

GAY TRAVEL OUTSTRIPS THE MAINSTREAM: SURVEY

Travel agents would be well advised to target the gay traveller. That's the conclusion drawn from a survey conducted in the United States last year that showed the segment out-travels the mainstream market by a wide margin.

International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association chief John Tanzella says he feels that the findings also hold true for the Canadian market.

Following are some of the key findings from the 2005 Gay and Lesbian Community Survey conducted by San Francisco-based Community Marketing Inc. (CMI):

!!! Gay and lesbian travelers took an average of six overnight trips in the previous 12 months – including three short (three nights or less) trips, two long (four nights or more) trips and one business trip.

!!! 96 per cent of respondents took at least one short leisure trip in the previous year, compared to 56 per cent of mainstream travelers. One third took five or more short trips.

!!! 87 per cent took at least one long leisure trip and 16 per cent took five or more long trips.

!!! 55 per cent took three or more overnight trips by air in the previous 12 months.

October, September and February were the top vacation months, demonstrating the non-peak seasonal preferences of gays and lesbians.

!!! 51 per cent of respondents had taken a cruise vacation, and 31 per cent had cruised in the previous two years.

!!! 25 per cent had traveled for a pride festival.

!!! The median number of hotel nights in the previous year was 15 and the car rental median was five days.

!!! 36 per cent had visited Canada in the previous year, and 33 per cent had visited Latin America or the Caribbean. Top destinations were Toronto (nine per cent), Puerto Rico (nine per cent), Puerto Vallarta (nine per cent), Montreal (eight per cent), Vancouver (eight per cent), US Virgin Islands (seven per cent) and Cancun (seven per cent).

!!! 29 per cent had visited Europe in the previous year. Top destinations, in order of preference, were Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Holland and Spain.

!!! 98 per cent indicated that a destination's gay-friendly reputation influenced their decision to visit.

!!! 58 per cent said gay-welcoming hotels were very important.

CMI noted, "The survey is not represented as a profile of all gays and lesbians, which is virtually impossible. Essentially, this is a profile of consumers who can be reached through gay marketing initiatives."

For more information, go to www.communitymarketinginc.com.

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