



# VISIT HUNTINGTON BEACH SURFCITYUSA.COM WEBSITE ROI STUDY

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Final Report of Findings—May 2016

# Introduction

## Research Objectives

This research presents the final report of findings of a year-long study of users of Visit Huntington Beach's consumer website, SurfCityUSA.com. This research was conducted on behalf of Visit Huntington Beach (VHB) by Destination Analysts, Inc., with the primary objective of generating detailed Return on Investment (ROI) estimates for VHB's official tourism website.

## Methodology

The findings presented here are based on the results of two surveys conducted specifically for this project. These two surveys were fielded online between March 2015 and April 2016. The use of this survey data in the ROI estimation methodology is explained immediately below:

### 1. Website ROI Estimation Methodology

As aforementioned, this Website ROI research is comprised of two surveys conducted amongst persons who visited VHB's website. These surveys<sup>1</sup> are interconnected, and included a Website Visitor Intercept Survey and a Website Visitor Follow-Up Survey sent after the website visitor had a chance to visit Huntington Beach. Destination Analysts worked closely with VHB to

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<sup>1</sup> Data presented in this report is from surveys collected from persons who visited the website between March 2015 and April 2016.

develop these survey questionnaires, which were then implemented online. Each survey is described below:

**Website Visitor Intercept Survey:** A survey invitation was placed on VHB's website that asked visitors at random to take a brief survey. The survey questionnaire looked into topics such as website users' motivations for visiting the site, how far along they were in their destination decision process, and their expected/considered month of arrival in Huntington Beach, as well as permission to send them a follow-up survey after they planned to travel to the area. As an incentive to take the survey, all respondents were entered into a prize drawing.

**Website Visitor Follow-up Conversion Survey:** As previously stated, respondents were asked in the initial Website Visitor Intercept Survey what month they expected to visit (or were considering visiting) Huntington Beach. At the end of this month, these respondents were sent an invitation to take the Follow-Up Survey<sup>2</sup>. This survey questionnaire asked respondents about topics related to their visitation to Huntington Beach. A sweepstakes entry was again offered as an incentive.

The data from the two surveys is then combined for each respondent, leaving our research staff with a robust set of data from visitors. For each respondent, beginning with their initial planning interactions with the website, the research process allows for tracking actual subsequent in-market behavior. Ultimately, this research technique allows Destination Analysts to develop estimates of the proportion of users who are converted to a visit by the website and other metrics needed for developing reliable return on investment estimates for Visit Huntington Beach.

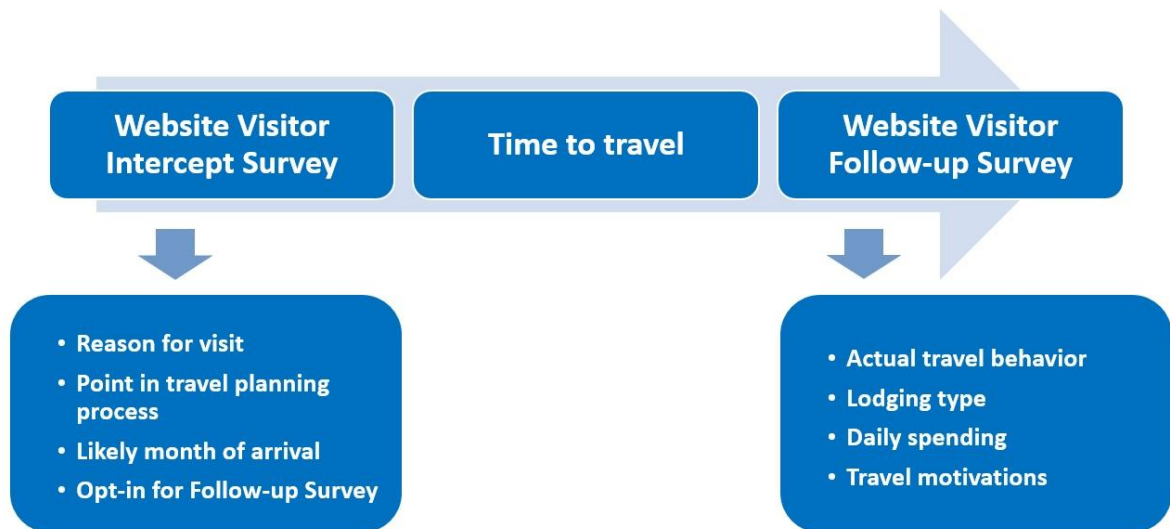
Section 4 of this report (ROI Summary) presents a summary of the economic impact of the website to Huntington Beach using Destination Analysts' proprietary economic impact model for DMO websites. Data collected in the surveys (both motivational and reported direct in-market spending) were used for this analysis, with the goal of estimating the amount of visitor spending in Huntington Beach directly generated by the website.

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<sup>2</sup> Only survey respondents who opted-in for this follow-up survey were sent the invitation.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** For this report, we used an estimate of 280,054 true, unique visitors to the website between March 2015 and April 2016 for the calculation of ROI estimates. This is based on the number of unique users on each of three device types—desktop, tablet and mobile phone—less the number of bounces from each device (those who only look at one page before exiting the site).

The following presents a flow chart of the Website ROI Study survey methodology:



## Quick Facts:

The profile below shows a summary of fundamental findings and descriptive statistics emerging from this research. These findings are based on 280,054 true, unique visitors to the website (267,888 unique desktop visitors less 41.35% bounce rate; 65,724 unique tablet visitors less 49.00% bounce rate; 288,517 unique mobile visitors less 68.73 % bounce rate) between March 2015 and April 2016.

### Website ROI Estimates (per 280,054 unique visitors)

Trips to Huntington Beach generated by website (i.e. incremental trips):	10,776
Average length of stay on incremental trips:	3.6 days
Average spending per day on these incremental trips:	\$347.50
Total visitor spending on incremental trips to Huntington Beach:	\$13,555,986
Incremental visitor days spent in Huntington Beach on trips extended by website's influence:	1,870 days
Total visitor spending on trip days extended by website:	\$626,058
Total economic impact/ROI of the website:	\$14,182,044
Total economic impact/ROI per unique visitor:	\$50.64
Incremental room nights generated:	6,087

*Note: Due to seasonality changes, the ROI estimates presented in Sections 2, 3 & 4 of this final report may differ from the ROI estimates presented in the Interim Report of Findings prepared in October 2015.*

## Executive Summary

### Website ROI

The research suggests that SurfCityUSA.com's economic impact to Huntington Beach is significant. The key ROI findings from this study of the website's users are summarized below.

- **SurfCityUSA.com is attracting a large volume of the types of website visitors who represent opportunity for the site to generate economic impact to Huntington Beach.** In total, 51.9 percent of VHB's website audience is from the non-professional segment (the professional segment includes meeting planners, travel trade, media and others using the website for purposes unrelated to travel and/or individual trip planning) and represent potential leisure travelers to Huntington Beach. Of those non-professional segment travelers who completed the Website Visitor Follow-Up Survey, 76.9 percent reside outside Huntington Beach. This distinction is significant, as any spending on trips by those residing outside Huntington Beach can be considered in the ROI analysis.
- **There is a significant rate of visitation to Huntington Beach by website users post use of SurfCityUSA.com.** Based on the study's findings, the estimated rate of visitation amongst potential visitors after using the website is 74.0 percent. 49.1 percent of website visitors who are potential leisure visitors to Huntington Beach had not yet made up their mind to visit the region when they used SurfCityUSA.com, representing a significant conversion potential for the site.

- **SurfCityUSA.com is influencing its audience's decision to visit Huntington Beach at an effective rate.** In the study's final findings, 80.0 percent of potential incremental visitors—those leisure visitors who had not yet made up their mind to visit Huntington Beach when they visited the site—agreed the website indeed influenced their ultimate decision to take a trip. Of these persons, 78.1 percent assessed the site as “Important” or “Very important” to this decision when asked to rate its relative impact on their decision process.
- **The average incremental trip generated by the website lasted 3.6 days, with reported in-market spending of \$347.50 per day.** These averages are based on trip details reported in the Website Visitor Follow-Up Survey.
- **Using data in our ROI model and the findings on incremental visitation summarized above, the website is estimated to have generated 10,776 incremental trips resulting in \$13,555,986 in new visitor spending in Huntington Beach, based on the 280,054 true, unique visitors to the site during the period of study.** Alternatively, it's estimated that for every true, unique visitor to SurfCityUSA.com, \$48.40 in incremental visitor spending is generated for Huntington Beach.
- **The website also inspires users to spend additional days in Huntington Beach. Those influenced by the website to extend their trip typically lengthened their stay by 1.0 days.** These additional visitor days can be included in the site's overall economic impact. Using data in the ROI model and the findings on lengthened stays summarized above, the website is estimated to have generated 1,870 additional visitor days and \$626,058 in additional visitor spending during the period of study. Alternatively, for every true, unique visitor to the site, an additional \$2.24 in visitor spending is generated for Huntington Beach.
- **The total estimated ROI/economic impact of the website for the 280,054 true, unique visitors during the period of study is \$14,182,044 (or \$50.64 per unique visitor).** The two components detailed above—spending on incremental trips and additional days in-market—will comprise the program's ROI/economic impact as defined in this study. From another perspective, every unique visitor to the website

would lead to an additional \$50.64 in incremental visitor spending in Huntington Beach.

- **The incremental and extended trips generated by the website drive the booking of new room nights in Huntington Beach hotels.** Given the number and length of such trips, and the proportion of these visitors reporting that they stayed in Huntington Beach hotels, we estimate that for the 280,054 true, unique visitors to the website during the period of study, 6,087 incremental room nights were generated in Huntington Beach hotels.

## Comparative Summary

The table below shows how SurfCityUSA.com's key ROI metrics compare to other DMO websites for which this same research has been conducted. To make these comparisons the results shown are based on 1,000 true, unique site visitors.

Destination	Incremental trips generated	Avg length of stay (days)	Avg visitor spending per day on incremental trips	Total visitor spending on incremental trips	Days spent in market on trips extended by website	Total visitor spending on trips extended by website	Total economic impact/ROI of the website	Total economic impact/ROI of the website per unique visitor
Huntington Beach	38	3.6	\$347.50	\$48,405	7	\$2,235	\$50,640	\$50.64
Destination A	60	1.8	\$333.20	\$36,741	17	\$5,685	\$42,426	\$42.43
Destination B	55	2.5	\$434.83	\$58,625	16	\$5,239	\$63,864	\$63.86
Destination C	47	3.0	\$266.97	\$37,322	8	\$2,059	\$39,381	\$39.38
Destination D	55	2.6	\$306.80	\$44,066	17	\$5,115	\$49,181	\$49.18
Destination E	42	3.1	\$216.50	\$28,270	15	\$3,331	\$31,600	\$31.60
Destination F	66	2.2	\$267.80	\$38,788	19	\$5,095	\$43,883	\$43.88
Destination G	50	3.0	\$251.30	\$37,829	11	\$2,696	\$40,526	\$40.53
Destination H	36	3.7	\$384.93	\$46,343	29	\$11,147	\$57,490	\$57.49
Destination I	27	3.8	\$252.00	\$26,100	32	\$8,115	\$34,215	\$34.22
Destination J	39	2.9	\$176.60	\$20,082	40	\$9,168	\$29,250	\$29.25
Destination K	32	2.0	\$336.46	\$21,892	17	\$7,777	\$29,669	\$29.67
Destination L	33	3.1	\$247.76	\$25,142	58	\$14,474	\$39,616	\$39.62
Destination M	34	3.8	\$284.26	\$36,861	27	\$7,770	\$44,631	\$44.63
Destination N	20	4.2	\$480.40	\$40,076	13	\$6,114	\$46,190	\$46.19
Destination O	45	2.9	\$340.00	\$44,090	14	\$4,640	\$48,729	\$48.73
Destination P	30	4.2	\$285.40	\$36,372	39	\$11,197	\$47,569	\$47.57
Destination Q	19	8.5	\$357.29	\$58,950	30	\$9,816	\$68,766	\$68.77
Average for all other destinations (excluding Huntington Beach)	41	3.4	\$307.21	\$37,503	24	\$7,026	\$44,529	\$44.53
Average for smaller cities/boutique destinations (Destinations A-G)	54	2.6	\$296.77	\$40,234	15	\$4,174	\$44,409	\$44.41
Average for major cities (Destinations H-P)	33	3.4	\$309.76	\$32,995	30	\$8,934	\$41,929	\$41.93

Note: Destinations A-G are smaller U.S. cities/boutique destinations. Destinations H-P are major U.S. cities. Destination Q is a state.