A vibrant night scene on a city balcony. In the foreground, a woman with large hoop earrings and a man in a red shirt are smiling and looking at each other. To the right, another man is laughing. The balcony is decorated with warm white string lights. In the background, a city street is visible with a large illuminated star sign and other city lights.

TRAVEL ALBERTA
ULTIMATE TRAVELLER
PLAYBOOK

VERSION 1.0 AUGUST 2022

1 ENGAGING THE HIGH-VALUE VISITOR

- 1.1 FIND YOUR AUDIENCE 4
- 1.2 ULTIMATE TRAVELLERS – AT A GLANCE 5

2 EXPERIENCE GUIDE

- 2.1 ULTIMATE TRAVELLER NEEDS AND POINTS OF MOTIVATION 9
- 2.2 EXPERIENCE IDENTIFICATION QUESTIONS 11
- 2.3 CASE STUDY: NORDEGG ADVENTURES 12

3 STRATEGIES TO CUSTOMIZE CREATIVE

- 3.1 ULTIMATE TRAVELLER AFFINITIES & INTERESTS 15
- 3.2 COPYWRITING GUIDELINES 18
- 3.3 IMAGE GUIDE 19
- 3.4 EXAMPLES OF CUSTOMIZED CREATIVE 21



1

**ENGAGING THE
HIGH VALUE VISITOR**



1.0 ENGAGING THE HIGH VALUE VISITOR

Identifying your target audience allows you to be more efficient in your marketing activities, and develop products that are more likely to appeal to an audience that drives the most revenue to your business.

After comprehensive stakeholder engagement and analysis exercises, Travel Alberta established the Ultimate Traveller (UT) personas. These personas identify future travellers that represent the greatest economic potential. This model supports our strategic pillars from the Bootstrap Plan. To learn more about this focused recovery effort plan, [click here](#).

In 2019, we introduced the Ultimate Traveller segmentation to distinguish between two types of travellers: Curious Adventurers and Hotspot Hunters. By considering each group's motivations, interests, values, and search behaviour, industry partners have been able to target and attract visitors to Alberta in a more cost-effective way.

Since then, Travel Alberta has gained new insights into how Curious Adventurers and Hotspot Hunters think, plan, and behave. This has made it possible to formulate methods for creating and tailoring marketing messages for each segment — a playbook that industry partners can now use for optimal results.

In the pages that follow, you'll find the tools and guidance you need to craft messaging that appeals to both groups.



1.1 FIND YOUR AUDIENCE

Before the Ultimate Traveller (UT) segments existed, Travel Alberta relied on Destination Canada’s Explorer Quotient (EQ) and the PRIZM segmentation system to help craft and target messages for visitors to Alberta. All three tools offer surveys you can complete online, to experience how each tool segments travellers — and evaluate their accuracy based on the results you and your team receive.

PRIZM

Prizm sorts Canadian consumers into 67 segments based on current demographics, lifestyles, and values. Because PRIZM is based on neighbourhood data, it can effectively differentiate between travellers using location-based traits (wealth, age, ethnicity, family composition) — but it’s less able to factor in personal values and interests.

[Click here to explore PRIZM Postal Code Search](#)

EQ

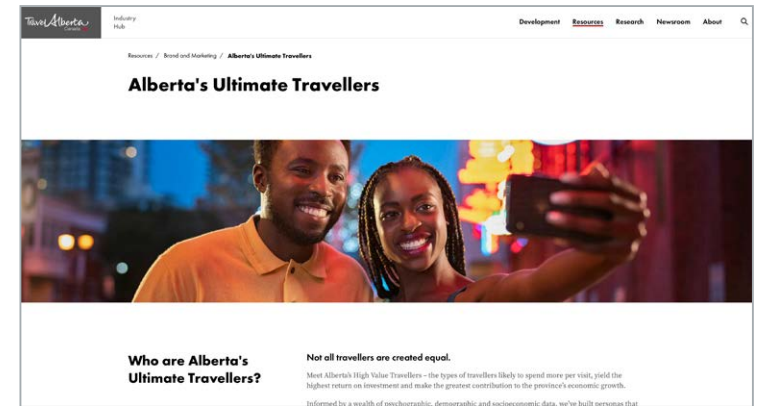
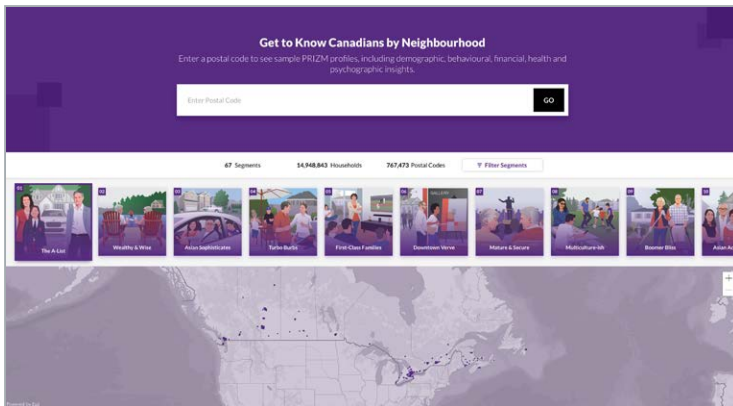
EQ features 11 rich and thoughtful values-differentiated personas, but because it relies on PRIZM to target those personas in the real world, it ultimately has the same limitations. Some DMOs reported that EQ was challenging to connect to revenue and near-impossible to use for targeting.

[Click here to take the EQ Quiz and determine your travel type](#)

UT

UT focuses on intent to travel as a driver of return on investment. It uses big data to provide 1:1 targeting, with no reliance on geography. It offers two values-based personas compared to EQ’s 11, but since Curious Adventurers and Hotspot Hunters are both likely to travel, reaching either segment should yield revenue.

[Click here to access UT Survey and determine which persona suits your business](#)



1.1

FIND YOUR AUDIENCE

This comparison chart illustrates the basics of PRIZM, EQ, and UT. Although all three tools have value, Travel Alberta recommends that industry partners adopt Ultimate Traveller as their main segmentation and targeting tool.

	PRIZM	EXPLORER QUOTIENT	ULTIMATE TRAVELLER
Underlying logic	Similar people live near each other	Travellers enjoy certain types of experiences	Travellers search for experiences in certain ways, with certain goals
Segments	67 Canadian	9 Canadian and 2 International	2
What segments are based on	Geography, age, income, and ethnicity	Desired travel experience survey results	Search behaviour, likelihood to travel, and desired travel experiences
Priority segments	N/A, segments determined via postal codes	Free Spirits and Authentic Experiencers (representing ~1/4 Canadians and ~1/2 Albertans)	Hotspot Hunters and Curious Adventurers (representing ~2/3 Canadians and ~4/5 Albertans) Geographically Agnostic
Strengths	Tracking segment movement (via household cell phones) The range of activities and interests captured Flexibility in rearranging segments	Clear and distinct segments Excellent personification (e.g. prosperous, middle-aged travellers who want to learn about the world) Ease of representing personas in visual advertising	Identification of high-value travellers Ability to position the same experience differently for each segment Ability to offer different search experiences to match the search behaviour of different segments
Weaknesses	Neighbours are often dissimilar Weak connections between segment and activities, interests, or mindset.	Personas can't be effectively targeted, except through PRIZM Difficult to layer together with other targeting dimensions (e.g., specific activities or demographics)	Can't use age or gender to differentiate between segments

1.2 ULTIMATE TRAVELLERS – AT A GLANCE



For Curious Adventurers, travel to get a different perspective on the world. They're energized by exploring new places and inspired to learn all they can about a destination through its landscapes, authentic culture and the people they meet. Spontaneous and open-minded, they are fuelled by a sense of adventure and discovery, knowing that organic moments can provide their best experiences. They are thoughtful planners, investing time before their trip to help forge deeper connections with a place.

[Click here to learn more](#)



For Hotspot Hunters, travel is about achievement and accomplishment. They want to visit the top attractions, take part in one-of-a-kind experiences, and connect with local experts. They're driven to make the most of every minute, to fill their trips with as many stories and memories as possible – and they plan accordingly, leaving little to chance and even deprioritizing sleep.

[Click here to learn more](#)

2

EXPERIENCE GUIDE



2.1 ULTIMATE TRAVELLER NEEDS AND POINTS OF MOTIVATION

CURIOUS ADVENTURERS

NEEDS

Gabriela needs authentic connection



They find cultural significance by immersing themselves in the communities they visit, making genuine connections with people and places.

Xander needs to belong



They seek out deeply enriching experiences through self-guided encounters to better understand their place in the world.

Andrea and Susan need to feel like locals



They curate unique experiences by discovering hidden gems that leave them feeling like they truly know a place.

Sean needs personal enlightenment



They slow down time to explore a destination freely, embrace their independence and stoke their enlightenment.

Greta and Karl need fulfillment



They nurture their personal growth by collecting stories about the people they meet and the places they visit to feel fulfilled.

POINTS OF MOTIVATION

- Discovery
- Exploration
- Personal growth
- Immersion
- Rich experiences
- Open to possibilities
- Planning is a part of the trip
- Constantly grazing for information
- Hearing from locals
- To know a destination, I need to spend time to understand it

“

It comes down to what do we go away for. For me, I want to be culturally stimulated. I want to go away learning something. My mind has to be stimulated.

”

2.1 ULTIMATE TRAVELLER NEEDS AND POINTS OF MOTIVATION

HOTSPOT HUNTERS

NEEDS

Skylar needs accomplishment



They do it all by collaborating with experts to know they have done everything possible in the destinations they visit.

Stephanie needs fulfillment



They embrace their unique lifestyle by collecting and curating stories to live the best life possible.

Lori needs connection by doing



They strive to be the best possible parent by creating trip itineraries that are filled to the brim to build family connections through lasting memories.

Wei needs the best moments ever



They curate the ultimate travel story with a personal narrative that shares experiences that are truly special.

Monique and Fred need value



They leave nothing to chance by researching and meticulously planning to experience everything on their list, ensuring their money and time are well spent.

POINTS OF MOTIVATION

- Achievement
- Completion
- Personal status
- Collecting stories
- Want to be in control
- Planning enables the trip
- Targeted search for information
- Hearing from other travellers/experts
- To know a destination, I need to see it all

“ If you're gonna spend on a trip and you only got so many years in your life, you want to see what you want to see, what you should see, because you may never get back there. ”

2.2 EXPERIENCE IDENTIFICATION QUESTIONS

The same questions we used to segment Hotspot Hunters and Curious Adventurers (see section 1.2) can be used to help you to identify how the elements of experiences you offer will appeal to each group. For fast identification of each group, we've selected a few questions from the full classification tool.

See section 2.4 for a living example of these questions in use.

Having an unplanned day is...

- a) a waste of time
- b) opportunity for something special to happen.

My best travel experiences have been...

- a) well known and iconic
- b) exploring places not seen by most visitors

When I travel, I like to feel a sense of...

- a) accomplishment
- b) discovery

I feel safer if a tour operator has organized my trip.

- a) agree
- b) disagree

I want the best of everything on my trip and I'm willing to pay for it.

- a) agree
- b) disagree

If you answered mostly **A**, you're a Hotspot Hunter.

If you answered mostly **B**, you're a Curious Adventurer.

No person belongs to just one group, on every day of every trip. But most people tend to lean one way or the other. Knowing that is enough to help your visitors have a great experience.

2.3

CASE STUDY: NORDEGG ADVENTURES

ULTIMATE TRAVELLER PROFILING IN ACTION

Nordegg Adventures is an operator designing programming that caters to different audiences. In 2020 they adopted the Ultimate Traveller segmentation as a way to improve their experiences for travellers. After classifying each of their tour guides as either Curious Adventurers or Hotspot Hunters, they began matching the guides with like-minded tour groups.

This matchmaking exercise improved the experience for both the guides and the groups. Guides who intuitively understand what a group wants are much better equipped to tailor a tour. Curious Adventurer guides can share their passion for the flora and fauna the tour passes by, while Hotspot Hunter guides can show off the best sights and photo opportunities.

Matching guides to tour groups also avoided potential problems. Curious Adventurer guides might be inclined to go too slow and explain too much to a Hotspot Hunter group. Hotspot Hunter guides might not give Curious Adventurer groups enough time to savour an experience.

Nordegg Adventures used the Hotspot Hunter and Curious Adventurer videos as part of their training program, which helped guides understand different types of travellers.

They also began offering two versions of a popular tour: one tailored to each segment. Both tours cost the same price and followed the same route, but the tour for Curious Adventurers ran an hour longer. Both the Hotspot Hunters and the Curious Adventurers were satisfied with their respective tours and with the tour operator.



2.3

CASE STUDY: NORDEGG ADVENTURES

EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS IN USE

Nordegg Adventures has adapted the Experience Questionnaire as a conversational tool to determine the type of travellers participating in their tours that day.

Nordegg Adventure Staff Question:

What else do you have planned for your trip?

Curious Adventurers (CA): Look for soft commitments about their plans, questions about other activities similar to what we offer.

Hotspot Hunters (HH): Look for a packed schedule and iconic attractions.

What are you most excited to see today?

CA: They'll usually start with an action they want to do (e.g. photograph the ice bubbles), something they want to learn about, or give an explanation on why they chose this tour.

HH: They'll usually give a short answer with a specific location (e.g. see Crescent Falls) or mention where they heard about the area (I saw a picture of the ice bubbles from [an influencer] and want to see it).

Have you hiked (or whichever activity we are doing on this tour) before?

CA: They'll mention why they enjoyed one or two hikes they have done. They usually undersell their abilities.

HH: They'll mention well-known trails, how challenging it was, and how amazing the views were at the destination.

Where are you staying? (and observe their gear)

CA: They often stay at more affordable options, or they add a justification for staying at a luxury accommodation (a special event, paying for it on points, wanting to try the Fairmont experience, etc). Usually, their equipment is either well-worn from core outdoor brands like Outdoor Research or they'll ask if what they have is good enough for the tour.

HH: They opt for a trendy or higher-end property. If staying at a more budget accommodation they'll usually add a justification (saving on money to pay for all the travel they do, other hotels were full, etc). Their equipment is usually from trendier outdoor brands (Patagonia, Arc'teryx, Canada Goose, etc) or they are wearing city clothes and are reluctant to wear rental winter clothes.

CA generally book direct. We're finding that bookings through OTA's like Get Your Guides are almost all HH.

3

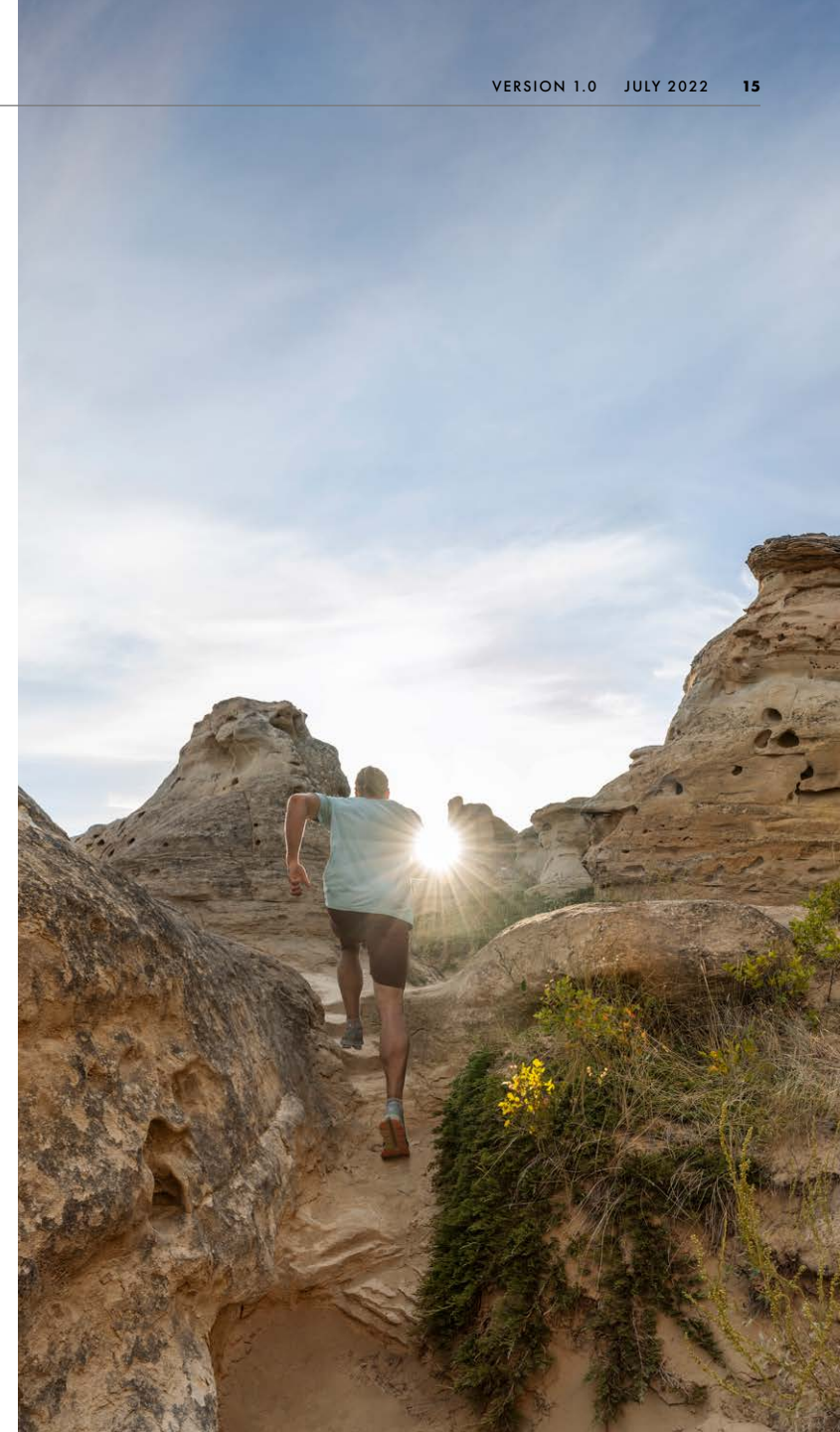
STRATEGIES TO CUSTOMIZE CREATIVE



3.1 ULTIMATE TRAVELLER AFFINITIES & INTERESTS

Thinking about the personal motivations, desires and media habits of your audience can allow you to stand out from your competitors and more effectively connect. The insights included herein are the result of over two years of extensive research. Use these to guide your media tactics and supporting creative development to drive higher engagement with your audience.

In these affinities and interests lists, you'll probably see activities that many of your guests enjoy. Every experience will attract a different mix of visitors. By understanding the other experiences that your guests enjoy you can better understand what they value about the experience you offer them.



3.1 ULTIMATE TRAVELLER AFFINITIES & INTERESTS

CURIOUS ADVENTURERS

The common motivations and needs shared amongst Curious Adventurers also carry over into many of their interests and activities. No individual Curious Adventurer participates in all of the interests and activities listed, but on average Curious Adventurers pursue these interests and activities more than the general population.

From this list we can see that Curious Adventurers' desire for discovery and spontaneity can have a wide variety of outlets. Some may enjoy the surprises offered by the natural world by pursuing camping, hiking, and watercraft. Others might satisfy their love of learning through Wikipedia, documentaries, and museums.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

- Camping
- Hiking
- RVing
- Motorcycles & ATVs
- Motorized Watercrafts
- Museums
- Birdwatching
- Studying genealogy
- Home Entertainment

NEWS SOURCES & PLANNING

- Wikipedia
- Documentaries
- Twitch
- Reddit
- TripAdvisor

ACCOMMODATIONS

- Airbnb
- VRBO
- Budget Hotels

3.1 ULTIMATE TRAVELLER AFFINITIES & INTERESTS

HOTSPOT HUNTERS

Like Curious Adventurers, Hotspot Hunters are united by attitudes and travel style. No individual Hotspot Hunter participates in all of the interests and activities listed, but on average Hotspot Hunters pursue these interests and activities more than the general population.

From this list we can see that Hotspot Hunters' desire for achievement and status can have a wide variety of outlets. Some might relish the competition in sports. Others might seek out the cachet of luxury goods and premium hotels.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

- Live Sporting Events
- Golf
- NFL
- Live Concerts
- Photography Equipment
- Luxury Goods
- Musical Instruments

NEWS SOURCES & PLANNING

- LaPresse
- Globe & Mail
- BBC
- Finance & Economy News

ACCOMMODATIONS

- Premium Hotels
- Travel Packages & Tours
- Travel Rewards

3.2 COPYWRITING GUIDELINES

When you understand what motivates each Ultimate Traveller segment, you can start using language and highlighting experiences in a way that will attract a specific group.

CURIOUS ADVENTURERS

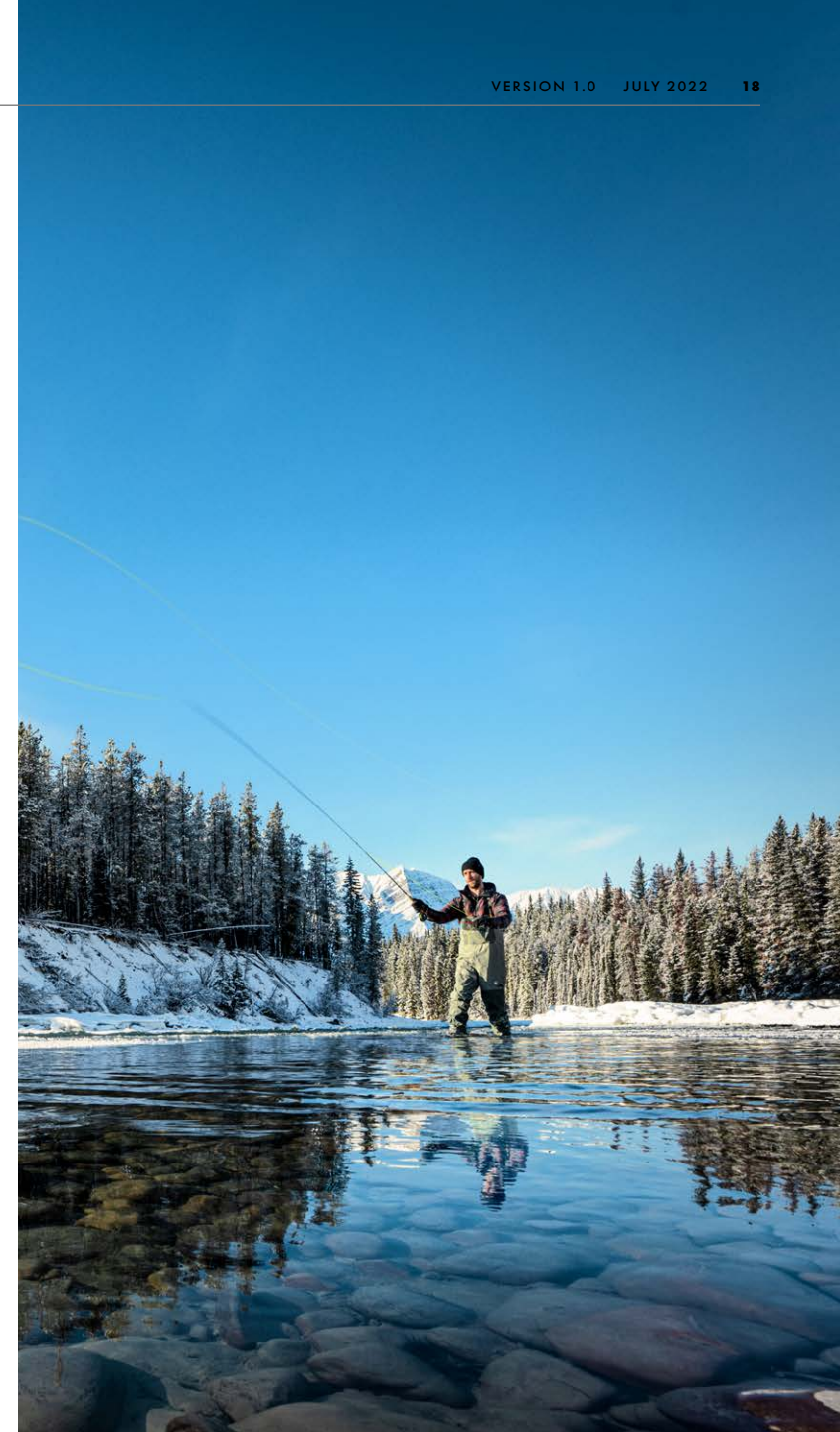
They like to travel at their own pace, with a focus on immersing themselves in local culture. They are interested in hidden gems, spontaneity, creating their own adventures, and making lasting memories. They prioritize spending time truly getting to know a place and its people.

To appeal to Curious Adventurers, focus on language that suggests what might be discovered or learned. Try to include words like “discover”, “immerse”, and “authentic”.

HOTSPOT HUNTERS

They like to make the most of their vacation. They love to plan and have a detailed itinerary, so they don't miss out on anything. They like Top 10 lists and are interested in must-see places and must-do activities. Good stories and great photos are on their list of desirable souvenirs.

To appeal to Hotspot Hunters, use language that focuses on what they might accomplish. Try to include words like “reach”, “icons”, and “one-of-a-kind”.



3.3 IMAGE GUIDE

Travel Alberta invested in consumer research to determine the types of images that would appeal to Ultimate Travellers. You can use what was learned as a guide when selecting stock images or taking photographs for your business. Keep in mind that a great photo of something not on this list will likely outperform a low-quality photo of anything mentioned below.

WHEN PROMOTING SUMMER EXPERIENCES:

The most appealing subjects are:

- Natural beauty & landscapes
- The Canadian Rockies
- Outdoor activities
(especially hiking & biking)

The least appealing subjects are:

- Activities that skew too old or too young
- Scenery too similar to their own
(e.g. BC residents)

WHEN PROMOTING WINTER EXPERIENCES:

The most appealing subjects are:

- Natural beauty & landscapes
- Snow-covered mountains
- Cold scenes where the people are physically warm (e.g. outdoor hot tubs, cozy cabins)
- Outdoor activities
(especially skiing & snowboarding)

The least appealing subjects are:

- Cold weather
- Depictions of being lost in wilderness
- Risk-taking & strenuous activities
- Unnaturally vibrant colours
(filters or Photoshop)

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- When possible, show activities that will appeal to your target
- When possible, show travellers who are similar to your target in age, gender, and ethnicity
- Curious Adventurers are tougher to impress with images alone
- Both segments love mountain images but Hotspot Hunters love them more
- Images without context are less appealing to Curious Adventurers
- Be sensitive to images of activities that raise animal welfare concerns

3.3 IMAGE GUIDE

Below are examples of the types of images that performed best in Travel Alberta's consumer research. For more examples and information on photography best practices, please refer to the Travel Alberta Brand Guide, linked [here](#).

SUMMER EXPERIENCES



NATURAL BEAUTY & LANDSCAPES
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

WINTER EXPERIENCES



PHYSICAL WARMTH
SNOW-COVERED

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS



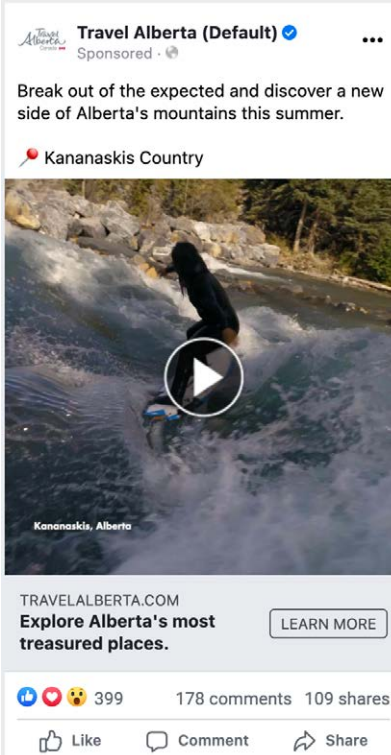
SHOWCASE TRAVELLERS WHO ARE SIMILAR TO
YOUR TARGET IN AGE, GENDER, AND ETHNICITY

3.4 EXAMPLES OF CUSTOMIZED CREATIVE

TRAVEL ALBERTA SUMMER CAMPAIGN

Here are examples of Facebook ads Travel Alberta ran in Summer 2021. In these examples, Travel Alberta selected a different experience to advertise to each persona, based on HH and CA known interests and affinities. Copy was written to appeal to each personas motivations.

CURIOUS ADVENTURER FACEBOOK AD



Travel Alberta (Default) Sponsored · 🌐

Break out of the expected and discover a new side of Alberta's mountains this summer.

📍 Kananaskis Country

Kananaskis, Alberta

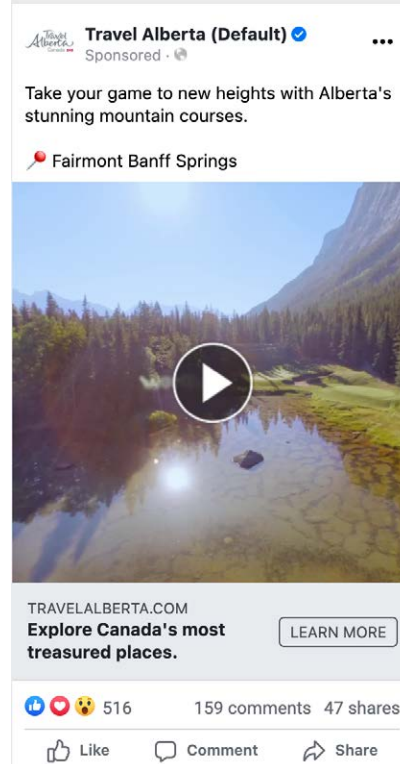
TRAVELALBERTA.COM
Explore Alberta's most treasured places. [LEARN MORE](#)

👍❤️👏 399 178 comments 109 shares

👍 Like 🗨 Comment ➦ Share

- Kananaskis River Surfing is a unique and little-known experience
- 'Break out of the expected'; focuses on the hidden gems of Alberta

HOTSPOT HUNTER FACEBOOK AD



Travel Alberta (Default) Sponsored · 🌐

Take your game to new heights with Alberta's stunning mountain courses.

📍 Fairmont Banff Springs

TRAVELALBERTA.COM
Explore Canada's most treasured places. [LEARN MORE](#)

👍❤️👏 516 159 comments 47 shares

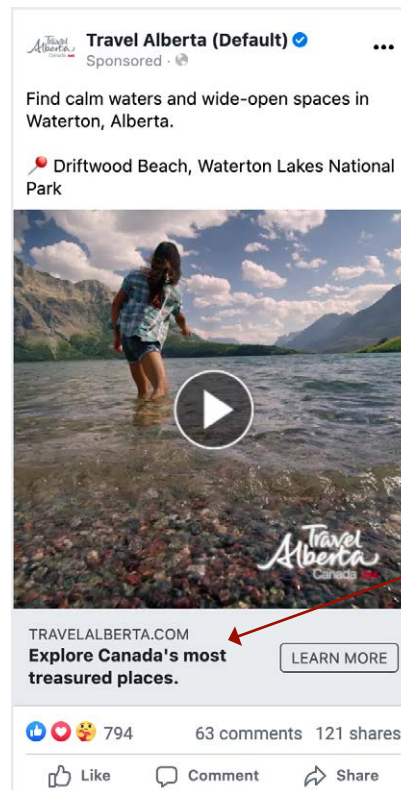
👍 Like 🗨 Comment ➦ Share

- Banff Springs is a prestigious Golf Course
- 'Take your game to new heights'; focuses on achievement

3.4 EXAMPLES OF CUSTOMIZED CREATIVE

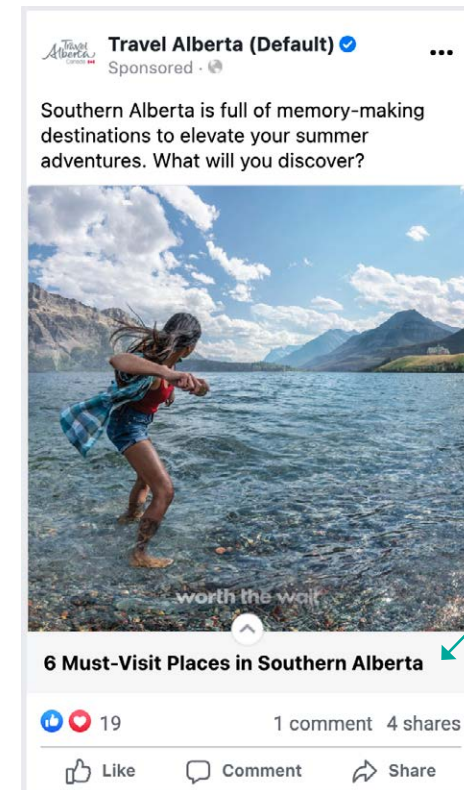
In these examples, Travel Alberta advertised the same experience to both personas. Different copy was written for each persona, highlighting the experience in a way that best resonates with each group. A stunning image was selected for the HH ad, and an immersive video was selected for the CA ad.

CURIOUS ADVENTURER FACEBOOK AD



Invites discovery

HOTSPOT HUNTER FACEBOOK AD



Listicle headline



TRAVEL ALBERTA

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