

# Creating the industry standard source of market intelligence

How ABTO, the Belgian trade body for travel tour operators, has created the go-to industry source of consumer and market insights for business planning.

## Customized intelligence for effective business planning

ABTO is the association of Belgian Travel Organisers. Its members include some of the leading players in the market including TUI, Vacansoleil, MSC cruises, Sunweb Group, Caractere, Club Med, Corendon, Continents Insolites, Costa Croisieres, De vakantie discounter, Interhome, Imagine, Flybru, Lagrange vacances, Ponant, Solmar, Thalassa, Travel World, Transeurope, Tooku, USA travel, and Wings 'n Weels.

To support this varied group of operators, ABTO chose GfK as their research partner to help them gain an indepth understanding the Belgian traveller, their recent travels, their intentions and their customer journey. The result is two research projects tracking the travel landscape, one following the other. The first is an extensive database of consumer insight

“By working with GfK to produce this comprehensive and up-to-date source of intelligence about the Belgian traveller, we have created our own indispensable business tool. We see this as our ‘crystal ball’ that helps ABTO members plan for the near and distant future, something that is business-critical. With this tool, we understand what holiday plans have been made, and what is being planned. It’s up-to-date too, with data reported both monthly and quarterly, giving us topline and granular information on destination, type of accommodation booked, travel style, budget, touchpoints and demographics. Delivered via an interactive dashboard available 24/7, it has proven to be invaluable for our members who span tour operators, airlines, hotel groups and cruise lines to name but a few.”

**Pierre Fivet, Project Leader, Market Intelligence  
ABTO**

Industry field	Travel
Headquarters	Belgium
Offering	The leading professional association for travel organizers in Belgium
Membership	21 travel organizers, and more than 45 brand names accounting for a turnover of more than 1.5 billion euros and 85% of the market share



covering 43 criteria based on monthly interviews with 850 consumers discussing their travels in the last 12 months. Delivered monthly via an interactive dashboard, insights can be analyzed based on factors including destination, type of accommodation, travel style, budget, marketing touchpoints and demographics.

The second is delivered quarterly and focuses on intended plans for travel. This report can identify emerging changes in traveller behavior and broader macro trends, such as the impact of major events like terrorist attacks or natural disasters on travel plans. Armed with this insight, members can adapt and respond to changing patterns of demand from a solid foundation of evidence. For instance, they can adjust capacity, pricing and promotion as emerging trends and behaviors are spotted in Belgian travellers. A third project focusing on the customer journey is already in the planning phase.

Having access to rich and recent consumer and market intelligence has allowed ABTO members to evaluate the entire customer journey, from lookers to bookers to planners. This insight can be incorporated into business planning and budgeting, marketing campaigns and promotional activity. Most recently, during the pandemic, the trend analysis and forward-looking aspects of the data

### A strong partnership

“We are incredibly proud of the two research resources ABTO has developed with GfK. We are the only country to offer such a detailed and wide-ranging dataset to our members, and we know other markets regard it with envy. Our partnership with GfK has been an important factor realizing this milestone. The team understands our business so can help us get the most from the very valuable intelligence. Throughout our working relationship, and most recently during the pandemic, we’ve appreciated GfK’s flexibility and support, and we’re looking forward to working together as the travel sector recovers.”

**Pierre Fivet, Project Leader, Market Intelligence  
ABTO**

has enabled ABTO members to steer their course through what has been an unprecedented time for an industry hit very hard by lockdowns and travel restrictions.

In addition, the two reports have quickly become the go-to source of travel sector information for the Belgian media. ABTO regularly provides trend and latest data and analysis for print, radio and TV news. In times of uncertainty, having access to a tailor-made source like this is essential to help put dark times into perspective, and to ensure that the media is able to report what is actually happening, rather than on speculation.

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