience. There is an opportunity for destinations to capitalize on this trend and to define it on their own terms. Examples of products coming to market are retreats, wellness, yoga, as well as on-the-land programs allowing people to connect with themselves and others.

Remote Work and Resident Tourism

The business traveller is the highest spending traveller in the NWT. Offering Business travellers more engagement with the NWT will naturally add yield while likely having a lower impact than the same amount of revenue from a leisure traveller. Connecting leisure opportunities to these visits and trips extended for leisure makes sense.

Furthermore, the office environment has radically shifted since the onset of the pandemic, allowing more remote work. Remote work may become a way of life for some. People are not just working from home but working from a variety of what might be considered vacation destinations, using innovative platforms to adapt. The divide between life, work and play is smaller than ever. As a result, remote workers are increasingly a new visitor segment in many regions. The NWT needs to be prepared for this new traveller and partner with other industries to provide a different kind of visitor experience beyond what's offered for short-term stays.



BARRENGROUND CARIBOU BULL WAYNE LYNCH/ NWTT

INDUSTRY ASSESSMENT

An ongoing risk assessment takes into consideration a number of factors that may impact the tourism sector in the NWT. When assessing marketing opportunities, NWT Tourism observes the competitive advantages as well as the challenges the tourism industry in the NWT faces. It also looks at how NWT Tourism and our industry partners may be able to mitigate risks through advocacy and strategic marketing initiatives.

Competitive Advantages

The Spectacular Brand

The brand developed by NWT Tourism and its partners is literally spectacular. It resonates with NWT residents, visitors, north-facing audiences, and new ones. The number of operators, packages and tourism products has grown over the years, and, under the Spectacular NWT brand, our promise is a powerful one. NWT Tourism has been operating for more than 20 years. It has been, throughout its history, a learning and growing organization. Its success in growing the market has resulted from solid decision-making supported by marketing data. The organization has a balance of seasoned and fresh perspectives and strong teamwork among its board, staff, agency of record, and contractors. Both its size and structure make it agile, flexible, and adaptable. The Spectacular brand is a genuine one that represents the NWT with authentic and unique storytelling.

Natural Assets

The NWT has significant natural assets, including Aurora, the Midnight Sun, pristine lakes and rivers, mountains, barrenlands, and wildlife. In a world that increasingly values pristine environments and sustainable tourism, the NWT offers first-rate natural products. The NWT has been scientifically supported as one of the best Aurora-viewing destinations in the world. Indeed, virtually all of the NWT's natural assets are recognized as world-class, from sport fishing to parks.

Wide-open Spaces

In addition to having considerable natural assets, the NWT is a unique destination. Scarcely populated and remote, the uncrowded wilderness of the North has always attracted people longing for wide-open spaces. The NWT is often perceived as an authentic and quirky destination. It continues to be sought after as a once-in-a-lifetime, "bucket list" destination where people can escape into the wilderness and connect with the "True North" culture and landscape. As the travel sector begins to emerge, consumers will be looking to participate in nature-based activities in smaller group settings. The vast expanse of the NWT provides visitors with the opportunity to enjoy a variety of iconic wilderness experiences in a setting that is truly uncrowded.

Authentic Indigenous Experiences

As the desire for travellers to learn more about Indigenous cultures and communities grows, the NWT is well-positioned to connect travellers with genuine Indigenous culture. The Indigenous cultures in the NWT are unique to Canada's North, and there is a wide range of cultures and languages throughout each region of the NWT, making it an ideal place to visit for travelers seeking authentic Indigenous experiences. Community-based tourism operations are consistently emerging, and experiences range from outdoor adventure to culinary, offering visitors a real connection to the land and the people of the NWT.





AURORA WATCHING IN TULITA ANGELA GZOWSK / NWTT

Connection to Industry Partners

Relationships have always been important and an element relied upon for success. NWTT's network of members across the regions has never been more central as a collective voice. The growth of the tourism industry relies on strong cooperation between likeminded partners. NWT Tourism enjoys a secure and durable relationship founded on trust and respect with the Government of the Northwest Territories. NWT Tourism also works in partnership with other organizations pursuing tourism; communities and Indigenous governments across the North, the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, Parks Canada, CanNor, and Destination Canada.

Digital Innovation

NWT Tourism has embraced innovative digital marketing, monitoring how travellers research, plan, and book travel. While NWT Tourism has referred to this strength in years past, this effort goes from strength-to-strength with data-driven, consumercentric marketing based on a sound knowledge of our destination. With over 42,000 mentions, the hashtag #SpectacularNWT is widely used by residents and travellers alike, and User-Generated Content (UGC) continues to populate NWTT social media channels. The SpectacularNWT website is diverse and robust. While always offering opportunities for improvement, it is comparable on an international DMO stage. This content strategy has served to advance fantastic success in Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) – as asset NWT Tourism will continue to build on.

Industry Challenges

Access to the NWT

Although air and road access has continued to improve over time, the cost of travel to the NWT continues to be high, especially compared to other competing destinations. This cost barrier is particularly the case when considering a journey beyond Yellowknife, and into more remote regions of the Northwest Territories. The NWT as a destination also battles with this perception. Even in instances where prices are not cost prohibitive, the consumer's perception is that the price is high. The existing problem of access to the NWT provides a challenging place from which to begin a rebuild; unfortunately, to date airlines have not been able to support the required routes to recovery visitation in key months of the year.

Lack of Tourism Infrastructure, Products and Services

The NWT has limited products, services and activities available to visitors, particularly outside of Yellowknife. There are only a small number of experienced operators who are actively working with Travel Trade. Many opportunities, such as community cultural experiences, wellness, luxury Aurora accommodation and unique high end culinary experiences, are not being offered or are not yet well-developed for tourism consumers and trade partners. Facilities and accommodations for Meetings, Conferences, and Events are limited outside of the capital city and travel to destinations outside of Yellowknife for MCIT can be difficult and costly. Additionally, there is a shortage of frontline workers in the hospitality industry. Add to this the pandemic's impact on the tourism economy, and it becomes clear that, for tourism to recover, well-planned destination development projects and funding support will be essential.

Limited Digital Presence of NWT Suppliers

Many of the Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the NWT are owner-operated businesses whose strength lies in delivering legendary tourism experiences. Rather than spending their time on their digital presence, they focus on working in their business. In a digital world, these legendary experiences need to be found before they can be enjoyed. There is a concrete opportunity to have a much stronger digital presence. COVID-19 has catalyzed the adoption of technologies and customer digitization. It is not sufficient to be digitally literate. The majority of operators must now be capable of connecting digitally with the right customer to generate leads and convert sales.

Lack of Human Resources

The tourism industry has faced huge job losses, and COVID-19 has left many in the tourism workforce questioning the security of a career in the tourism industry. Hiring the necessary workforce has always been a challenge for many businesses in the North, long before the job losses caused by the pandemic. Although this is not a new problem, it may represent one of the largest challenges for the recovery of the industry. The Great Resignation of 2021, which saw many workers opt out of unsupportive workplaces, may also have far-reaching effects that will add pressure to an already wavering area of the NWT economy.

While many of the above weaknesses are out of the control of NWT Tourism's marketing team and mandate, they are areas that warrant careful monitoring. There may be opportunities for NWTT to address and share insights into these problems in an effort to provide support in finding solutions.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In response to the changes in the tourism environment, Northwest Territories Tourism has identified the following strategic priorities. The intent of these strategic priorities is first to help offset the losses that the tourism industry in the NWT may encounter as a result of changing economic conditions, changing flight capacity, labour shortages, and secondly to position the sector for long-term success.

Target the Right Travellers

NWT Tourism needs to attract the right guests for our members, and that means appealing to the NWT lovers. These are the guests who love the NWT as well as the visitors that communities love to host. These guests bring positive outcomes and are aware of their impact on a destination. These are the best guests; these are our high value guests, who also match the target segments (Appendix B).

With rising costs and the economic environment, the number of people who can afford to or have access to travel will be considerably reduced. To help mitigate the situation, NWT Tourism will align with DC and identify, and target high-value guests who have an interest in NWT experiences. They have the financial means to travel to the NWT and spend more time in the territory. The goal is to increase yield, with higher average visitor spend, to mitigate the lower number of visitors to each region and the higher cost(s) of operations. The best way to attract these guests is often through word of mouth. It starts with travel trade and industry partners coming to experience the North, being invited to a FAM (familiarization tour) which is why it is crucial that residents become Spectacular ambassadors.

Build off the Spectacular Brand to Grow the Domestic and United States Markets

Since the launch of the Spectacular Northwest
Territories brand in 2006, there has been a significant
increase in destination awareness and interest in the
NWT, particularly within Canada and certain areas of the
United States. As it is expected that overseas visitation
will take longer to recover, it will be important to offset
these losses through increased travel from Canada and
the United States. Promotions in these regions will focus
on iconic products, including Aurora, fishing, paddling,
and road touring, and will incorporate Indigenous
tourism experiences to add to the authenticity of a
vacation to the Spectacular Northwest Territories. NWT
Tourism will focus on creating opportunities for guests
from targeted marketing efforts to engage in our brand
and visit the NWT.

Encourage Repeat Visitation

As the tourism products offered in the NWT are both iconic and diverse, there is an excellent opportunity to encourage visitors to return to our territory time and time again to be enriched by the experiences available to them. People who have travelled to the NWT at least once have a far greater understanding of and appreciation for the territory. They are familiar with the logistics involved with travel to and within the region and know what to expect in terms of amenities and level of service. It is more cost-effective to attract repeat visitors than it is to convert new customers. There is an opportunity for a greater return on investment by focusing on Customer Lifetime Value (CLV), and by creating special programs and incentives to target



repeat visitors. This will prompt past visitors to promote the NWT to their family, friends, and colleagues through word-of-mouth and most importantly repeat visitation visitors will have a greater chance to travel further into the regions and communities, and will likely return to experience again with extra or different activities.

Leverage the Marketing Efforts of National Tourism Partners

As national partners, Destination Canada (DC) and the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) have helped raise the profile of Canada (and its regions) in the international markets they are active in, NWT Tourism will continue to benefit from aligning international marketing efforts with these organizations. NWT Tourism will continue to participate in trade shows, sales calls and cooperative marketing activities that are made available through these organizations.

In 2023, NWTT went into the market in the USA with other Northern Canadian partners to market Canada as a Northern Lights destination. Partners were happy with the campaign and plans are in place to collaborate again in 2024. This cooperative approach will help attract some US-based visitors who head toward Europe for Northern Lights viewing. NWTT was able to invest together with Manitoba and the Yukon as well as Destination Canada; and being in the market under the DC brand gave us a much wider reach than any individual destination would have if trying to market to the US on their own.

Reduce Travel Barriers by Simplifying Travel to and Within the NWT

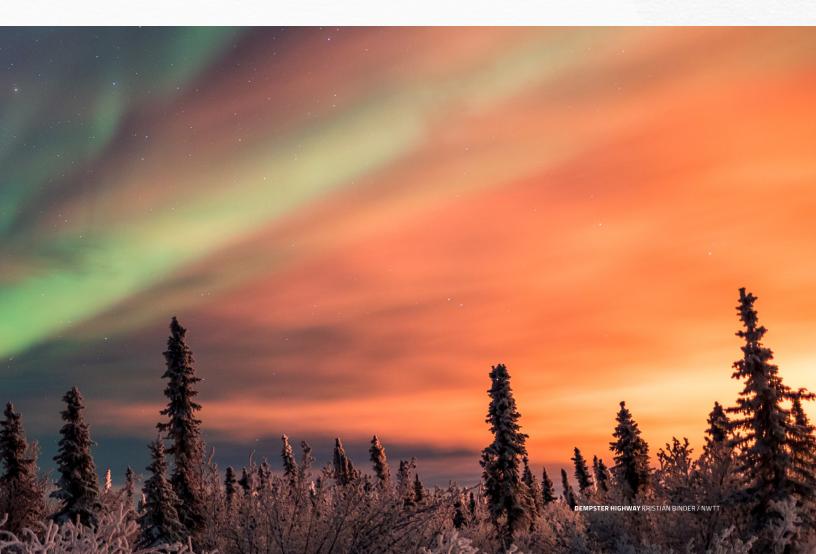
Post pandemic, travel has become far more complicated and stressful. With travel regulations frequently changing, flight cancellations and lost luggage becoming increasingly problematic, there is an apprehension for



people to travel, especially to destinations that are less known and/or require multiple flights. Unstable weather conditions can further complicate travel logistics for people visiting remote regions of the NWT. To help lessen the impacts of these issues, NWT Tourism will provide clear communication on any changes in travel regulations. It will support the development of tourism packages to simplify travel and encourage visitors to build in buffer days for travel into and within the NWT. NWT Tourism will also encourage visitors to connect with northernmost hosts and local travel planning services that can help visitors navigate through the complexities of travel in a post- pandemic world. This will include efforts to reduce digital friction and managing expectations associated with travelling in the northern environment.

Employ a Diversified Approach to Marketing the Territory

NWT Tourism recognizes that each of the tourism sectors that make up the tourism industry in the NWT has its own unique set of challenges and opportunities. In an effort to support tourism operators to the fullest capacity, NWT Tourism develops specific tactics that are tailored to the needs of each sector. While each of the sectors will be included in the general awareness marketing activities, working with member businesses to learn about the needs of each sector and adopting specific actions targeted to each sector will ensure that all experiences available in the NWT are marketed to the right audience.



Support the GNWT's Destination Development Efforts

As part of the GNWT's role in supporting the tourism sector in the NWT, the department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) provides a number of services to new and existing tourism businesses to help them achieve long-term success. These include funding support, training, strategic advice, and business development support. As a result of this support, a variety of new or enhanced tourism products and services are developed each year. NWT Tourism is

committed to aligning messaging and marketing efforts in support of any new products that have been developed. This will include ongoing communications with the Government of the Northwest Territories—Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (GNWT/ITI) to learn about the destination development activities taking place in the regions. NWT Tourism will continue to share insights on the emerging industry trends that may help guide GNWT/ITI's destination development efforts.

HVG Key Insights

Through the market survey research and generative interviews, Destination Canada uncovered 5 overarching insights which hold true across the HVG.

REFERENCE: DESTINATION CANADA - LAWS OF ATTRACTION

1.

They place high importance on value for money when travelling

- Want to feel the trip met their expectations
- Want to make the most of their time in a destination
- Need to feel that price is commensurate with the quality of the experience
- More travel experiences to compare with and have a sense of value & quality

2.

They are not very spontaneous leisure travellers

- Tend to plan a trip 6-12 months in advance
- Like to feel confident in their plan
- Tend to do extensive research prior to arriving at a location
- Tend to have regular travel cadences (i.e., yearly ski trip in March)

Statistics

- 60% of respondents stated that value for money is an important factor that impacts their overall trip experience and satisfaction
- 53% of respondents stated that they could be influenced to repeat a destination if their expectations were met

Statistics

- 56% of respondents stated they begin planning a trip 6-12 months in advance
- 43% of respondents stated that they research itinerary options prior to arriving at a destination and 45% stated that they book activities and excursions prior to arrival

Create More Opportunities for Tourism Businesses to be Successful

The tourism industry in the NWT is made up of a large number of businesses providing a wide range of products, services, and experiences. The level of business readiness also covers a wide spectrum. Some businesses (particularly new business start-ups) do not meet all the requirements to be considered business-ready or market-ready. Others are seasoned tourism businesses that are already selling their products and services to the international markets (export-

ready). NWT Tourism recognizes that not all tourism businesses will have the capacity or interest in becoming export-ready. As part of the marketing strategy, NWT Tourism will look to create business opportunities for all levels of readiness. This will be accomplished by marketing these businesses to the appropriate target audiences. Strategies include the promotion of self-guided experiences to residents and Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR), to promote market-ready packages to Free and Independent Travelers (FIT) and export-ready packages through media and the travel trade.

3.

They are very family & friend influenced when planning a trip

- Family & friends are a highly trusted source of information & influence when choosing a destination
- Travel companions heavily impact their planning & choices for travel



They crave authentic and cultural experiences when travelling

- Prefer content that provides them with ideas for unique experiences
- Enjoy experiences that are "off the beaten path" as opposed to more "touristy" options
- Want experiences that they feel they could not get anywhere else



They need to have clear information before travelling

- Tend to seek out authentic recommendations that show a realistic picture of the destination
- If they have trouble finding information on a destination, that is a major pain point
- Often satisfied with a destination if it aligns with the content read/watched

Statistics

- 50% of respondents indicated that who they are travelling with influences their destination choice
- 46% of respondents stated that they friends & family recommendations were a factor that influenced their hotel, airline, and/or activity booking for their trips

Statistics

- 40% of respondents stated the level of unique experiences is an important factor in overall trip satisfaction
- 48% of respondents stated that they could be influenced to repeat a destination based on the cultural experiences they had on their trip

Statistics

- 75% of respondents stated that honest reviews from previous travellers is a type of content that would help them decide where to go
- 52% of respondents stated that they wished more sources existed that they could trust with information about destinations

Artificial Intelligence

2023 will likely be remembered as the year of Al. Google and other companies were using a plethora of Al tools in travel features, chatbots, maps and Online Travel Agents (OTAs), but 2023 is the year the technology shifted to get really 'generative Al'. The introduction of ChatGPT and consumer-based Large Language Model (LLM) interaction meant that the general public was able to access processing power and creative development like never before. There has been much discussion about the pros and cons of adopting Al tools. There any many undisputed benefits of adopting Al tools;

- Aids with processing content and creating a searchable knowledge base.
- It enables content production,
- It helps support data-driven decision-making,
- It helps to get a better understanding of target audiences.

You can use it to do just about anything you need, from writing a marketing plan (yes, we used AI in places to gather data) to doing an audit of online reviews for your business. While NWT Tourism will continue to explore the impacts of AI on tourism and tourism marketing, the main takeaway at this point in time is that, like any digital tool, it's only as good as it is inputs. Large Language Models (LLMs) used by AI and the fact AI uses web integrations to get the data mean NWT Tourism needs to ensure the information available to consumers (who might be using AI to plan a trip to the NWT) is correct and extensive. This means simple inputs such as opening hours, tour availability, package information and contact information must be addressed.

From an organizational point of view, it's essential to note that privacy is a concern when using Al and therefore, organizational policy around the use of Al, especially in regard to sensitive data, is an important topic to be addressed.

Utilize Sound, Timely Research and Data to Guide Marketing Decisions

To ensure NWT Tourism is achieving the best ROI from marketing efforts, it is imperative decisions are made based on sound and timely research. NWT Tourism

will work closely with ITI, DC and ITAC to obtain the latest visitor statistics and industry research to ensure decisions are based on the most recent research data. NWT Tourism will also continue to establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for all marketing activities and report on these KPIs on an ongoing basis in order to adjust marketing efforts where required. A primary focus will be to ensure the use of first-party data (mainly postal codes) and to encourage all visitor information centers throughout the NWT to collect data digitally so that it can be shared with NWT Tourism as well as industry partners in real-time where possible.

Support Genuine Indigenous Experiences

The changing social-political environment has brought about a new demand from visitors to connect with genuine Indigenous experiences. This is no longer a secondary product, but rather global audiences are interested in learning about the Indigenous culture of a destination. With many Indigenous owned businesses as part of the membership base, NWT Tourism has been committed to marketing Indigenous experiences for many years, working with ITAC to share the offerings in the NWT as one of the best destinations to experience authentic experiences offered by Indigenous owned businesses. With the launch of the Original Original brand and program, NWT Tourism aims to highlight and promote experiences with the Original Original designation.

Encourage Regional and Seasonal Dispersion

NWT Tourism has always focused on attracting travellers to all five regions of the NWT. While the bulk of travellers visit Yellowknife and Inuvik, NWT Tourism is committed to working with communities that are interested in building their visitor economy, and which have NWT Tourism member businesses (accommodations, restaurants and experiences). Attracting the right HVG guests is essential here, guests that are engaged with culture, want to have genuine Indigenous experiences (see graphic section 4) and to help overcome the higher cost of access into many communities by offering these authentic experiences (see graphic section 1).



TARGETING OUR MARKETS

NWT Tourism reviews target markets annually to ensure marketing continues supporting the tourism economy and revenue generation for businesses in the territory. The target audience continues to shift and change, as do the geopolitical effects on global tourism and changes in economic conditions. While markets remain geographic, we strive to connect with like-minded travellers by repurposing content across markets and to communicate with individuals on the basis of interests and media consumption. In an ever-changing world, we will need to assess the situation and adapt the strategy accordingly.

Geographically, NWTT targets cities in Canada with Air Access, areas of the United States that align with national partners, including airlines and related air access, and key overseas markets that DC and other Canadian DMO's also market to so that NWT Tourism is leveraging partner resources in these markets for the best possible ROI.

NWT Tourism uses website analytics to monitor engaged and emerging audiences online. This is matched with postal code data collected from traveller and visitor guide requests to focus marketing activities on the ideal target audience - those who are likely to plan a visit to the NWT. For overseas markets, General Sales Agents (GSAs) are contracted to help us understand and attract audiences from around the world. While pre-pandemic visitors tended to be over the age of fifty (50), a broader audience is a logical choice as NWT aims to dial into the functional (business traveller) and emotional marketing of target audiences in target markets. NWT Tourism is broadly targeting Canadian Residents aged 35–65. Research on the audience is conducted regularly to ascertain the most viable audience based on intent to travel and market access. The data collected helps NWTT understand target audience's psychographics, motivations, and media habits, which allows us to ensure marketing decisions are data-driven. Appendix B shows part of the results of the postal code research that provides insights into the target audience.

The People Approach – Psychographics and Market Segments

Since 2006/07, Destination Canada (DC) has used a proprietary psychographic segmentation system called Explorer Quotient (EQ), based on travel values. This method was employed for its brand Canada marketing efforts and as a licensed research product for destination marketing organizations at the provincial and territorial level. EQ 2.0, launched in 2018, offers access to more data, allowing for a more actionable travel value-based segmentation for today's digital marketers. EQ segmentation data cover social values, demographics, and media preferences.

While current marketing efforts are practical by segmenting geographically (due to air access), the EQ segments were applied to the audience segmentation with the basis of this work from 2019 and 2020 still being relevant. NWT Tourism is targeting three primary EQ segments: Personal History Explorers, Authentic Experiencers, and Cultural Explorers.

As travellers, Personal History Explorers are primarily defined by their desire to connect with their cultural roots and travel in comfort, style, and security. The Authentic Experiencer is a more learned, understated traveller. Travel is not their only interest in life, but they certainly appreciate it when they go. They prefer more of an independent experience while at a destination,



choosing to have control over their itineraries and schedules. Authentic Experiencers are looking for authentic, tangible engagement with the destinations they visit, and have a particular interest in understanding the history of the places they visit.

Cultural Explorers are avid travellers who value learning and discovery while travelling. They don't want to feel like a typical tourist, preferring just to blend in and have the most authentic experience possible rather than being confined to group tours and schedules. Cultural Explorers are defined by their love of constant travel and continuous opportunities to embrace, discover, and immerse themselves in the culture, people, and settings of the places they visit.

Audience Segmentation

While EQ segments help to build the emotional "feeling" of marketing activities, aiding with content development and understanding what connects our destination to the right audience, today's data-driven marketing world requires a level of accuracy that targets these audiences and meets them where they are. This means they need to find us on the right social channels, in the most probable newspaper, during their favorite TV show, on the commute to work, or while they listen to their favorite sports team on the radio. Understanding audience needs is essential and, while the core call-to-action may be the same across audiences, what motivates those audiences to take interest, and then take action, will vary. Audience personas are one way to conceptualize specific and similar groups in target audiences, making it easier to develop messaging specific to them, their motivations, and their interests. The personas captured for NWT Tourism were constructed using Canadian population data. The Environics PRIZM system collects census data as its base and then enhances it with dozens of other authoritative data sources. It classifies every Canadian household into one of 68 segments reflecting current demographics, lifestyles and values. Deeper than demographic insights, PRIZM allows for an understanding of life cycle stages, psychographics, and values, which all help create a more complete picture of audiences.

Using historic postal code data collected from visitors to the NWT, NWT Tourism developed segments with high visitation rates to target those who are most likely to visit the territory. Similar segments were then clustered together to create target groups. Appendix B offers some high-level insight into the compiled data analysis and not only gives insights into their demographics, but also their key tourism activities, accommodation preferences, media habits, and more. Testing of these audience segments was carried out in 2023, and the segmentation remains relevant and accurate.



Keeping Connected

Geographic markets are the geographic areas that marketing efforts are focused on and represent the areas from which to attract visitors from. NWTT selects geographic markets based on several criteria. For a domestic audience, this is based on market size, average household income, engagement, and access to the NWT. For international markets, NWT Tourism works with partners such as Destination Canada to assess the number of visitors to Canada and the NWT, the total visitor spend, the average spend per traveller, and the match between the products that visitors from a particular geographic region are looking for and those

available in the NWT. These markets also rely on air access, and the marketing activities need to align and focus on geographic areas with air access. For more information on these markets and target audiences, please refer to target market Appendix C. NWT Tourism also considers the strength of a market economy, current geopolitical status, air capacity, and other factors that may affect travel ease and interest. There are different needs and constant changes in target markets, and working with partners to track developments in each market is pivotal when marketing the NWT. NWT Tourism assists members in the process of targeting the right audiences for their businesses and communities.



JEAN MARIE RIVER ARTS AND CRAFTS BEN WEILAND / NWTT

2024/25 MARKETING PLAN

The Marketing Plan guides activities and highlights some of the strategies and tactics NWTT will use to achieve its goals and objectives. The plan acts as a resource to rely on when moving through the calendar of marketing activities. This plan can be shared to show partners planned actions toward marketing the NWT. As we closely monitor the tourism environment, it is evident that the tourism industry is changing rapidly. NWTT must plan to be flexible in the face of this changing environment.

Goal, Objectives and Milestones

The goal is the ultimate outcome established by the Board of Directors. It guides marketing activity, the setting of objectives and the marketing milestones NWTT strives towards. While the industry is working towards recovery, the goal has not changed; focusing on the tourism industry's 'growth' now implies growth from the ground up, rebuilding the tourism economy. The goal remains true as people look toward the eventual growth of tourism into something that is once again resilient and sustainable.

Goal

To expand the NWT tourism industry and the economic benefits to participants in the industry and to contribute to the sustainable economic development of the NWT.

Objectives

At the core of any plan is a clear list of strategic marketing objectives, which outline the marketing team's intentions, provide clear direction for team members to follow, and offer partners information to review and support. Objectives, which are linked to Milestones and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), signal when progress is made toward the primary goal.

Objectives outlined below are discussed throughout the strategy and tactics, and although some of these objectives may be high-level, they drive NWTT's efforts. NWT Tourism will work towards the following ten objectives:

- 1. To increase visitor spending in the NWT.
- 2. Build tourism visitation from the right audiences and markets.
- 3. Encourage regional distribution of tourism benefits in the NWT.
- 4. Expand awareness of genuine Indigenous experiences in the NWT.
- 5. Promote the NWT as a Business and Events destination.
- 6. Ensure effectiveness and high engagement in media marketing.
- 7. Build awareness of NWT experiences in travel trade networks.
- 8. Ensure marketing in all channels is based on relevant data and feedback.
- 9. Advocate for the Tourism Industry of the NWT.
- 10. Increase brand and destination awareness of the Spectacular NWT.



Marketing Milestones

Milestones measure interim steps toward the achievement of the objectives. While NWTT's marketing team is always tracking KPIs as the gauge to confirm success, milestones signal work toward an objective is on track. Milestones can change in response to fluctuations in the marketing environment. Some of the milestones and KPIs that NWTT will strive toward as part of the 2024/25 marketing plan will include:

- Maintaining brand awareness for SpectacularNWT in key markets and expanding secondary markets.
- Measuring and maintaining audience quality and engagement rates.
- Measuring and building owned content engagement.
- Establishing benchmarks for earned media value with new metrics.
- Monitoring and tracking results for paid media KPIs.
- Increasing social media engagement and building followers on all platforms.
- Video engagement and follower growth.
- Increasing the number of subscribers of SpectacularNWT E-Newsletter.
- Attracting MCIT Events to each region of the NWT.
- Establishing website landing content for all primary markets and sectors.
- Increase leads to and bookings with NWT tourism operators.

Marketing Channels

NWT Tourism approaches marketing through four key distribution channels:









Consumer

Arguably, the most important channel is direct-toconsumer. A destination marketing organization aims to build awareness of and attract visitors to the destination. In turn, it helps develop local visitor economies. Consumer marketing aims to create a desire to visit the NWT by engaging people through marketing and developing an interest in the NWT. NWT Tourism does this through digital marketing and an 'Always On' strategy to engage potential visitors. Marketing efforts focus on content marketing across a variety of channels to reach the consumer. Content will either deliver facts, interesting reads, emotional content, or other content aimed to spark interest and engage an individual online. There is normally a call to action to then go further and click on a link to a member listing, jump-off to member websites, or engage in a phone call with a member.

The consumer distribution channel remains the largest focus of marketing efforts. The primary consumer target is potential visitors from the whole of Canada, and the United States. Now more than ever, the intention is to develop brand recognition and destination awareness. With long-term viability and success for direct bookings to operators in mind, NWTT has a focus on marketing to support Airline Routes such as new services from Toronto.

Consumer direct marketing is centered around the website and a large focus on the 'consumer journey' and the 'funnel', which is detailed further in the strategies and tactic section. One example of this is the E-Newsletter marketing. NWT Tourism markets direct-to-consumer with a monthly email newsletter to an audience who have signed up to receive direct communication from the NWT about experiences available to them. This audience is likely planning a future trip, and in terms of website traffic, website traffic via the newsletter has the highest average engagement time per session. This shows that this is an audience that is further 'down the funnel,' and efforts are made to push toward operators' listings and package pages on the website for direct bookings to NWT businesses.

Consumer direct marketing begins at home with NWT residents. Residents know the NWT is a place of spectacular beauty brimming with adventure. NWT Tourism aims to build 'SpectacularNWT' brand

ambassadorship and encourage storytellers to go directly to potential visitors and share their Spectacular NWT with friends, family and anyone who seems like they might enjoy it 'up here.'

Media

One of the most effective ways to increase destination awareness is through paid, earned, and owned media channels. This is where people spend their time: searching, exploring, reading, watching, and listening to stories of what might be their next travel adventure. In the past, NWTT has highly prioritized 'travel media', and while this remains a priority, NWTT now approaches the media in a holistic model known as PESO (Paid, Earned, Social, & Owned). Owned media is when content is created and shared with consumers organically on unpaid channels. This includes stories and other pages on the SpectacularNWT website and original content on social media channels.

Earned media is when content about the destination has been created or shared by a third-party site, a travel or news publication, or the public. Earned media often comes from traditional and online media that specialize in reporting on travel and destinations. NWTT builds relationships with travel media through travel media marketplaces organized by Destination Canada, and by matching qualified travel media to products their audiences are interested in following. Any mentions, shares, re-posts, or reviews on social channels would also be considered earned media. Receiving earned media coverage is the most cost-effective way to expand reach and general awareness for a destination.

Travel media plays a crucial role in promoting and selling tourism destinations. NWT Tourism conducts regular Familiarization (FAM) tours, which are an essential factor in obtaining travel media coverage. The media coverage by travel writers, bloggers and broadcast journalists enables a greater reach than most other marketing activities. Consumers trust earned media more than paid advertising. It provides a voice of authenticity with readers because it is genuine, and the destination is not controlling the message. Earned media is where the destination earns the emotional connection that talented writers offer readers. However, the destination often has little to no control over what is said or when it will be published.

Paid media is when NWT Tourism pays for our content or to have content developed to be promoted to a broader audience that we may not have access to organically. For example, paid media would include any advertising or advertorials, as well as any boosted social posts where people are not already exposed to NWT content. The benefit of paid media is that the destination controls the message, the target audience, and for how long it will be promoted. The downside of paid media is that it consistently costs more than earned media and is less trusted by the consumer. (Note: paid media is part of the Direct to Consumer channel)

Each channel works hand in hand and is very important for maximizing media coverage. By combining all three channels and using social media's connectivity, we can amplify reach and destination awareness more effectively. This year, the objective will be to maintain destination awareness through these three media channels and work to retain and build the earned media ad value we have managed to build.



ADAPTED FROM: GINI DIETRICH, SPINSUCKS ©

Shared Media

Social media continues to be an essential tool for destination marketing. Social media is a direct-to-consumer platform and one of the most effective ways to engage, inform, and share firsthand experiences with potential visitors. NWT Tourism works with our Agency of Record to manage domestic social media channels and with our GSA partners on international channels. NWTT must keep its online presence consistent and "on brand" across all platforms. The main objective for all social media channels is to increase brand awareness and engagement and measure click-throughs to shared content.

Travel Trade

Without travel trade, travel virtually stops. The travel ecosystem is an intriguing web of airlines, travel agents, online travel Agents (OTAs), booking agents, wholesale agents, bookable experiences, hotels and much more. The travel trade is mainly the intermediary and liaison organizations between travellers and tourism suppliers. These organizations include tour operators, Regional Tour Operators (RTOs), wholesalers and travel agents. These groups all promote and sell to North American and overseas markets and create an essential link between tourism suppliers and potential customers. Working with the travel trade requires tourism suppliers to contribute commissions. Rates vary and are negotiated from around 10% for direct retail agents in Canada and the USA, to around 20% for longer haul markets like the UK, Australia, Japan and China, and even higher when working with a wholesaler or global receptive. A portion of commissions often go towards the marketing of the destination in the tour operator's distribution systems.

The travel trade has played a vital role in marketing the NWT to key international marketplaces where direct marketing to the consumer is cost-prohibitive and destination awareness is low. As the tourism industry recovers, there will be a need to rebuild and connect with the domestic travel trade. NWTT benefits from working with the travel trade as it has established sales networks and a loyal client base. GSAs act as an extension in their respective markets to ensure awareness is high, and they have developed long-standing relationships with key accounts. NWT Tourism's marketing efforts to countries outside the United States and Canada rely heavily on the travel trade distribution channel.

As part of the overall NWTT travel trade strategy, NWT Tourism will attend key travel trade marketplaces, make sales calls and present product training in person or through webinars. NWT Tourism also provides the travel trade with regular updates on export-ready products in the NWT, host travel trade professionals on familiarization (FAM) tours (both in-person and virtually, where applicable) and establish cooperative marketing partnerships with key trade accounts.

Meetings, Conventions and Incentive Travel (MCIT)

The MCIT channel targets a different type of demographic altogether. This channel is composed of those who broker and organize business and convention travel. NWTT's Conference Bureau manages this channel and works with local businesses in the NWT to gather information to respond to Requests For Proposals (RFPs) on behalf of the region. Marketing efforts focus on attracting mid to small-sized meetings and conferences and on promoting the NWT to incentive groups and companies looking for innovative ways to reward their top clients and employees.

The NWT Conference Bureau customarily attends MCIT shows and events (both remotely and in person), hosts site visits for planners, and helps local partners submit bids and proposals to host meetings, conferences, and events in the NWT. The NWT Conference Bureau builds resiliency in the MCIT markets by continued investment in online digital advertising, coupled with modern visual assets such as virtual tours and virtual experiences.

MCIT plays a crucial role in generating revenues from business travellers to the NWT. The business traveller is the highest value traveller to the NWT, spending more on average per visit than any other visitor, and the growth of "bleisure" travellers is an essential consideration in this channel. They are the most technologically savvy, socially driven, shared economy, savvy and smart travellers in the world today. There is a focus on business travellers to extend their stay pre/post-event. The business traveller group includes government workers, executives, doctors, nurses, and other MCIT and event-related groups.

Marketing Strategies and Tactics

NWT Tourism uses data and research insights to determine the right core strategies and associated tactics. By identifying channels where we can target primary, secondary, and emerging geographic markets, we take a 'full-funnel approach.' Customer segments are identified, and with the NWT Tourism sector in mind, marketing activity is undertaken that aims to bring potential visitors into the digital marketing funnel. As we bring consumers through the phases of 'awareness' and then 'engage' them, we strive to build a 'desire' to travel to the NWT. Eventually, we offer a Call-To-Action (CTA) that encourages the user to 'evaluate' a trip to the NWT and, ideally, begin a conversation with NWT Tourism members.

Integrated Marketing

The aim is to combine the strategic components in an integrated marketing approach. Content is developed 'on-brand' with audiences in mind, and the best experiences and attractions are marketed to this audience directly or where they engage with media. While markets and channels vary, tactics employed will be integrated across all channels and markets wherever possible. NWT Tourism ensures there is consistent messaging and branding throughout our marketing and that content and collateral are being shared widely and re-purposed to amplify marketing efforts. This ensures the best Return On Investment (ROI) for our budget.

Marketing activities focus on six strategic areas:

- Brand Ambassadorship and the continual upholding and enhancement of the Spectacular NWT brand.
- "Always-On" marketing strategy to meet people where they are searching, reading or scrolling.
- Content marketing to share the spectacular and tell stories that engage audiences.
- Leading with our best experiences and unique NWT attractions.
- Working together with partners for maximum impact and shared success.
- Data-driven marketing and results-driven decision-making.



THE MARKETING FUNNEL

THE MARKETING FUNNEL HAS TWO DOMAINS: THE MARKETING DOMAIN AND THE DESTINATION DOMAIN.

The marketing portion focuses on four areas: Awareness, Engagement, Desire and Evaluation.

AWARENESS

The Awareness portion is about the destination and brand awareness. This is 'Always On' in a digital world with digital advertising, paid advertising, paid social media, organic search and SEO, paid search, and SEM and social media marketing.

ENGAGEMENT

On dream list: Consumers are connected to earned or paid media; they have engaged with the NWTT website, or they may be communicating with NWTT social media or a member directly.

DESIRE

On consideration list: There may be itinerary planning, wish lists, or early contact with the NWTT call centre or online travel agents.

EVALUATION

Decision Time: Consumers will have engaged with NWTT content, there may be items in digital shopping carts after a jump-off to member sites, quotes for creating vacation plans or flights may be booked.

The other four key areas rely, for the most part, upon the destination to perform. These are the Conversion, Experience (Travel), Advocacy and Expansion areas of the customer journey.

CONVERSION

Transaction: Spending activity, bookings, deposits, detailed itinerary planning, selecting dates, and interactions with suppliers.

EXPERIENCE

Travel: Journey to and within the destination, customer experience

ADVOCACY

Value Add: Get to know the customers, add to the trip, buy a meal, positive flow-on effect from tourism.

EXPANSION

Word of mouth is the most powerful marketing tool: positive experiences build brand ambassadors for the destination.

1. Brand: Enhancing and Upholding the Spectacular Brand to Maximize **Destination Awareness**

Our brand is what we want our audience to picture when they think of the Northwest Territories. As such, it is critically important that brand messaging is consistent across all initiatives, campaigns, activities, and products. The Spectacular NWT brand will traverse and integrate with every other strategy. It will resonate in our content and be ubiquitous in our digital presence. It will anchor product marketing and be the driver of our partnerships. In support of this, NWTT updates its brand visual assets every year.

Our Brand Promise

The Northwest Territories offers discovery - a wonderfully child-like type of discovery. We offer the thrill of a first-time experience, the surprise of discovering something new, the reward of trying something you have never done before. In short, Spectacular NWT is simplicity, surprise, and awe.

The Northwest Territories destination brand is what we want potential visitors to see as their "mind movie" when they think of the Northwest Territories. Through our marketing, the Spectacular brand provides a compelling reason for customers to select our destination for their travels.

We will continue to strengthen our brand and use it to maintain destination awareness, positioning the NWT as a place full of spectacular experiences, untouched wonder, and the ultimate destination for the traveller seeking the story of a lifetime.

We will continue to build on the promise that a visit to the Northwest Territories is a life-changing and transformative experience. Not only is the NWT Spectacular - but something here will change you.

Photo and Video Assets:

Photos and video are a huge part of destination marketing. Consumers are drawn to visual content when it comes to booking their next adventure. Luckily for the NWT, there is no shortage of beautiful, inspiring visual content in the territory. NWT Tourism's inventory of content is full of an assortment of high-quality visuals from all five regions.

NWTT continues to increase the budget in these areas to allow for increased asset acquisition. This will fill the gaps in the content library and continue to provide fresh and exciting NWT content. International photographers, videographers and visiting travel media can also provide content. Additionally, by monitoring #SpectacularNWT for User Generated Content (UGC), NWTT tracks shares of Spectacular content. It continues to be invested in NWT-based content creators and works hard on developing long-term relationships with the Northern photo and video community.

NWTT aims to purchase a range of images representing all NWT regions and communities and the diverse landscapes, activities, and cultures. When acquiring photos and videos, it is essential to show genuine, true-to-life visuals that evoke emotional responses. Visuals include experiences, locations, and details of real Northwest Territories adventures and the authentic cultural experience available to visitors. It is essential for images to be bright, warm, and awe-inspiring.

The visuals NWT Tourism pursues go beyond just capturing a great image or video – they also tell a story, educate, and inspire. The content NWT Tourism acquires and creates captures the viewers, making them wish that they were here. Spectacular brand content tells a story and conveys emotion, as well as a sense of uniqueness belonging to this place. Photography that often performs best includes images captured in the first person, with a focus on an individual who is inframe, and a spectacular landscape in the background.

Digital: Always On

Every trip today begins online. Whether it be through inspiring Instagram photos that ignite the mind movie, or by watching, reading, or looking up itineraries, the internet is the central starting point for trip planning. Therefore, digital marketing intersects all of NWTT's marketing strategies.

NWTT's digital marketing strategy uses various tools and tactics, including Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM). It also uses programmatic media buying, retargeting, and paid ads on social media. The digital strategy also includes monitoring trends in all channels, ensuring that NWTT is on top of emerging trends and their place in the digital space. For example, during impact response marketing, NWTT worked with partners to adjust messaging and remove display advertising away from news sites and other areas that put our destination at risk of being seen alongside negative news. With constant monitoring, NWT Tourism shifted programmatic advertising to a strategic list of content providers and specific audiences with excellent results which continue to validate the strategy.

NWTT has an opportunity to engage the digitally connected traveller and enable them to easily find the information they are seeking in order to choose the NWT as their destination. The NWT must be present digitally at each stage in the consumer's path to purchase - from awareness through dreaming - to engaging the user

through their preferred content, thereby creating the desire to consider visiting the NWT. Digital marketing enables people to imagine their vacations and get excited about itinerary planning. It aims to develop a feeling of urgency to finalize travel arrangements and book the trip to come and experience the NWT.

In 2024/25, NWTT will continue to transform marketing online for improved reach and effectiveness. NWTT will consider digital evolutions and extensions of existing tools such as the Spectacular Guide, email distribution and how we tell our stories by employing more video storytelling. In 2023, NWT Tourism focused on improving the user journey through content, connecting the user further down the marketing funnel. The user journey will continue to be developed with constant improvements to 'landing' pages on the website, quickly engaging users in the content they are looking for.

Calls to Action (CTAs)

Although Calls to Action (CTAs) are used in almost all marketing in some way, calling for action and the use of CTAs was affected by the pandemic. It was not always appropriate to ask consumers to 'book now.' Therefore, NWTT had a shift toward creative language to connect with consumers through CTAs that offer more engagement and direction. "Go Paddling, Reel in a Giant, See the Sky, and Experience the Culture" are some examples of revised CTAs. This tactic was adopted and now CTA's are softer higher up the funnel and stronger (book now) lower down the funnel.



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Social Media Strategy

The primary tactical approaches employed for social media are creating new organic content, repurposing owned content and sharing UGC. Social media activity increases engagement with NWTT's following by liking, commenting, and sharing content, and by interacting with followers every day on all social media channels.

NWT Tourism will continue to embrace social media in everything we do, by focusing on what makes the NWT unique and by encouraging engagement. Being alive in the digital space not only builds awareness and helps consumers along the path to purchase, it also provides valuable tools for NWTT. Here we collect research and gather 'first-party data' that will help better target marketing efforts in real-time and create content that continues to resonate with target consumers. We aim to have an engaged conversation with followers, including residents and both past and potential visitors to the NWT.

Leveraging UGC with these users has been an effective way to promote the destination authentically. NWTT operates a UGC monitoring platform that helps NWT Tourism track user-generated images and content on social media platforms using hashtags (#SpectacularNWT and others). This platform also allows us to ask user permission to share their photos through Spectacular NWT social media channels. Furthermore, closely monitoring social content allows NWTT to monitor member and professional photographer content. NWTT will purchase images from photographers in accordance with Spectacular brand needs and with a priority to members of the NWT Professional Media Association. Photographers are encouraged to use #SpectacularNWT and reach out directly to NWTT for the list of required assets.

3. Content Marketing: Spectacular Stories

Telling Stories That Engage. Stories are written into the brand and featured in the logo for a purpose - content marketing. Using storytelling and content in destination marketing is an excellent strategy for multiple reasons. Not only is it a way to grow awareness and engage with audiences, but it delivers value by answering the audience's questions, educating them on the destination, and bringing them further down the funnel toward a conversion. Through content marketing, NWTT can build trust with the audience, add value, and emotionally connect with potential visitors to generate jump-offs and leads for NWT tourism suppliers.

The tourism marketplace is always evolving, and consumers are continually demanding a stream of new content that fulfills their immediate needs. This includes engaging videos and storytelling, third-party testimony, as well as social evidence of the experiences that destinations offer. By having a likable array of content, NWTT reaches various segments of its audience through their preferred medium. It also offers additional content opportunities on social platforms that can drive click-throughs to the Spectacular NWT.com website. By continuing to serve up relevant content, NWTT can increase audience retention. Developments to the website have included a points-based algorithm that positions similar content on story pages to keep users engaged until they act. Tools used to share UGC provide highly authentic content and encourage engagement. To this end, content that shows up at the right place and the right time for the right audience will improve the NWT connection to potential visitors.

Brand recall and retention will happen when spectacular content provides value, along with the unique and identifiable voice, style, and delivery of the Spectacular brand. NWTT is working to build trust and relationships with our audience by applying this strategy across all distribution channels. This highlights why great content is a vital asset for customer relations. It is the ticket to capturing audience attention and continually reinforcing a positive brand impression. Well-delivered content marketing can create a positive experience for potential visitors and give them the information they need to make educated decisions. NWTT premium content can compel people to come back for more and eventually experience the spectacular NWT for themselves.

Results-based Content Development

Knowing what content audiences are seeking online is key to ensuring NWTT information, stories and videos are resonating with audiences and pushing them further down the conversion funnel. Content based on trends and industry insights leads to conversions in areas where opportunities lie. A strategic approach, starting with fact-based content development and keeping search engines in mind, is how all of the content is developed. We amplify content that performs well against the metrics used to assess content performance. Stronger performing content gets pushed to the target audiences. If there is a topic of content that the marketing team wants to feature or emphasize, the content team develops this content with key findings from the tools used to measure content performance. The recent upgrade and launch of the Aurora web page, 'World's Best Aurora,' is an example of responding to consumers' search and content needs. This page proved successful with comprehensive text, image and video content curated to provide more traffic. There was more traffic during the launch month than all the traffic combined in the year prior. This tactic is employed for future landing page developments with similar results expected.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is essential for tourism marketing. SEO involves tactics that increase the visibility of a website or web page in a search engine's (i.e. Google or Bing) organic results. Activities to drive more search traffic to the SpectacularNWT.com website include: creating premium, long-form content; building a website structure that is search-engine friendly; including metadata for all webpages; and including alternative tags for all images and videos on the website.

Some specific tactics that NWT Tourism uses on the website include the following:

- Ensuring that searchable keywords appear on all pages.
- Ensuring that the keyword for search is included in the title of all stories.
- Updating the site infrastructure so that it conforms to industry standards.



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- Refreshing content and adding new images and videos whenever possible.
- Ensuring that descriptions, image captions and alternative text for images appear.

Search Engine Optimization tactics are continually changing as Google and other search engines change their algorithms for determining which web pages are delivered first in a search. For example, right now organic search results that rank on page one of Google contain an average of 1,890 words, which gives excellent support to our premium story content strategy for the website.

Experiences: Lead with our Best

4.

NWT Tourism will always lead with our best. The inmarket materials will highlight the best attractions and experiences available to visitors. We will show the world our cultures, wildlife, parks, unique landscapes, and spectacular natural environment. We aim to help visitors connect to culture while, in line with our strategy, highlighting all regions of the NWT. We will lead with our best marketing and trade-ready products from all five regions of the NWT. Our marketing is researchbased and consumer-driven-content. We optimize marketing efforts based on what consumers want and where that demand aligns with products offered in the NWT. Demand drives a destination's ability to highlight other lesser-known attractions and regions. Research into consumer demand online helps identify areas of focus. Leading with our best means directing a strong focus on areas such as: Aurora, Indigenous experiences, paddling, wildlife viewing, or simply some of the world's best fishing.



Worlds Best Aurora

The NWT has built a reputation as one of the best destinations in the world for Aurora viewing. With a rise in consumer demand there is also increase in competition both from within Canada and internationally. In addition to reaffirming that the Aurora is scientifically proven to be 'the best in the world' with the highest possible chance of seeing the Northern Lights, we will ensure messages reach target audiences and that SpectacularNWT.com is top of website searches for both Aurora and Northern Lights keyword terms. The NWT has the world's best Aurora viewing opportunities, and the goal is to spread this message.

Indigenous Experiences

Research confirms that Indigenous experiences are on the travel list for global audiences, and there is a growth in demand. Indigenous tourism experiences can help to create sustainable and meaningful employment for Indigenous communities, and provide opportunities for elders to pass down culture, history, and traditions to youth. There is an increased desire domestically and globally to travel with purpose. This includes learning more about different cultures and being immersed in local communities. It also means being conscious of contributing to the well-being of a place. The pandemic has enhanced the desire to connect in meaningful ways with places visited and foster a local regenerative economy. In an era of more conscious and responsible travel, Canadian tourism organizations have a oncein-a-generation opportunity to take actions that are meaningful to Indigenous communities, their tourism businesses, and the visitors who could engage with them. NWT Tourism is focused on marketing tourism experiences with Indigenous operators and communities while supporting Indigenous tourism by Indigenous people rather than about Indigenous people.

Paddling Experiences

Paddling in the NWT is a unique experience as our rivers and lakes offer once-in-a-lifetime trips for both novice and expert paddlers. Marketing showcases the diversity of our waterways. From the Nahanni to the Barrenlands, from the mountains to the Mackenzie, the rivers in the NWT are truly spectacular. The waterways are a key feature of what makes the NWT spectacular.

Wildlife and Diverse Fish Species

For many travellers, capturing an image of a unique animal that can only be seen in a certain place is the most valuable souvenir they can bring back from a trip. The diverse wildlife and fish species in the NWT are key attractors. NWT Tourism promotes the diversity of wildlife and the amazing opportunities to see them in the wild. We promote the diversity of fish species and, through marketing, share unique stories about them and what we believe – that the best fishing is up here.

5. Partnership: Working Together for Maximum Impact

Strategic partnerships provide the opportunity to leverage messaging and resources synergistically. We will continue to seek out alignment between NWT Tourism objectives and potential project funding sources from partners such as CanNor, TIAC, ITAC and Destination Canada.

We will pursue co-marketing opportunities: innovative partnerships with non-traditional, non-competitor partners with complementary goals and similar audiences, such as the film commission, hotels, airlines, sporting goods manufacturers, and others. Co-marketing is a partnership between two or more organizations where both organizations participate in a marketing opportunity, split the costs, and share the benefits.

We will add value for NWTT members by offering co-op marketing opportunities that make marketing more affordable for both NWTT and its members. This can include reduced fees to participate in trade shows or advertising, for example.

6. Research: Strengthen How Research and Results Drive Decision-making

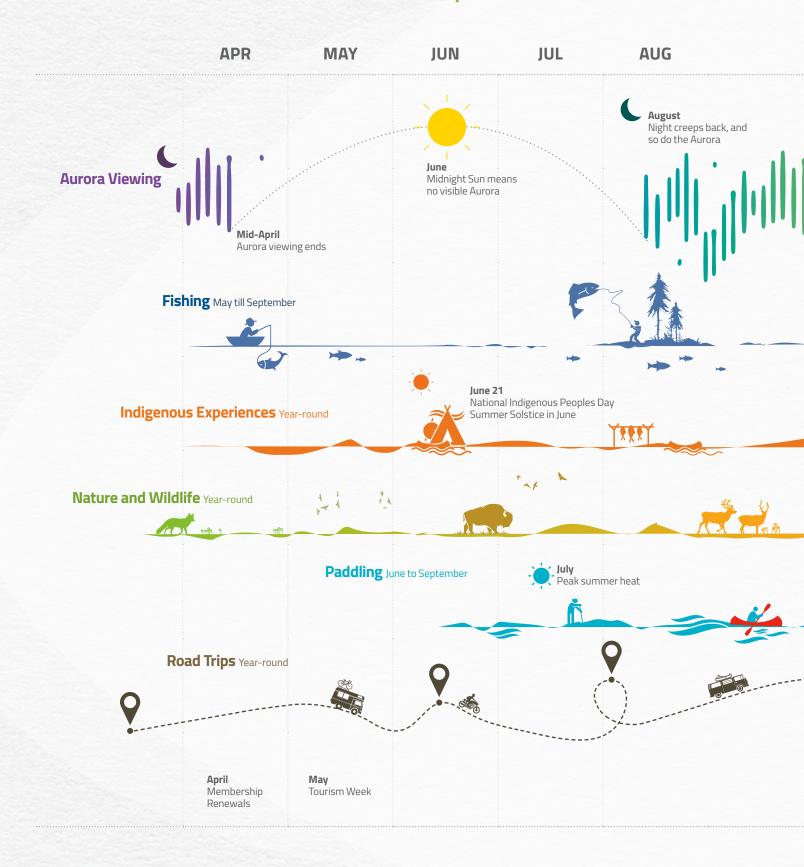
Marketing strategy relies on timely research which is planned, implemented, reviewed, and interpreted with key partners to underpin marketing success. This guides marketing messaging, timing, and tactics.

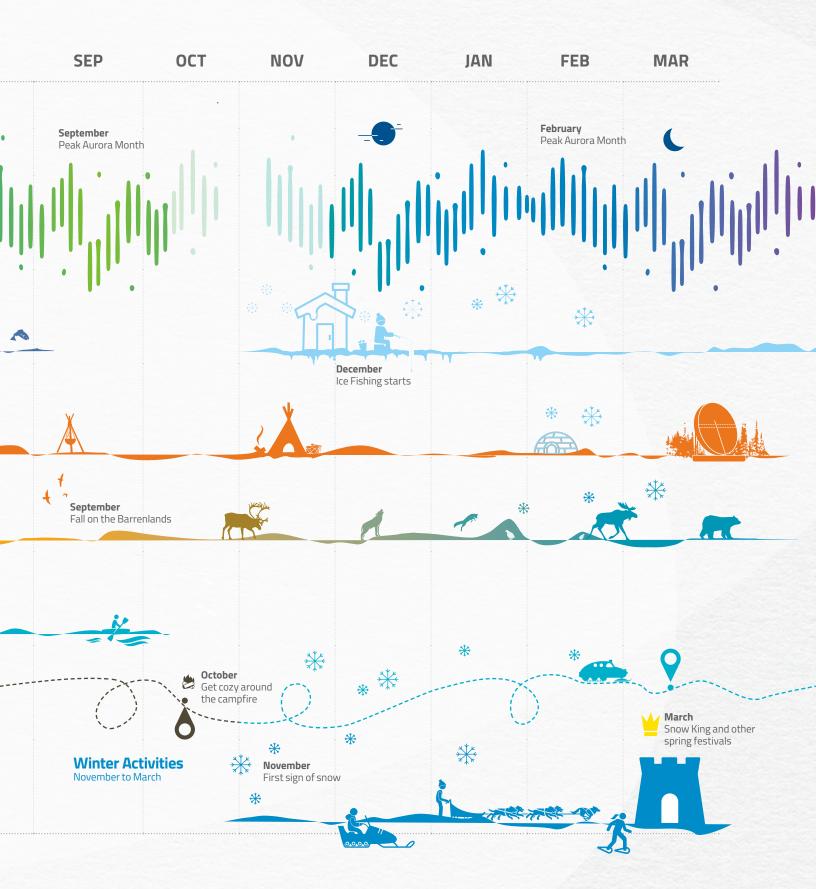
Marketing without research is guesswork and holds less potential to meet objectives. The pandemic has severely impacted the tourism landscape. New analysis into target demographics and re-establishing market knowledge will be critical. NWTT will continue to work closely with the GNWT to identify research needs and access data in real-time.

As part of the digital strategy, NWTT and its partners will study existing pools of data such as that available through Destination Canada, Google Analytics 4, and other online data sources. There is a continuous and essential need to conduct ongoing visitor profiling and analysis of the consumer journey. This enables predictive content development and marketing activity.



Northwest Territories Tourism Seasonal Activity Calendar





Northwest Territories Tourism Annual Activities by channel

ACTIVITY	CONSUMER	TRAVEL TRADE
GUIDE	Spectacular Guide (English and French)	Spectacular Guide
CONSUMER, TRADE AND MEDIA EVENTS	Toronto Sportsman Show, Toronto OAS, Montreal OAS, Calgary OAS, Vancouver OAS Snow Travel Expo Sydney/Melbourne Co-op opportunities increased	Focus Mexico Showcase Asia Rendez-vous (RVC) Showcase, Australia
ADVERTISING PRINT	Evolve to new formats, multi-channel	Various placements
ADVERTISING DIGITAL	Always on	Various placements
ADVERTISING CO-OP	Member offers with enhanced value proposition	Destination Canada and other partners
MEMBERSHIPS		CITAP, TIAC, ITAC
VISUAL ASSETS	35,000 (+1000) with focus on video	1500 (+100) CANTO
WEB CONTENT	English – weekly Japanese – monthly Chinese – redirect to Weibo German – redirect to domestic site French -TBD	English: Travel Trade website regular updates
SOCIAL MEDIA	Social media activity as per the social media strategy	LinkedIn, Operators, Trade Partners
FAM		Qualified trade partners from each market
NEWSLETTER	English - monthly	Travel Trade – quarterly in each market

MEDIA	MCIT	Legend:
Spectacular Guide	Spectacular Guide	BEAC Business Events Advisory Committee
GoMedia, TMAC International Media Marketplace (IMM)	CME, IMEX, Tête-à-Tête, Destination Direct, CSAE	CITAP Canadian Inbound Tourism Association (Asia Pacific) CSAE Canadian Society of Association Executives
		DC Destination Canada
Various placements	Various placements	FAM Familiarization tour
Various placements	Various placements	ITAC Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada
Destination Canada and other partners		MPI Meeting Planners International
TMAC, Communications Working Group (DC)	CSAE, MPI, BEAC	OAS Outdoor Adventure Show
CANTO/Agiliy PR/Crowdriff	1500 (+200) CANTO	RVC Rendez-Vous Canada RTO
Update media site Repurpose content in stories	Update with strong call to action, venues and hotels	Receptive Tour Operator TMAC Travel Media Association of Canada TIAC Tourism Industry Association of Canada
Influencers' # posts Share media stories	Lever local businesses and organizations	MEE Meetings and Events Expo
Qualified media from each market	FAM for leisure & business to maximize spend	
Share media stories		





FREE SPIRITS

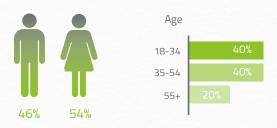
13% OF GLOBAL MARKET

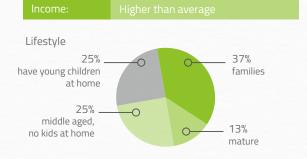
Free Spirits are highly social and open-minded. Their enthusiasm for life extends to their outlook on travel. Experimental and adventurous, they indulge in high-end experiences that are shared with others.

Social Values

Joy of consumption, social mobility, attraction for crowds, confident risk takers, see themselves happy and full of life. They want to show their success to the world

Demographics





Travel Values

Luxury, bragging rights, checklist samplers

CULTURAL EXPLORERS

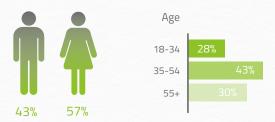
12% OF GLOBAL MARKET

Cultural Explorers are defined by their love of constant travel and continuous opportunities to embrace, discover and immerse themselves in the culture, people and settings of the places they visit. They are open, accepting, non-traditional and enthusiastic.

Social Values

Spontaneity, cultural sampling, adaptable to environment, enjoy trying new experiences, like to feel in control, long for personal escape, enjoy personal challenge

Demographics



Employment:	Full-time employed (lower percentage of retirees)
Education:	Higher then average
Income:	Average



Travel Values

Constant travel (excited about the next trip), living history, culture, beauty of nature, see travel as a journey, going with the flow

AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCERS

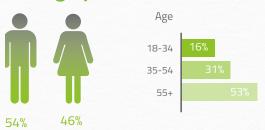
9% OF GLOBAL MARKET

Authentic Experiencers are typically understated travellers looking for authentic, tangible engagement with destinations they seek, with a particular interest in understanding the history of the places they visit. They are steadfast, understated, responsible, interested and rational.

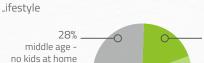
Social Values

Personal control, spontaneity, cultural sampling, the need to feel responsible, skeptical towards advertising, concerned for the environment

Demographics



Employment:	Work full-time - higher percentage of retirees	
Education:	Higher than average	





Travel Values

Living history/culture, comfort and rejuvenation, escape from the daily pressures of life

NO HASSLE TRAVELLER

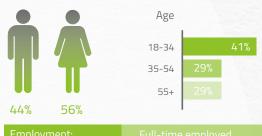
11% OF CANADIAN MARKET 10% OF AUSTRALIAN MARKET

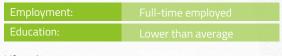
No-Hassle Travellers are extroverted, flashy people who seek secure group travel, allowing them to be pampered in luxurious surroundings while seeing all the main sights of a destination.

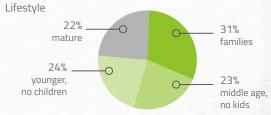
Social Values

Financial security, huge consumers, like to use their purchases to impress others, confidence in advertising, like to keep things simple, believe in big brands

Demographics







Travel Values

Seek comfort, checklist travel, luxury, like to show off their status

SOCIAL SAMPLER

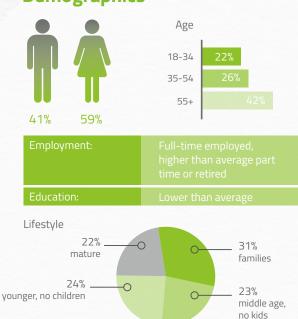
14% OF AUSTRALIAN MARKET

Social Samplers are defined by their affinity for travelling in groups, as well as by the idea that time is limited while travelling, thus they show a preference for focusing on 'must-see' attractions.

Social Values

Living virtually, meaningful moments, savor the pleasures of life, high respect for authority, find it thrilling to try new things

Demographics



Travel Values

Group travel, historical traveller, sampling a variety of experiences, sharing experiences with others, constant travel

PERSONAL HISTORY EXPLORER

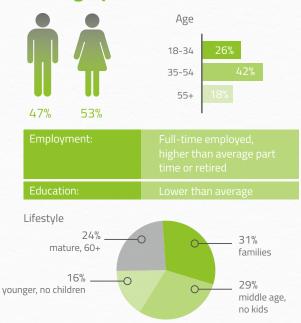
13% OF CANADIAN MARKET 14% JAPANESE MARKET 10% SOUTH KOREAN MARKET

As travellers, Personal History Explorers are primarily defined by their desire to connect to their own cultural roots – and do so by travelling in comfort, style and security.

Social Values

Love to savour life's pleasures, need for status recognition, search for family roots, concern of appearance

Demographics



Travel Values

Discovering their roots, comfort and luxury, security, shared experiences

REJUVENATORS

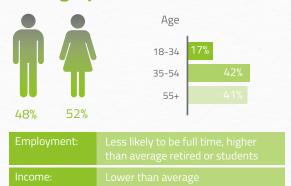
6% OF CANADIAN MARKET

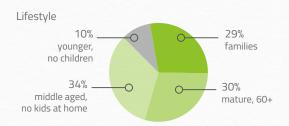
Rejuvenators are family-oriented people who travel with others to escape from the stresses of everyday life to get pampered and indulge themselves.

Social Values

Stand up for their own beliefs, penchant for saving money, yet will buy on impulse, ethical consumerism, meaningful moments, they stick with social conventions

Demographics





Travel Values

Seek comfort, looking for escape, prefer unstructured travel, awestruck by nature, see a vacation as a time to be carefree and indulge

GENTLE EXPLORERS

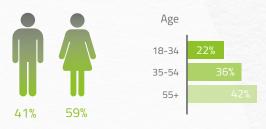
25% OF CANADIAN MARKET

Gentle Explorers are primarily defined by their reluctance to venture far beyond the comfort of home and travel 'on condition,' demanding the very best and most comfortable environments for themselves when they must do so.

Social Values

Living virtually, meaningful moments, savor the pleasures of life, high respect for authority, they find it thrilling to try new things

Demographics



Employment:	Full-time employed, higher than average part-time or retired	
Education:	Average	



Travel Values

Group travel, historical travel, sampling a variety of activities, enjoy sharing experiences with others, constant travel

CULTURAL HISTORY BUFFS

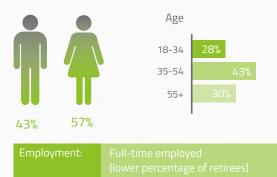
12% FRENCH MARKET 16% JAPANESE MARKET 16% SOUTH KOREAN MARKET

Cultural History Buffs are defined by their focused interest in the history, culture and natural surroundings of the places they visit. They are driven to learn everything about a culture, in the company of other like-minded people.

Social Values

Importance of spontaneity, guided by emotions and will change options easily, approach life with vitality, autonomy and personal control, feel more confident to deal with unexpected changes

Demographics





Travel Values

Nature, historical travel, cultural emersion, group travel, constant travel.

ASPIRING ESCAPISTS

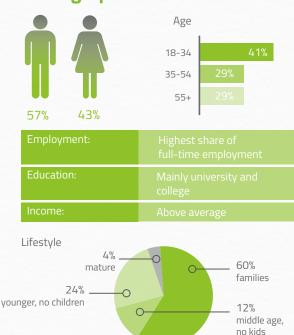
20% CHINESE MARKET

Aspiring Escapists are stressed about life in general and more apprehensive about travelling – but if travel offers sufficient comfort and safety, they may be tempted to leave the comforts of home to escape.

Social Values

Financial security and social mobility, high importance on aesthetics, fashion and brand, time stress and fatalism from busy hectic lifestyles, voluntary simplicity

Demographics



Travel Values

Comfort and luxury, safety, like to show off their travel experiences to their friends, like to briefly try a variety of experiences

APPENDIX B: TARGET SEGMENTS



MEDIA AFFLUENT & MATURE

TOP RADIO PROGRAMS

Programs (Weekly)

News/Talk 31.3% Mainstream Top 40/CHR 19.3% Adult Contemporary 16.9% Classic Hits 14.4% 13.8% Hot Adult Contemporary Multi/Variety/Specialty 12.5% Today's Country 11.5% 11.0% AOR/Mainstream Rock Modern/Alternative Rock 9.1% 7.5%

TOP TV PROGRAMS

Programs (Average Week) 47.3% 37.3% Evening local news 30.7% Primetime serial dramas News/current affairs 29.0% Hockey (when in season) 28.1% Home renovation/decoration shows 26.1% Suspense/crime dramas 26.1% Situation comedies 26.0% 25.5% Documentaries Cooking programs 22.3%

TOP NEWSPAPER SECTIONS

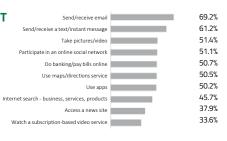
Frequency Read (Occasionally/Frequently) Local & Regional News National News 54.2% International News & World 51.4% Movie & Entertainment 36.1% Health 34.2% Editorials 32.5% Sports 30.7% Business & Financial 29.9% Travel 29.3%

TOP MAGAZINE PUBLICATIONS

CAA Magazine Canadian Living 8.3% Other U.S. magazines 7.9% Other English-Canadian 7.5% Maclean's 5.5% Hello! Canada 5.4% 5.1 Cineplex Magazine National Geographic 5.0% Food & Drink 5.0% 4.5%

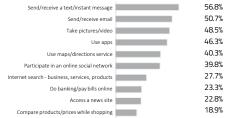
TOP INTERNET ACTIVITIES

Activity (Past Week)



TOP MOBILE **ACTIVITIES**

Activity (Past Week)







NWTT VISITOR PROFILES

NORTHWEST +
TERRITORIES

KEY TOURISM ACTIVITIES

LEGEND Highest group Lowest group

ACTIVITY	AFFLUENT & MATURE	MATURE EXPLORERS	CULTURAL TRAVELLERS	MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES	DIVERSE TRAVELLERS
Adventure sports	11.6%	9.6%	10.8%	11.2%	10.8%
Art galleries, museums & science centres	33.4%	33.8%	34.4%	33.0%	33.2%
ATV & snowmobiling	11.7%	15.6%	12.5%	20.4%	9.0%
Beer, food & wine festivals	11.7%	10.5%	11.3%	9.2%	-
Camping	46.8%	46.5%	46.1%	52.4%	42.3%
Canoeing & kayaking	34.9%	33.4%	34.1%	32.9%	31.7%
Cross country skiing & snowshoeing	20.5%	22.4%	19.2%	21.2%	16.4%
Curling	7.8%	8.7%	7.9%	10.9%	6.4%
Cycling	43.1%	40.1%	41.0%	41.0%	37.2%
Exhibitions, carnivals, fairs & markets	36.6%	40.9%	36.4	39.4%	- 1000
Fishing & hunting	23.9%	28.5%	24.6%	33.1%	20.2%
Hiking & backpacking	38.7%	37.8%	37.3%	36.2%	37.6%
Historical sites	26.8%	26.9%	25.7%	27.0%	25.2%
Motorcycle shows	1.4%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%
Music festivals	8.5%	9.7%	9.0%	9.6%	-
National or provincial park	28.0%	31.5%	28.2%	33.4%	23.7%
Parks & city gardens	36.2%	40.3%	36.5%	38.5%	-
RV shows	2.1%	2.8%	2.0%	3.2%	1.5%
Sportsman & outdoor shows	2.2%	2.7%	2.4%	3.2%	2.1%
Travel shows	1.5%	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	<mark>1.6%</mark>





NWTT VISITOR PROFILES



TARGET GROUPS AFFLUENT & MATURE (MARKET: CANADA EXCLUDING NT, NS, NB, NL)

This group is composed of Canada's wealthiest households, which tend to be older, living in cities or suburbs. They see themselves as having worked hard and enjoy rewarding themselves for their efforts. They value status symbols and gravitate towards opportunities they personally find valuable or distinguishing.

Total Population: 2,609,657
7.4% OF MARKET
(35,352,147)

Total Households: 874,620

6.3% of MARKET (13,955,923)

Household Income: \$203,016 Median Household

Maintainer Age:



TOP GEOGRAPHIC MARKETS

Census	Target Group		Market	
Metropolitan Area	% of Group	% of Market	HH Count	% of Market
Toronto, ON	24.7	9.2	2,330,252	19.6
Vancouver, BC	10.7	9.0	1,033,601	8.7
Calgary, AB	8.7	13.3	565,543	4.8
Ottawa-Gatineau, ON/QC	8.1	12.0	580,720	4.9
Edmonton, AB	5.0	7.9	547,874	4.6
Montréal, QC	4.8	2.3	1,817,206	15.3
Hamilton, ON	4.5	12.4	312,700	2.6
Winnipeg, MB	3.3	8.6	326,742	2.8
London, ON	2.7	10.6	222,421	1.9
Victoria, BC	2.6	12.9	172,186	1.5

52.1% Couples With Kids at Home

63% Married/Common-law







Average



NWTT VISITOR PROFILES





LEGEND

С

Consumer and Call Centre



Media



Travel Trade

MCIT

Meetings, Conventions and Incentive Travel

Business



General Touring



Fishing



Hunting





Visiting Friends and Relatives

APPENDIX C: GEOGRAPHIC MARKETS

Before the pandemic, NWT Tourism's target markets were well-established, and during the pandemic, even with global changes, these markets remained reasonably consistent in terms of their value and viability for the NWT. That said, there have been changes as we look to new flight connections in eastern Canada; the viability of European markets such as the UK means we are exploring projects there to gauge viability and ROI for future investment.

These markets are supported by Destination Canada's investment, which, along with marketing support, also provides data and internal and external research. There is still much uncertainty globally about the long-term effect of travel and tourism within and between countries. We keep up to date on research and other information related to travel trends. As we move forward, we rely on this research to ensure that NWTT focuses on markets with the best opportunity for a high return on investment for the territory.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES



POPULATION: 45,161

AUDIENCE SIZE: 12,780

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$152,592*

The Northwest Territories residents offer a unique value proposition for tourism operators and was added as a primary market during the pandemic. The Northwest Territories has the highest median personal income in Canada; however, we have only a small population of adults to target to engage in a tourism-related activity. The right price point is vital in driving success in this market as we have seen with staycation success going to operators who adjusted their pricing and product to suit the local market. Many residents have moved here from outside of the territory and are eager to partake in activities that would be normal daily activities to long-time residents. There is certainly opportunity for regional tourism business outside of Yellowknife to engage an active, adventurous audience with a high household income who are eager to explore the territory. Regions have a unique opportunity to test products and offerings to a 'gritty' northern audience. This will always help to enable the development of new products that will have success with the first VFR and domestic visitors we see. There is an opportunity to rebuild products with locals in mind, and a plan to scale experience offerings that become feasible with domestic and international audiences.

STRATEGY: A community-based strategy will include local media advertising with print, digital, radio and social media. Where applicable, NWT Tourism will utilize northern specific messaging to encourage NWT residents to explore their backyard. Geo-targeted social media posts have been met with success and will continue to be used to build Spectacular brand ambassadorship and support for the tourism economy from NWT residents.

^{*} NWT BUREAU OF STATISTICS: HTTPS://WWW.STATSNWT.CA/LABOUR-INCOME/INCOME/INDEX.HTML





POPULATION: 37.6 Million

AUDIENCE SIZE IN CANADA: 2.17 million

AVERAGE SPEND PER VISITOR (EXCLUDING AIR): \$380

EQ TRAVEL SEGMENTS: Learners aged 35-64

Like most other Canadian destinations, the NWT traditionally draws most of its visitors from within Canada. Canadian visitors accounted for 60 – 80% of travellers to the NWT in 2019. Domestic marketing efforts of NWTT have focused on increasing general awareness of the Northwest Territories. In 2019, the number of Canadian visitors to the territory was at an all-time high. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on international visitation, NWTT has shifted focus to attract more Canadians to visit the territory through domestic marketing efforts.

Travel from many major cities in Canada to the NWT can be accomplished in a day. While the cost to travel to the NWT can be more expensive than travel to most southern cities, competition between major airlines creates regular seat sales and price competitiveness and the NWT has been lucky to see improved Air Access from new markets such as Toronto.

RECEPTIVE TOUR OPERATORS (RTO):

Jonview, JAC, Entrée Canada, Dominion Tours, Fresh Tracks, Anderson Vacations

TRAVEL TRADE SHOWS:

Rendez-vous Canada 2024 (Edmonton), CITAP Winter Function (Vancouver)

MEDIA TRADE SHOW:

GoMedia Canada (national and international media), TMAC

CONSUMER TRADE SHOWS:

Toronto Outdoor Adventure Show, Toronto Sportsman Show, Calgary Outdoor Adventure Show, Montreal Outdoor Adventure Show, Vancouver Outdoor Adventure Show

MCIT: Canadian Meeting and Events Expo, CSAE, Incentive Canada, Tête à Tête and Destination Direct

STRATEGY: Content approach, guided by editorial calendar focusing on planning/booking cycle. Refresh top content, deeper with more content and fewer publishers. Integrate messaging across all platforms with emphasis on digital/social focus. Expand on digital platforms and create more opportunities for collateral development such as video, search engine marketing. Partnership with Travel Trade and Media Partners along with DC and ITAC for content promotion.





POPULATION: 328.2 Million

AUDIENCE SIZE IN US:

4.75 million

AVERAGE SPEND PER VISITOR (EXCLUDING AIR): \$738*

EQ TRAVEL SEGMENTS:

Learners aged 25-44, Free Spirits 25-44

It comes as no surprise that the US is the top source market for inbound travel to Canada. And while most of this is drive traffic which is reflected by the low average spend the reality for the NWT is the average spend is much higher due to the investment in trips for fishing, paddling and outfitted wilderness experiences. From January to November 2019, US arrivals to Canada by automobile and air averaged a combined year-over-year growth of 7%. Typically, American travellers like to take advantage of long weekends for travel, with 70% of all travel taking place between May and October. Around 11% of potential American travellers to Canada expressed an interest in visiting Canada's North, and one in three US visitors expressed an interest in Indigenous cultural experiences. According to Destination Canada, some of the other top activities that American leisure travellers wanted to experience included local food and drink tasting, nature-based experiences, such as seeing natural attractions, hiking or walking in nature, visiting nature parks, and viewing wildlife.

Destination Canada markets to five states in the US. New York, New Jersey, Florida, Texas and California. NWT marketing efforts align with DC or other DMO partners for example Alberta or BC who are marketing to source airport areas such as Minneapolis or Seattle.

There are high costs to connecting directly to consumers in the US. In the busy marketplace, NWT Tourism's marketing efforts need to focus on direct audience groups, niche markets and select outlets, for sector specific marketing activity. Travel Media provides the most cost effective way to connect with audiences whether with national partners or independently.

Through Destination Canada research, the Northern Lights were identified as a key potential trip driver. Working with Northern DMO partners Yukon and Manitoba a pan-Canadian approach was employed in 2023 to attract US based Aurora visitation to Northern Canada. Led by Destination Canada the Northern Lights partnership Campaign saw out of home in Times Square, digital advertising efforts with a focus on video. The campaign is set to repeat in 2024 providing great visibility of the Northern Lights in the US and highlighting Canada as a place to visit.

NWT Tourism's marketing efforts in the US have increase in 2023 and will continue in 2024 with targeted digital advertising in Airport access supported cities to promote the NWT year round.

MEDIA TRADE SHOW:

International Media Marketplace (IMM)

RECEPTIVE TOUR OPERATORS (RTO):

Jonview, Entrée Canada, Dominion Tours, Fresh Tracks, Anderson Vacations

STRATEGY: Partnership focused with DC, Yukon, Manitoba which includes trade partners, as well as Airlines such as WestJet and OTAs such as Expedia. There is also a large focus on Media Partnerships and working to host US based travel media in all seasons possible.

^{*}Canada wide average





POPULATION: 1.4 billion

AUDIENCE SIZE IN CHINA: 2.04 million

AVERAGE SPEND PER VISITOR (EXCLUDING AIR): \$2,668

EQ TRAVEL SEGMENTS:

Escapists aged 35+ from Tier 1 cities (Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen), Free Spirits 35-44

Demand for Aurora-motivated travel remains strong across Greater China and among Chinese speakers globally. A visit to see the Northern Lights consistently tops the "bucket list" of many ethnically Chinese travellers, including those already living in North America. International marketing efforts in 2024-2025 will focus on areas with strong flight capacity such as Hong Kong, while domestic campaigns will target Chinese speakers in Canada's major cities with special emphasis on promoting the new direct flight from Toronto.

In step with Destination Canada China, NWTT is working on leveraging steady demand in Taiwan and in Hong Kong and Southern China (Guangzhou and Shenzhen) with a series of trade trainings, product update sessions and airline partnerships. Overall, China still presents an enormous opportunity for the NWT tourism market despite ongoing uncertainty around visas, the slow resumption of flights and a diplomatic chill. Pre-pandemic, China was Canada's second-largest long-haul market with a valuable average spend of \$2,668 per visitor. China is projected to be Canada's largest overseas market by total spending in 2030.

In 2024-25, the NWTT marketing program in Greater China integrates trade development, consumer awareness, promotion and social media. NWTT targets High Value Travellers in affluent urban centres who value unique, legendary experiences close to nature. Trade activities with Chinese travel agencies in Canada and China cultivate and deepen relationships with active companies most likely to send travellers to NWT in the future. NWTT will continue engaging partners with Chinese-language materials that showcase local operators and businesses in web, print and digital formats.

Notably, NWTT continues to target the over 1.5 million local Chinese already living in Canada with activations, geo-targeted messaging and non-traditional partnerships. Efforts in Canada will have a focus on building awareness of the new flight from Toronto with boosted video and posts on Facebook customized to Chinese speakers. Local Chinese have a high probability of repeat travel and are more likely to visit lesser-known areas of NWT and in off-peak season. This demographic of local Chinese already comfortable travelling in Canada are more likely to stay longer and express interest in visiting areas outside of Yellowknife. Road and self-drive trips are increasing in popularity among the Chinese, creating new opportunities for the NWT regions and lesser-known products.

TRAVEL TRADE SHOWS:

RVC, DC China and Hong Kong Special Events

CITAP STRATEGY: Sustain consumer awareness of NWT as a travel destination in key Chinese-language markets: Chinese in Canada are first priority, followed by Greater China including an expanded focus on Taiwan and Hong Kong. Increase short-haul travel and product knowledge among local Chinese living in Canada.

STRATEGY: Sustain consumer awareness of NWT as a travel destination in key Chinese-language markets: Chinese in Canada are first priority, followed by Greater China including an expanded focus on Taiwan and Hong Kong. Increase shorthaul travel and product knowledge among local Chinese living in Canada, and engage this audience to stimulate and welcome Chinese travel globally now that borders have reopened.





POPULATION: 126.8 million

AUDIENCE SIZE IN JAPAN: 2.63 million

AVERAGE SPEND PER VISITOR (EXCLUDING AIR): \$2,019

EQ TRAVEL SEGMENTS:

Free Spirits 25-34, Cultural History Buffs 55+

In 2018, 251,240 Japanese travellers visited Canada, spending on average \$1,810. This was down significantly from 2017-a drop of about 15%. The 2019 visitor forecast without the pandemic factored in was down a further 3.5% to approximately 242,000, but numbers were affected by the pandemic.

Post Pandemic many Japanese were reluctant to travel, and restrictions on visiting Japan were in place until September 2022. Many of the previous visitors to the NWT were an older demographic who, when last surveyed, demonstrated a reluctance to resume overseas travel. With this in mind an added focus on Japanese social media has been developed and adding a younger audience to the marketing mix.

According to preliminary figures from the Immigration Service Agency of Japan, the number of Japanese overseas travelers in October 2023 was 937,714. While this represents an increase of +168.3% compared to the same month in the previous year, it is -43.6% compared to the number of travelers in 2019, which was 1.70 million.

Of the identified Japanese target market, 27% indicated they are likely to visit Canada in the coming years, with 14% of those saying they are interested in visiting the North.

Japanese visitors have been travelling to Yellowknife for more than three decades, and the Canadian North is well-known in Japan for its Aurora and natural attractions.

Air access to Canada increased in recent years before the pandemic, with flights from Osaka to Vancouver. This was in addition to direct flights between Tokyo and Calgary. Direct flights between Vancouver and Yellowknife, and Calgary and Yellowknife has made the NWT highly accessible to Japanese travellers. Currently Westjet is flying into Calgary filling the gap left by Air Canada who ceased flights from Japan that did not return post pandemic.

Many of these flight routes have been slow to return and some have ceased altogether. Working in partnership with air carriers, media, and trade partners is very important to the recovery of the Japanese market.

TRAVEL TRADE: Key national trade partners such as HIS and JTB are partnered with DC and other DMOs in-market to maximize efficiency of Media projects, FAM's, as well as sales and training visits or trade missions.

STRATEGY: The show, Focus Japan, is held every second year. It is anticipated that the next Japan event will take place, but no specific dates have been established yet. In years where there is no trade show, we increase sales calls from our GSA to maintain the presence and ensure promotion of the right seasonality at the right time to align with planning and booking timelines. Spectacular NWT aims to drive consumer demand through fresh Japanese language content across multiple channels. NWTT nurtures relationships with travel agents and key trade partners and maintain a general sales agent in market to maintain and establish long-term relationships with travel agencies.

TRAVEL TRADE KEY ACCOUNTS: HIS, JTB, Fellow Travel, Global Youth Bureau, Alpine Tour Service, Maple Fun Tours, Hankyu, Club Tourism, Jalpak, and Mitsukoshi Isetan Nikko Travel.





POPULATION: 51.6 million

AUDIENCE SIZE IN SOUTH KOREA: 3.56 million

AVERAGE SPEND PER VISITOR (EXCLUDING AIR): \$1,751

EQ TRAVEL SEGMENTS:

Free Spirits 25-34, Free Spirits 55+

South Korea's outbound tourism continues to recover. As of end of October 2023, it stands at 75% of 2019 level while for the period of July to October 2023, 91% of 2019 level. South Korean government forecasted international travels from the market will return to pre-pandemic level in early 2024. For Canada, as of end of September 2023, visitation recovery is at 55% of 2019 level while spending is recovering at a faster pace.

GDP growth of South Korea is expected to rebound to 2.3% in 2024. Elevated interest rates and energy prices are weighing on private consumption and investment in the near term. Growth is weak but there are emerging signs of recovery (OECD). According to Destination Canada's Global Tourism Watch, there are about 1.7M immediate potential HVG (High Value Guest, target audience) from South Korea and over 80% of HVG prioritize spend on travels. Personal saving rate of South Korea is one of the top among OCED countries at 33.4% (trading economics, Mar 2023) Canada is perceived very positively among South Korean HVGs. Canada is regarded as a safe place to visit and #1 in Net Promoter Score.

Air capacity between South Korea and Canada has slightly exceeded in 2023 and WestJet's Incheon-Calgary direct flight service to be launched in 2024 will support Korean travellers' trips to Yellowknife. 23% of HVGs are interested in visiting Canada's North and Aurora viewing is the second most popular activity that South Korea HVGs are interested in participating in while in Canada.

Due to strong trend of independent touring to Canada (75% of South Korea HVGs prefer independent touring to Canada to group packages) and airlines' strict policy with group seat block provision, we need to enhance NWT's visibility and storytelling on the platforms where the target audience spend time and money.

Even if viewership and readership of legacy media have decreased due to diversification in device usage, legacy media still maintain prestigious position and especially TV is one of the most powerful channels to set trends in the media landscape. To reach out to our target audience, we need to enhance to work with theme/passion based vertical category publications. Social media influencers have a potent impact on audiences' next travel destination choices, so we need to enhance partnership with them as well.

TRAVEL TRADE SHOWS: Focus Korea

STRATEGY: Position NWT as the top Aurora viewing destination where South Korean HVGs can get connected with unique culture, food and outdoor experiences.

Partnership with Destination Canada; Enhance partnership with airlines – WestJet, Korean Air, Air Canada; Partnership with key tour operators – Aurora (Pharos, Chalet Travel, Kyowon, Very Good Tour) / Honeymoon (Honeymoon resort); Enhance partnership with TV, vertical category media and social media influencers.

TRAVEL TRADE KEY ACCOUNTS:

Pharos Travel, Hana Tour, Mode Tour, Prime Travel

GERMAN-SPEAKING EUROPE (GERMANY / AUSTRIA / SWITZERI AND)



POPULATION:

83.2 million Germany,8.95 million Austria,8.7 million Switzerland100.85 million

AUDIENCE SIZE IN GERMANY: 5.69 million

EO TRAVEL SEGMENTS:

Learners aged 25-34, Free Spirits 45-64

According to Destination Canada research, Canada ranks second, behind the United States and equally with Thailand, as top-of-mind country they would like to visit for long haul travel by Germans. In 2019, approximately 412,000 Germans visited Canada – in 2023 Germany has reached 63% proportion of 2019 levels. The market is expected to fully recover in 2024 / 2025. German travellers spend, on average, \$1,720 when they visit Canada which is more than any other European market. Germany remains the world's third largest outbound market in terms of tourism expenditures. Both interest and actual travel to Canada are highest among German leisure travellers between May and October – July and August are the most popular months. Of potential German travellers to Canada, a significant 16% indicated they are likely to visit the North. Use of travel agents/tour operators for either planning or booking purposes was up significantly after the pandemic – 76% intend to use a travel agent or tour operator for their booking.

Top experiences German leisure travellers desire while on holiday include sampling local food and drink, summer and fall outdoor experiences, exploring Indigenous culture, city tours, and exploring places other tourists won't visit, which is a great fit for the Northwest Territories. Natural attractions, visiting nature parks, wildlife viewing, and hiking/walking are the top trip anchor activities for German travellers. Northern Lights are also a big draw with 42% being interested in seeing them.

The majority of German leisure travellers on their most recent trip to Canada (60%) did not travel in an organized group travel package.

Germans are a good fit for travel to Canada as they typically have five to six weeks of annual vacation and are avid travellers. They also prefer natural areas to cities. Most Germans speak enough English that they do not require the use of an interpreter while travelling. Germans tend to plan trips well in advance, often four months or more prior to booking.

Air access from Germany to Canada has been excellent.

A new direct Condor flight to Edmonton has been added, however there will be no more direct air access to the Yukon from Germany for 2024 and 2025 due to a major runway construction. The Toronto – Yellowknife connection offers new itinerary combinations to the German market.

STRATEGY: Similar to the North American strategy, focus will be on increasing digital delivery of destination information. We will drive consumer interest through social media accounts while redirecting website traffic. We will maintain relationships with media, travel trade, and our general sales agent in market. Germany continues to show positive growth to the Western Arctic region. NWTT will align its tactics with the Yukon to further promote road traffic to the Western Arctic, and the South Slave/Dehcho regions for road trip options to Nahanni and Wood Buffalo National Parks.

TRAVEL TRADE KEY ACCOUNTS: Canusa Touristik, SK Touristik, CRD, Travel House/Hotel Plan (CH)







POPULATION: 126 million

AUDIENCE SIZE IN MEXICO:

227,500

AVERAGE SPEND PER VISITOR (EXCLUDING AIR): \$1,792

EQ TRAVEL SEGMENTS:

Authentic Experiencers 18-34, Free Spirits 35-54

In 2022 Mexico, France and the UK recorded the strongest recovery toward 2019 arrivals. In 2022, 347K Mexicans travelled to Canada, this is 71% compared to 2019. In 2023, this growth trend continued. With the short lead in times on bookings, the Mexican Market has been a well-suited first mover in the recovery of tourism in the NWT.

Destination Canada suggests that when guests from Mexico seek new places to travel, they look for unique destinations that stand out for their natural beauty, history and food. Canada is on a competitive list of places they want to travel to and has the highest Net Promoter Score (NPS) rating from those who have already visited. Mexican High-Value Guests want to travel during winter, mainly for skiing, but also for Northern Lights viewing and snow experiences. Starting in 2023, Destination Canada in Mexico is working towards the objective to promote winter travel and position Canada's winter activities beyond skiing.

Currently, Mexicans prefer to visit Canada in the summer. However, the Northern Lights are the top trip anchor for which travellers between 18-54 would be willing to book a trip. Of potential Mexican visitors to Canada, 18% indicated that they are likely to visit the North, and 55% out of them would travel to see the Aurora. Mexican travellers generally book their travel to Canada one month in advance; however, more experienced travellers can book with more time (up to 4 moths).

TRAVEL TRADE SHOWS:

Focus Canada Mexico 2024

Rendez-Vous Canada. The participation in this event gives continuity to the relationship with the Mexican trade.

STRATEGY: Mexico is an emerging market for NWT Tourism. We will focus on Mexico media and trade familiarization tours, agent training, and market business-to-business. We will support partnered activities with Alberta (Edmonton and Calgary), Toronto, ON and Vancouver, BC and aim to build reliable itineraries for Mexican guests and grow the understanding of what can drive Mexican travellers to our destination.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Starting on October 30, 2023, Air Canada is flying from Monterrey, NL to Toronto, ON. It increases air capacity from Mexico to Canada and it gives the opportunity to present Toronto as a gateway to all Canada (not just for the East).

2024 will be an electoral year in Mexico. Candidates will be running for the presidency, government of 9 states, among other public positions.

2024 will be an Olympian year; Paris will gain a lot of attention from the audiences. However, Olympics are scheduled for the summer, so most of the imagery and content will be around the experience in this season.





POPULATION: 25.7 million

AUDIENCE SIZE IN AUSTRALIA: 995,500

AVERAGE SPEND PER VISITOR (EXCLUDING AIR): \$2.293

EO TRAVEL SEGMENTS:

Cultural Explorers 25-34, Social Samplers 55+

Australia ranks as a top 20 country across a wide range of indexes, including the economy, international trade, investment, education, and other global indexes. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Australia had completed 28 consecutive years of annual economic growth-one of the few economies in the post-WWII period to achieve this (2018-19, Australian Bureau of Statistics). At year-end 2019, Statistics Canada customs tabulations reported 354,000 overnight arrivals from Australia by air and sea, almost on par with the previous year. Direct air access from Australia to Vancouver sees British Columbia as the most visited province, with itinerary combinations of Western Canada being the most soughtafter packaged vacation.

Aurora viewing and wildlife remain to be the top two reasons Australians want to travel to Canada, combined with rail travel, glacial lakes and Rocky Mountains in summer months, and winter wonderland plus skiing in winter months. Both seasons provide great opportunities for the Northwest Territories to be combined with trips to Western Canada.

The average length of stay for Australian travellers ranges between 18 to 25 days, and Australia continues to be one of the highest international spenders in the market.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on the global economy and Australia was not immune to its effects. This impact was off the back of an extreme bushfire season in late 2019 and early 2020. These combined impacts pushed Australia into its first recession in 30 years. In October 2020, the Australian Federal Government announced plans to inject \$98 billion into jolting Australia's economy.

TRAVEL TRADE SHOWS: Destination Canada's roadshow in Australia, "Corroboree," is set to take place every two years. At the time of writing, this event is not scheduled for 2024, therefore NWTT will focus on both key travel, trade-led trade shows and also considered consumer-facing shows linked with trade, including the Snow Travel Expo, to capitalize on future winter bookings.

STRATEGY: Ensuring future growth via incremental tourism revenue, NWTT will motivate travellers with compelling reasons to visit around the two Aurora seasons. Iconic distinctions of Aurora variations for NWT vs the rest of the world will be highlighted through Indigenous and cultural identities, and unique off-the-grid type experiences that provide a deep emotional resonance with travellers.

WHOLESALE: Adventure World, Momento, Entire Travel Group, Natural Focus Safaris, APT, Ski Max, Travel Associates

DISRUPTORS: Luxury Escapes, Trip A Deal, **Inspiring Vacations**

RETAIL: Helloworld, Flight Centre, MTA Travel, Phil Hoffman

MARKET INSIGHTS:

Australians want iconic, memorable and authentic experiences that they can touch and feel. They are looking to form lifelong memories and take pride in telling their friends that they've done something truly unique. 2.79 million Australian travellers have immediate potential to book a trip to Canada, with 522,000 of those identified as High Value Guests (HVG).

Traditionally, Australian travellers spend more and prioritise travel over other major purchases. This remains true in the post pandemic world, with Australians holding over \$8 billion of travel credits and post-pandemic household savings.

VALUE ALIGNMENT:

Many Australians are seeking out responsible travel options and they consider Canada a socially and environmentally friendly destination. They are drawn to experiences that allow them to connect with people in the communities they visit.

RELIANCE ON TRAVEL AGENTS:

With travel becoming increasingly complex, travel agents will be essential. A large majority of Australians indicate that they will rely on travel expertise to navigate the complexities of post-COVID travel. The Global Tourism Watch indicates 78% of Australians are likely to use a travel agent to book their trip to Canada.

POTENTIAL MARKET:

5,555,000 with 50% definitely/very likely to visit Canada in the next 2 years.

2,794,000 is Canada's immediate potential in the next 2 years

DEMOGRAPHICS AGE:

36% (18-34) 31% (35-54) 33% (55+)

TOP MOTIVATORS:

Safe to visit Outdoor experiences

TRAVEL ACTIVITIES:

Cruise, rail, Rockies, wildlife and Aurora viewing as the biggest bucket list items



Northwest Territories Tourism, Box 610, Yellowknife, NT, Canada, X1A 2N5 Telephone (Local): (867) 873-5007 North America Toll-free: +1 (800) 661-0788 Fax: (867) 873-4059 Email: info@spectacularNWT.com

SPECTACULARNWT.COM