

## Generating Off-Season Business Among Top Concerns for Travel and Tourism Industry

2007-08-29

---

Nearly 50 percent of respondents identified email marketing as their most effective marketing tool

As the summer of 2007 gives way to fall, travel and tourism businesses are turning to email marketing to generate business in the off-season. According to Constant Contact's 2007 Travel and Tourism Outlook, small travel and tourism businesses list their top challenges as: finding new customers (42 percent), generating business in the off-season (27 percent), and filling rooms/seats (13 percent). Of those businesses surveyed, 47 percent identified email marketing as the most effective way to address these challenges and market their businesses. Constant Contact(R), Inc is a leading provider of email marketing and online survey tools for small organizations.

### **Peak Season Relationships Drive Off-Season Bookings**

While 87 percent of survey respondents noted that summer reservations met or exceeded last year's levels, nearly 30 percent said they feel pressure to keep business flowing during the off-season, typically between early fall and late spring.

Peak seasons provide travel and tourism businesses a strong opportunity to build relationships with their customers. These relationships may prove to be valuable during the off-season. In fact, 33 percent of surveyed businesses said that driving repeat visitors is a major benefit of email marketing.

'This year's survey results show that small travel and tourism businesses not only recognize the value of building relationships with customers using tools like email marketing and online surveys, but are adopting them in increasing numbers,' said Eric Groves, SVP of Sales and Business Development, Constant Contact. 'The results highlight the power of email marketing in generating off-season business for the travel industry, and other small businesses will likely see the same positive impact during slow sales periods.'

### **Small Businesses Gain Confidence in Email Marketing**

Travel and tourism businesses promote their companies in a variety of ways including email marketing, direct mail, and online, radio, and print advertising. According to the Constant Contact survey, the majority of respondents noted that email marketing leads to greater results and provides additional benefits versus other marketing methods. Nearly half of survey respondents (46 percent) said reducing the dependency on print marketing is a major benefit of email marketing.

'We've used a variety of marketing techniques to get the word out about our business over the years, including expensive direct mail campaigns and trade shows,' said Bob Schwartz, Assistant Director of Marketing and Sales, Boston Duck Tours. 'Today, we use email marketing to generate business and have seen amazing returns as a result. Constant Contact has helped us get our word out and save money.'

Email marketing also makes it easier to use a wider variety of marketing tools to reach prospects and customers. In fact, 83 percent of survey respondents use email marketing to create and distribute newsletters - an increase of 23 percent over last year. Other types of email communications frequently sent by travel and tourism businesses include promotions (67 percent), event invitations and calendars (56 percent), seasonal offers and last minute specials (43 percent, respectively), as well as several other methods.

As email marketing continues to gain acceptance among consumers, more small businesses are requesting email addresses from customers. Fifty-seven percent of small travel and tourism businesses surveyed say they now have email addresses for at least half or more of their customers.

Sample questions and results from Constant Contact's 2007 Travel & Tourism Outlook survey include the following:

### **What is your greatest business challenge?**

Finding new customers 42%

Keeping business flowing in the off season 27%

Filling rooms/seats 13%

Competing with online travel sites 13%

Getting business from past customers 5%

### **Which method is the most effective for your business?**

Email Marketing 47%

Direct mail 17%

Search Engine Ad 13%

Online Ad 10%

Newspaper Ad 9%

Yellow Page Ad 2%

Radio Ad 2%

**What have been the major benefits of email marketing for your travel and tourism business?**

Reduce Dependency on Print 44%

Repeat Visits from Past Customers 33%

Higher Volume of Visitors 27%

Increased Reservations 18%

Filling Reservations During Off-Season 11%

Increased Ticket Sales 8%

**Please estimate the percentage of your customers for whom you have email addresses**

0% - 10% 10%

11% - 25% 16%

26% - 50% 17%

51% - 75% 24%

76% - 100% 33%

**Which best describes your summer bookings?**

Reservations are higher than last year 44%

Reservations are less than last year 13%

Reservations are at about the same level as last year 43%

[Click here](#) for PDF of full survey results.

\*The 2007 U.S. Small Business Summer Outlook survey was conducted through targeted online distribution to U.S. small businesses who are current customers of Constant Contact, recording results from more than 750 respondents. Respondents came from the following categories: attractions, convention and visitor bureaus, hotel/motel/resort/B&Bs travel agency, tour operator/company, online travel site, and transportation. The survey was conducted from May 8 - May 15, 2007.

This article comes from Hotel News Resource

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com>

The URL for this story is:

<http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article29017.html>

© 1998 - 2007 Nevistas and the author.

Brought to you by Hotel News Resource

*Distribute your news on our Network*

See what all the buzz is about at:

[http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/Info-news\\_account\\_info.html](http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/Info-news_account_info.html)