

Understanding Experience Seekers in the US Market

Tourism Australia's global market segment 'Experience Seekers' was targeted because they:

- Are likely to undertake long haul travel
- Are high yield prospective travellers
- Are likely to disperse beyond the major capital cities and gateways and are,
- Non-rejectors of Australia

Experience Seekers can be found in different age groups, income levels, and regions. They have a mind set and attitude to life that stretches well beyond the category of travel including personal development and everyday life. Experience Seekers also have global commonalities; they:

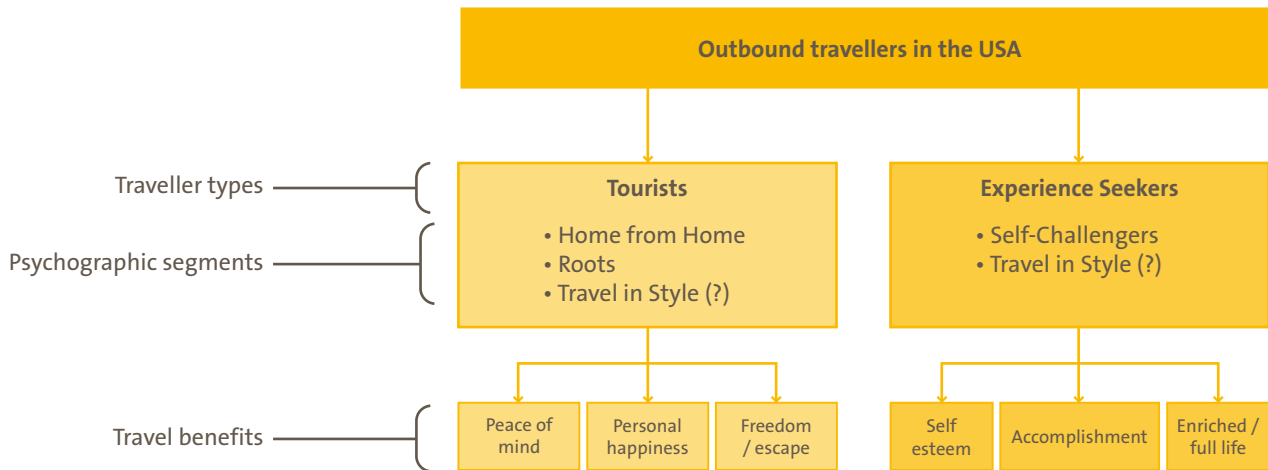
- Are experienced travellers for whom travel plays a big part in life
- Look to challenge themselves, be it physically, emotionally or mentally
- Desire a high level of engagement with the local people and culture
- Wish to experience, not witness destinations
- Like to avoid the tourist route, preferring locations that are untouched

US Experience Seekers

In broad terms, they:

- Are inspired by a range of sources, most notably knowing people who have visited the destination. Experience Seekers are also more likely than other long haul travellers to be inspired by magazines, travel guides, TV travel programmes and documentaries, history books and films. They are less likely to be inspired by travel agents, brochures and advertising;
- Are likely to plan their holiday around visiting historic sites. They are also more likely than other long haul travellers to plan their holidays around events or festivals, native culture, sightseeing, nature and food & wine. Once at the destination they are likely to want to get to know the locals and their culture;
- Are more likely to stay with friends or at bed and breakfasts and are less likely to stay in 4/5 star hotels or on a cruise ship;
- Always read the news, entertainment and travel sections of newspapers, and are unlikely to read the sports, arts or business sections. Local newspapers are very popular;
- Are not avid readers of magazines, however the *AARP Bulletin* and *National Geographic* stand out as the most popular magazines among Experience Seekers;
- Are unlikely to listen to the radio. The most popular genres among those that do include talk, classical, classic rock and adult contemporary;
- Demonstrate selective interest in television. Preferred genres include news and current affairs, drama, documentaries and movies. Channels including The History Channel, PBS and The Discovery Channel were more prevalent among this segment than other groups of the market;
- Use the internet daily for non-work related purposes including news, travel information and information on activities. They are less likely to use the internet for games. Moreover they are more likely to have access to the internet at home (9 out of 10 Experience Seekers). The internet is one of the main sources used by this segment when planning a holiday;
- Are more likely to own Visa and MasterCard credit cards.

The following diagram illustrates the two primary outbound traveller types in the USA, core psychographic segments and key travel benefits sought.



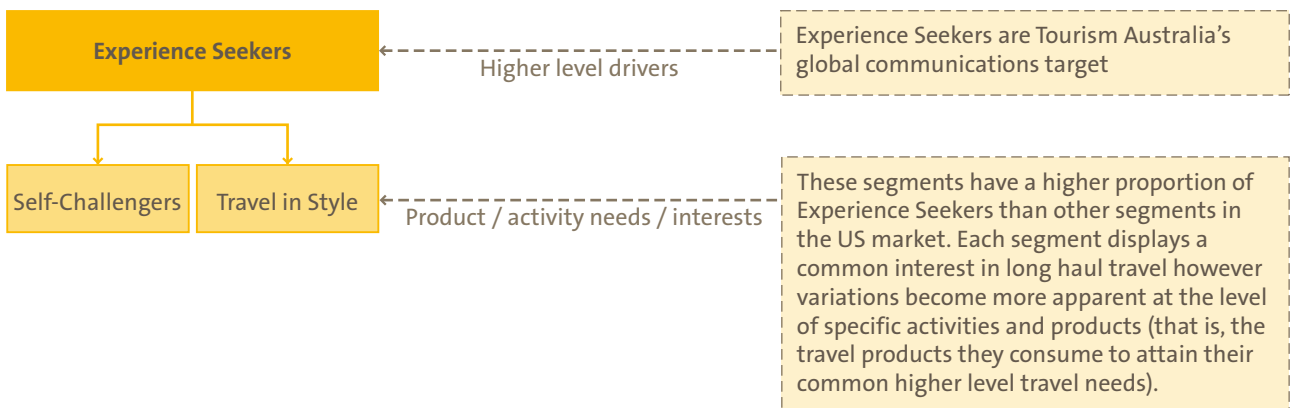
So, how does the Experience Seeker target relate to the four current psychographic holiday segments in the US market (Self-Challengers, Home from Home, Travel in Style and Roots)?

Experience Seekers are our global communications target. They share common interests, drivers, and desires in life and travel. The types of media they listen to and the experiences they are looking for from a long haul holiday are also common to Experience Seekers in all markets.

Experience Seekers are an overarching segment whose values, needs and motivations have relevance and

therefore resonate with more than one travel style, holiday type, etc. It is however recognised that Experience Seekers values, needs and motivations are more common in some particular psychographic holiday segments.

In the case of the USA these holiday segments are Self-Challengers and Travel in Style.



What does this mean?

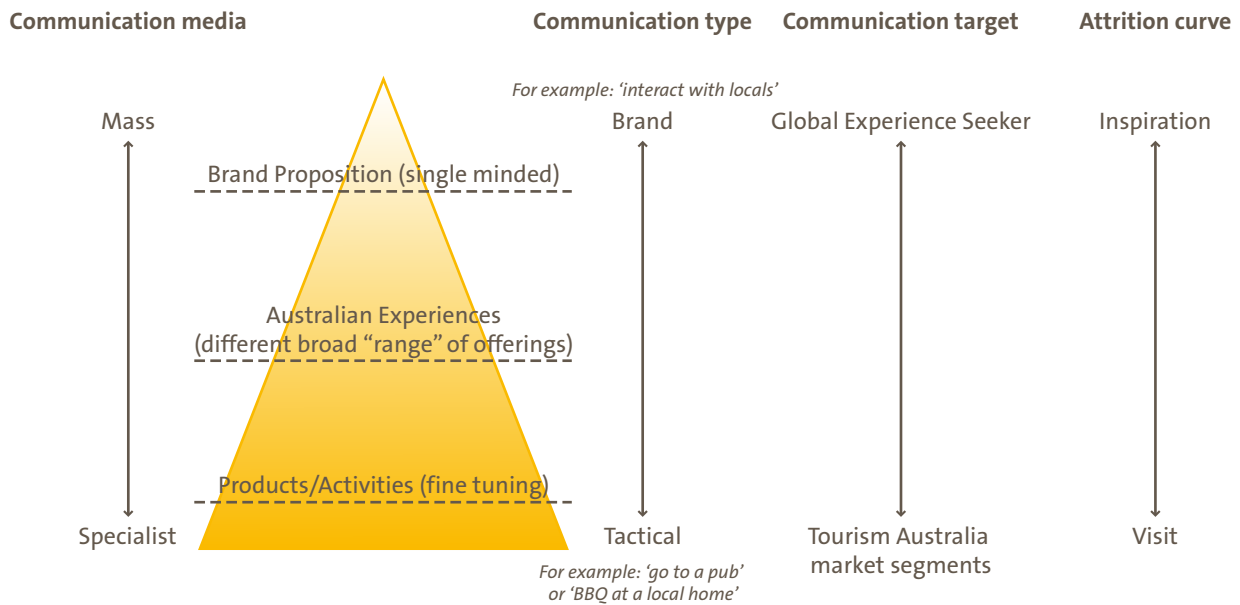
The result of this is that at an over-arching brand communications level, the Experience Seeker is the global target market. However, when communicating information regarding specific products and activities, the opportunity exists to fine tune amongst appropriate holiday segments within the US market.

While Experience Seekers have similar broad drivers for their holidays, the manner in which these can be realised through consuming products or activities can vary among the different holiday segments within each market. Here is an example of what we mean:

A US traveller who prefers a Travel in Style holiday and a traveller who prefers a Self-Challenger type of holiday

would both be motivated by Experience Seeker messages about learning, local lifestyle, interacting with locals, etc. The type of products and activities they would seek out (information search) and eventually participate in (what they do at the destination) can, and does vary. For example, interacting with locals – Travel in Style travellers could obtain this by dining in a pub frequented by visitors and locals. Self-Challengers may obtain this through meeting a local and being invited to their house for a BBQ.

The role of Experience Seekers and the holiday segments in the communications process can be shown diagrammatically as follows:



Further information

This document is one component of a suite of documents Tourism Australia has produced for the US target market.

For a broad snapshot of the US travel market, please refer to:

- *Australia's understanding of the US travel market*

For more information on the US segmentation study, please refer to:

- *The US traveller – segmentation of the US market*

To understand the global communications target market that Tourism Australia is concentrating on, please refer to:

- *Australia's global communications target: the Experience Seeker*

These documents are available on the Tourism Australia website. For any further information you require, please visit the Tourism Australia website at www.tourism.australia.com, or contact your local Tourism Australia office.