

# OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU EMAIL MARKETING ROI STUDY 2016

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FINAL REPORT OF FINDINGS—MAY 2016

## Introduction

### Research Objectives

This report presents the findings of a study of subscribers to The Outer Banks Email Newsletter. Destination Analysts, Inc. conducted this research on behalf of the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau with the primary objective of generating Return on Investment (ROI) estimates—in terms of incremental trip days and associated in-market spending generated—for the email newsletter marketing program. The research also explores content preferences, destination perceptions, and demographic and psychographic profiles of the CVB’s newsletter subscribers.

### Methodology

Working closely with the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, Destination Analysts developed a base questionnaire that addressed the core objectives of this research. This questionnaire was then adopted for The Outer Banks’ two email lists – consumer and lead generation. This survey was programmed online, and the Outer Banks VB sent out a survey invitation via email to its lists of subscribers in April 2016. As an incentive to take the survey, all respondents were entered into a prize drawing. In total 7,148 completed surveys were collected (5,230 from the consumer list and 1,918 from the lead generation list).

## Email Newsletter ROI Estimation Methodology

The ROI estimates derived for this study include all direct spending in The Outer Banks by two types of visitors: (1) those who live outside Outer Banks and took *incremental trips* to the area that were inspired by Outer Banks' eNewsletter content and (2) those that *increased their intended length of stay in The Outer Banks* based on Outer Banks' eNewsletter content. These two visitor types are described below:

1. Visitors on incremental trips: To be considered an incremental visitor, survey respondents had to state that content received through Outer Banks' eNewsletter motivated a trip to The Outer Banks and that this content was "Important" or "Very important" to this decision to ultimately visit the area.
2. Visitors who extended their stay as a result of Outer Banks' eNewsletter marketing: Leisure travelers who did not state that Outer Banks' eNewsletter content influenced their decision to visit The Outer Banks, and all business and convention travelers, were asked a series of questions on the influence of Outer Banks' eNewsletter content on the intended length of their stay in The Outer Banks. Visitor spending impact estimates for this group only include spending during reported "additional" days in market generated by Outer Banks' eNewsletter content.

The survey questionnaire was designed to identify the information needed to estimate the incidence of these two types of travelers in the population of the Outer Banks VB's eNewsletter audience, as well as their spending in market. Statistics collected in the survey were applied to the eNewsletter's audience size to arrive at the ROI estimates presented here.

**NOTE: Those on the Visitors Bureau direct consumer list who read the newsletter are referred to throughout the report as "consumer actives"; those who received and read the email newsletter from lead generation activities are referred to as "lead generation actives."**

## Quick Facts

The profile to the right shows a summary of fundamental findings and descriptive statistics emerging from this research. The Email Newsletter ROI estimates are based on an average of 20,212 subscribers reached for consumer actives and 21,942 subscribers reached for lead generation actives. These estimates are based on a twelve-month period (May 2015-May 2016).

Note: Destination Analysts' approach to modeling the economic impact of tourism activity stresses conservatism, and in cases where sub-sample sizes are small, data sets are carefully examined and the most reliable and defensible data input to use in the model is selected.

	<b>Consumer Actives:</b>	<b>Lead Generation Actives:</b>
Incremental trips to Outer Banks generated by eNewsletter marketing:	2,519 trips	1,052 trips
Total visitor days in Outer Banks on influenced trips:	7,634 days	2,745 days
Average visitor spending per-day on incremental trips to Outer Banks:	\$337.70	\$312.19
Total visitor spending on incremental trips to Outer Banks:	\$2,577,975	\$857,037
Additional days spent in Outer Banks on trips extended by eNewsletter marketing:	382 days	236 days
Total visitor spending on trips extended by eNewsletter media marketing:	\$121,252	\$61,417
Total visitor spending impact of eNewsletter marketing:	\$2,699,227	\$918,454
Total visitor spending impact per subscriber:	\$133.55	\$41.86

## Executive Summary

The studies key ROI findings are summarized below.

### eNewsletter ROI

- **Incremental trips to Outer Banks generated by the Outer Banks eNewsletter marketing:** An estimated 3,571 incremental trips (2,519 for the consumer list; 1,052 for the lead generation list) were generated for Outer Banks by the OBVB's eNewsletter marketing to its subscribers from May 2015 – May 2016. An incremental trip is one in which the visitor decided to visit Outer Banks based on Outer Banks' eNewsletter content. These are trips to the area that would not have happened if the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau did not market through this medium, and thus any visitor spending in The Outer Banks on these trips can be counted as part of the marketing program's economic impact. Incremental trips are estimated to have generated a total of \$3,617,681 (\$2,699,227 from the consumer list; \$918,454 from the lead generation list) in visitor spending in The Outer Banks.
- **Additional days spent in Outer Banks generated by eNewsletter marketing:** A second way The Outer Banks eNewsletter marketing can generate economic impact for The Outer Banks is by convincing visitors to extend their intended stays in The Outer Banks. The research findings estimate that Outer Banks' eNewsletter content generated 618 additional visitor days (382 from the consumer list; 236 from the lead generation list) in Outer Banks from May 2015 – May 2016. Assuming that visitors from the consumer list spent \$317.06 per day while in The Outer Banks and visitors from the lead

generation list spent \$260.55 in the area during their most recent visit, this resulted in an additional \$182,669 in incremental visitor spending in the area.

- **Total Estimated Economic Impact:** The two components discussed above (spending on incremental trips and additional days in-market) comprise the eNewsletter marketing program’s economic impact as defined in this study. Based on these findings, Outer Banks’ eNewsletter marketing accounted for a total of \$3,617,681 in direct visitor spending in The Outer Banks from May 2015 – May 2016. As it is estimated that Outer Banks reached 20,212 subscribers from the consumer list and 21,942 subscribers from the lead generation list on average during this time period, it is estimated that each subscriber from the consumer list represented \$133.55 in economic impact to Outer Banks and subscribers from the lead generation list represented \$41.86 in economic impact to The Outer Banks.

## Other Key Findings

- **Information on discounts and deals is the most popular type of content Outer Banks eNewsletter subscribers would like to see, although “lighthouses and historic sites” and beach/beach activities related content are the most influential in actually converting subscribers to Outer Banks visitors.** 69.9 percent of email newsletter subscribers from the consumer list and 64.1 percent of subscribers from the lead generation list reported that content on discounts/deals would be of most interest to them—making this the top content subscribers expressed the greatest interest in. General information about The Outer Banks that would apply to anytime (62.7% of consumer list actives; 57.0% of lead generation actives) and deals/discounts (61.1% of consumer list actives; 59.9% of lead generation actives) are also of interest to Outer Banks’ eNewsletter audience. When those who were influenced by Outer Banks content to actually take a trip to The Outer Banks were asked which types of these content were most important to this decision, across both subscriber lists “lighthouses and historic sites” and “beaches and beach activities” information were top. This was followed by content on attractions/sightseeing, restaurants and deals and discounts.

- **Key differences arise when comparing why Outer Banks’ two eNewsletter audiences follow the destination. Consumer actives primarily subscribe to the eNewsletter because they feel a connection to The Outer Banks and like to keep up with what is going on there while lead generation actives subscribe to get trip ideas.** Nearly half consumer actives (49.6%) and 30.3 percent of lead generation actives report subscribing to The Outer Banks eNewsletter because they “feel a connection to The Outer Banks and like to keep up with what is going on there.” Lead generation actives primarily subscribe to “get trip ideas” at 40.8 percent while a slightly smaller percentage, 35.3 percent, of consumer actives subscribe to the newsletter for the same reason. Over three-in-ten audience members on these respective subscriber lists report subscribing to The Outer Banks eNewsletter because they are currently planning a trip to the area (35.3% of consumer list actives; 30.1% of lead generation actives).
- **Subscribing to The Outer Banks eNewsletter has positively impacted subscribers’ perception of The Outer Banks.** Nearly two-thirds of eNewsletter subscribers (63.7% of consumer list actives; 62.5% of lead generation actives) report that subscribing to The Outer Banks eNewsletter has positively impacted their perception of the destination either “a little” or “a lot.”
- **The Outer Banks Visitors Bureau’s other marketing assets—especially its website, OuterBanks.org—appear to work in conjunction with its eNewsletter marketing to help drive visitation and/or influence the decision to stay longer in the area.** 56.6 percent of all eNewsletter subscribers cited OuterBanks.com as influential to their decision to visit the destination. Another influential resource was the Official Outer Banks Travel Guide at 46.2 percent. Subscribers from the consumer list were more likely to have been influenced to take their trip to The Outer Banks by posts from Visit The Outer Banks on Facebook compared to subscribers from the lead gen list (24.7% vs. 12.4%).

# Snapshot of Findings – The Outer Banks Email Newsletter Subscriber



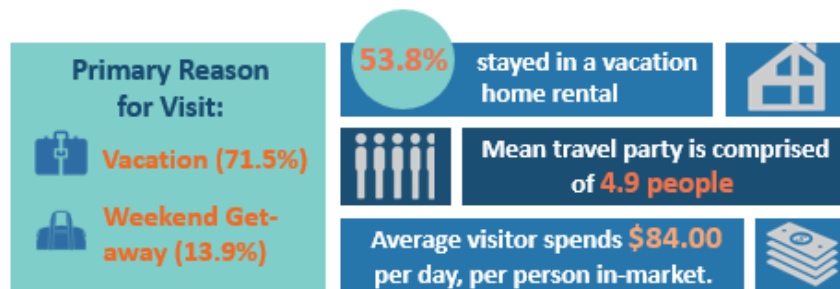
## Email Newsletter Subscriber Details (% of all respondents)



## Trips to The Outer Banks (% of all respondents who have taken a trip to The Outer Banks since subscribing to The Outer Banks newsletter)



## Trip Details (% of all respondents who have taken a trip to The Outer Banks since subscribing to The Outer Banks newsletter)



## Outer Banks Newsletter Content's Impact on Followers' Perception of The Outer Banks (% of all respondents)

