

ADVENTURE TRAVEL

A LIFESTYLE SPECIALIST COURSE



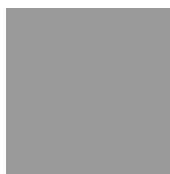


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**LESSON
2**

Adventure Travelers

▶ LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- ✓ Identify both demographic and psychographic characteristics of adventure travelers.
- ✓ Describe the relationship between adventure travelers' attitudes about travel and their travel behaviors.
- ✓ Select the types of adventure travelers that will make the best customers for adventure travel products.

BRAINSTORMING

Please answer these brainstorming questions **before** you read the lesson. At the end of the lesson, review your answers and make changes as needed based on what you learned.

1. How would you describe a typical adventure traveler? Is there such a thing?

2. What do adventure travelers want from their travel experiences?

3. What type of consumer makes the best prospect for adventure travel? Why?

Defining the type of traveler who seeks out adventure travel has come under great scrutiny. There have been several studies and even entire books devoted to trying to profile the adventure traveler in an effort to help those who want to identify these customers and market to them.

In this lesson, we will explore some of the findings from such studies. We will first consider some general demographic and psychographic data about these travelers, and then we will take a closer look at how they travel. Finally, we will identify different types of travelers who make up the active travel market.

TIPS AND TOOLS

To gain further insight into the types of consumers who seek adventure travel, try reading the following books:

- *Rocking the Ages: The Yankelovich Report on Generational Marketing*, by J. Walker Smith and Ann Clurman
- *EVEolution: The Eight Truths of Marketing to Women*, by Faith Popcorn

Demographics and Psychographics

"[There is] a new class of consumers—savvy, value-conscious and eager for a taste of excitement in their travels. . . . [D]eparture from the beaten path may represent the future of global tourism. . . . The new tourists will want different things. The sun-and-surf standard is giving way to adventure travel, ecotourism, cultural tours and sport vacation in ever more far-flung places: China, the Maldives, Botswana, Vanuatu. The new buzzword: authenticity."

—Rana Foroohar, "The Future of Travel,"
Newsweek, July 22, 2002

Much of the research about the trend toward adventure travel points to the fact that there is a new and growing breed of savvy, well-educated, affluent, experience-oriented travelers. The emerging nature of this market poses a challenge in creating a well-defined profile of these travelers, although studies have revealed some interesting demographic and psychographic data.

From a **demographic** perspective (referring to measurable and quantifiable factors about a population), we have learned that more than half of these "new tourists" are women—who are traveling alone or with female friends,

mothers, daughters, or grandchildren. Studies also reveal that the majority of these travelers are between 45 and 60 years old. This includes the large and diverse group of Baby Boomers, many of whom are still working or are in the early years of retirement; they are often young grandparents or have aging parents of their own. Regardless of gender or age, adventure travelers are mostly college educated and hold professional or specialty positions.

The following *psychographic* characteristics (which refer to a population group's attitudes and values) offer clues about their lifestyles at home, which in turn may influence how and where they travel:

- They read and watch shows about history, culture, and wildlife.
- They watch public television and take educational classes and seminars.
- They contribute to and are active in charitable organizations.
- They believe it is important to learn from other cultures.
- They enjoy dining in ethnic and specialty restaurants.
- They attend performing arts events and visit art museums and galleries.
- They are skeptical of large-scale advertising and hype.
- They like to feel special, recognized, and appreciated.
- They don't shop for the cheapest items but appreciate good value.

Years of experience have honed the description of adventure travelers by those who know them best—the adventure travel operators. How do adventure tour operators describe their clients?

- Asia Transpacific Journeys: “Travelers seeking quality, unusual, and off-the-beaten-track sojourns . . . Some seek active adventure, while others desire more relaxed and luxurious journeys, or a combination of the two.”



© Canadian Mountain Holidays/Topher Donahue
Women hiking in the Cariboo Mountains, British Columbia

- **Backroads:** “All abilities and fitness levels. Average age range of 35–65 years old. Diverse, discriminating travelers with a desire to be active and indulged. Families, solo travelers, couples, private groups, campers, and honeymooners.”
- **explora S.A.:** “Urbanites, non-professional explorers of all ages, contemplatives, active and not-so-active adults and children, who enjoy walking and immersing themselves in nature; families who believe vacation is a period of re-creation.”



© Lindblad Expeditions/Stewart Cohen

Cruising on a smaller ship along Baja California, Mexico

- **Lindblad Expeditions:** “Clients are among the mainstream of travelers who are well-educated, [have] higher-than-average income, like unusual destinations, experienced cruisers looking to graduate from the big cruise ship experience to an intimate vessel for individual discovery and adventure.”
- **Butterfield & Robinson:** “45–55 years old, affluent, American professionals. Culturally curious, moderately athletic, and stylish.”
- **Randonnée:** “Average customer age is 48, upscale, college educated and independent-minded.”

- **Uncharted Outposts International:** “People interested in the leading edge of vacation travel that is exotic, adventuresome without danger, educational, experiential, and authentic. They don’t do package tours, fancy resorts, or cruises.”

CHALLENGE

How would you describe your own adventure travel clients? In the columns below, create a profile of your clients by listing some of their demographic and psychographic characteristics. (If you aren’t sure of your clients’ characteristics, identify a method for collecting this type of information.) Then write a brief paragraph that summarizes your target market.