

TRACKING HOLIDAYMAKERS AS THEY PLAN THEIR NEXT TRIP

GfK research helps a global travel group understand the purchasing behavior of holidaymakers and sharpen the effectiveness of its marketing and sales forecasting.

The client

Our client is a leading global travel and leisure group that generates revenues of more than \$10 billion (€8.6 billion) from over 20 million customers each year.

Situation

The rapid growth of the Internet and online travel sites and services has dramatically transformed the client's traditional business. These innovations have radically altered how holidaymakers research, select and pay for their vacations. Conventional methods of predicting consumer behavior are no longer effective. Even consumers are unsure how they will book their holidays in future.

To devise and implement a successful strategy for the future and market effectively in a complex and shifting business environment, the group needed a thorough understanding of the new ways in which consumers are researching and buying their vacations.

Approach

Consumers are unreliable predictors of their own behavior. We, therefore, needed to track the actual behavior of consumers as they researched and selected their holidays. This was accomplished by using our Crossmedia Link solution to measure the effectiveness of a broad range of marketing activities directed at an audience of 15,000 households. This enabled



us to monitor how consumers with different demographic profiles investigated prospective holidays and eventually selected a particular vacation. We also installed special software on all their digital devices to track their online behavior and their use of mobile phones and tablets. This identified how they responded to marketing initiatives delivered across a variety of Internet sites and services. Finally, we gathered information using a questionnaire that explored the influence of traditional marketing media.

Outcome

Our research provided our client with detailed insight into the new purchasing patterns of consumers buying holidays. It analyzed how they research and select their vacations and highlighted the importance of travel websites, online "keyword" searches and travel aggregators that provide consumers with a cost comparison of different leisure products and services.

The travel group used the research to increase the effectiveness of its promotions and marketing so that it could better influence consumers when they were planning their holidays.

Some of the most important findings included:

- While many intended travelers continue to research and book their holidays online, there is an emerging trend that sees them making their bookings offline, such as face-to-face.
- Online travel platforms are playing an increasingly important role, at the expense of traditional travel brands.
- Travelers who book online tend to make their bookings within five weeks of starting their research. Those who book offline take longer – between six and ten weeks, on average.
- Consumers visit a much higher number of websites before making their travel booking than when researching other types of purchases. They start by researching countries, then locations and finally resorts or hotels, and use an average of more than eight websites.
- When conducting search-engine searches, intended travelers tend to use simple search terms – even single keywords. In their searches for other high-value purchases, such as consumer electronics, they are more likely to use multiple words or even sentences.



The travel group used the research to increase the effectiveness of its promotions and marketing so that it could better influence consumers when they were planning their holidays. This increased sales of its products and services. It also improved the accuracy of sales forecasts and enhanced business planning. A particular advantage of the research is that it can be repeated, or implemented in other markets, with a high level of efficiency.

Your contact partner is there for you:

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About GfK

GfK is the trusted source of relevant market and consumer information that enables its clients to make smarter decisions. More than 13,000 market research experts combine their passion with GfK's long-standing data science experience. This allows GfK to deliver vital global insights matched with local market intelligence from more than 100 countries. By using innovative technologies and data sciences, GfK turns big data into smart data, enabling its clients to improve their competitive edge and enrich consumers' experiences and choices.