

EQ[®] Up Close: Case Study Series

New Brunswick Department of Tourism,
Heritage and Culture:
Shaping Culture, Increasing Focus and
Finding Success



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Fundy National Park, New Brunswick

New Brunswick Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture: Shaping Culture, Increasing Focus and Finding Success



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Hopewell Rocks, Bay of Fundy, New Brunswick

Case Summary

In the summer of 2010, Tourism New Brunswick (TNB), a division of the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture, became one of the first to license the Explorer Quotient® (“EQ®”) from the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC). TNB’s goal was to increase net new visitors to the province. Having used primarily ad hoc research in the past, it was time to evaluate segmentation tools to gain better insights into travellers. Specifically, the organization sought a tool that could link with additional research sources to keep segments up to date and to track progress year-over-year.

The long term goal was a defensible market segmentation model providing insights into traveller motivation that can translate into increased visits from targeted, higher-yield guests. The short term benefit, however, is using EQ to provide a common language and a common goal for the Department, resulting in a cohesive working environment and a coherent strategic direction.

The focus and alignment has ensured that all members of the department, their partners, and industry are aware of the EQ research and are making decisions based on a single view of travellers. Working together, it is a bright future.

Introduction

Tourism New Brunswick (TNB), a Division of the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture has been a licensee working with the Explorer Quotient since 2010. In 2009, the Department launched a 2010- 2013 Tourism Strategy with a focus on customer-centricity. Their brand positioning - *"The Unexpected is in our Nature"* - references not only the awe-inspiring natural wonders of the province, such as the Highest Tides in the World, but also its culture and intimate experiential tourism offerings. The challenge, at the time, was that prior segmentation efforts were largely based on the geo-demographics of potential visitors rather than travel values and motivations.

This case study explores the business decisions to invest in EQ, the department's vision of building a research platform for better insights, the progress it has achieved in the past three years, and its view for the future.

Reasons for investing in EQ

Harmonizing research activities

In 2009 – 2010 Tourism New Brunswick was considering making a significant investment in consumer research in order to move away from ad hoc analyses of reports from various sources with varying levels of comparability. David Rioux, Senior Research Analyst explains that:

"The Canadian Tourism Commission's Explorer Quotient provided the opportunity to leverage a nationally supported, travel-specific segmentation model that could be augmented and implemented through more mainstream segmentation products such as Environics Analytics' PRIZM¹."

Compared to other proprietary travel market segmentation studies, EQ could provide a unifying research platform for a comprehensive analysis of TNB's travel markets and its potential and actual performance in those markets.

¹ PRIZM is a segmentation system developed by Environics Analytics that classifies US and Canadian households into 66 consumer segments based on demographics and preferences for a broad range of behaviours. By cross-referencing EQ and PRIZM, EQ licensees can gain geo-demographic data on where their customers live as well as other behaviours such as media use. See: http://www.environicsanalytics.ca/data_consumer_segmentation.aspx



"With an increasingly competitive marketplace, and more demand being placed on marketing dollars, EQ has allowed the department to stay extremely focused. Not only with paid advertising, but also in aligning all of our marketing touchpoints in message, tone and product offering to speak to EQ segments. We still have much to do, but we feel we are on the right path."

*Kim Matthews, Director of Marketing, Tourism Division,
Tourism New Brunswick*

Internal and external alignment

Alignment was another key reason for choosing EQ. It was clear EQ would create an opportunity to build stronger connections with the CTC and industry partners. Having one clear view of primary EQ types across the organization would also improve alignment and processes amongst staff. The short-term goal was to get everyone on the same page as to whom the Department should be targeting and what product it should be offering to those potential visitors.

Benefits

The benefits of becoming an EQ licensee have been significant within Tourism New Brunswick:

1. Marketing – Consumer insights shape targeted campaigns and drive visitor engagement

Within Marketing there were two clear benefits for using EQ. The first was the ability to develop a rich, layered set of insights about travellers' values, motivations and how to engage these travellers. The second was the ability to leverage commercial and proprietary market data through EQ's PRIZM link to make these EQ insights effectively and efficiently actionable.

The insights allowed The Department to develop a brand narrative that would resonate with people interested in the travel experiences of New Brunswick. Having greater understanding into the reasons and motivations behind travellers who have a higher propensity to enjoy the New Brunswick experience allowed the department to develop a compelling creative execution. The new creative resonated not only in EQ specific focus groups, but more importantly delivered increased engagements across key channels, such as the consumer website.

2. Research Platform – EQ is the backbone for consumer research

EQ, as the primary segmentation tool, aligned the Department's research activities to provide a rich understanding of their market. This research includes CTC segmentation and ad tracking studies, lifestyle marketing databases (BBM, PMB, Delvinia, and others), online panel research (including campaign awareness and return-on-investment studies), visitor inquirer data, and proprietary surveys. As illustrated by the diagram below, EQ connects with multiple data sets and provides a 360° view of New Brunswick's best customers.





EQ is at the centre of and connected with each research program to provide multiple layers of consumer insights that inform TNB's business and marketing decisions.

One example of layering in research with EQ is the use of PRIZM data. The Department has used PRIZM micromarketing tools to geographically locate and quantify the best prospective travel markets for campaign execution. The details provided insight into the key areas, by postal code, where there was a higher propensity of their target EQ types, thus informing how best to leverage paid media. In 2011 the Department developed an engagement benchmark through specific channels to measure future growth and success.

3. Alignment – Building collaboration through common language and understanding

The focus on EQ types and specifically those which New Brunswick has identified as their primary targets - Cultural Explorers, Authentic Experiencers and No-Hassle Travellers - has provided a focus and consistency to how the Department does business.

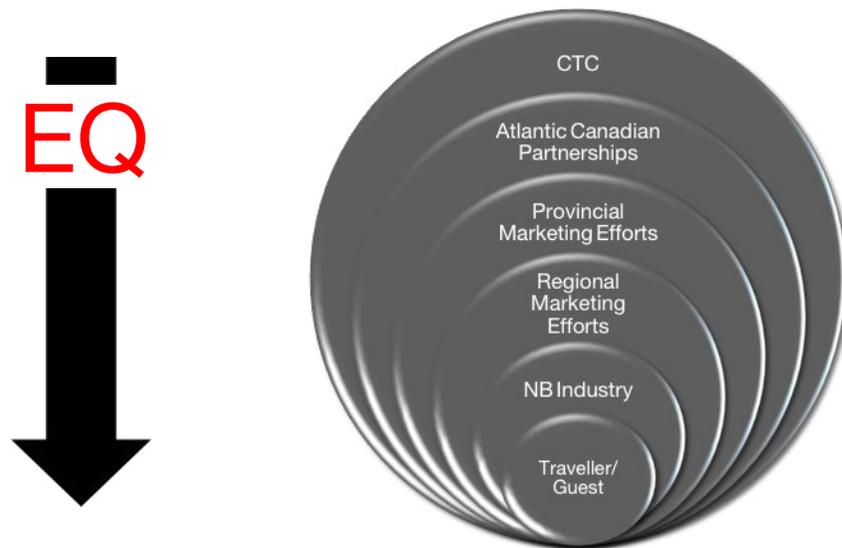
"We all started from the same point. What is the research telling us, what are our segments, and what are our segments looking for? From there, [it's: what are] the products that are being developed, through the Experience Collection², how we load the information and display it on our website and social channels, to the messages we use in our campaigns, and how we qualify journalists and media outlets. Because we're all starting from the same point, which is [knowing] our EQ Segments."

-- Emilie Comeau-Sinclair, Manager, Product Innovation

² Experience Collection is the consumer facing name for New Brunswick's Inner Journeys Program – a branded packaging and experiential product development program.

Tourism New Brunswick's marketing responsibility is to build consumers' awareness of, and engagement with, the province. Based on shrinking marketing budgets, it is important to take advantage of the connection with partners to leverage collective efforts and available funding. As David Rioux describes:

"The CTC is looking for the best prospects in international markets to bring people to Canada. ACTP [Atlantic Canadian Tourism Partnership] is using PRIZM to target prospective travellers who consider Atlantic Canada appealing, and to select the most efficient and effective marketing media for these travellers. New Brunswick uses EQ and PRIZM in our travel markets to do the best we can with the resources we have to gain incremental visits to the province by higher-yield guests. By providing marketing and tourism product development insights and toolkits to regional tourism marketing organizations and to tourism sector partners, [we enable them to] serve their best prospective guests with value-added experiences... leading to enhanced advocacy for the province by these well-hosted guests. This alignment is critical, and it all follows from a coordinated implementation of the CTC's model."



TNB works with its partners to align and leverage opportunities based on its EQ learnings.

This alignment provides a common and easily understood language to describe New Brunswick's best customers. Stronger insights provide stronger leads, and will increase engagement with the right EQ types, demonstrated by the increased goal conversion of prospective travellers on TNB's consumer website.

EQ in action

During the past three years New Brunswick has put EQ in action. In 2010 the team needed to determine how to increase the number of new travellers coming to the province. Working with Environics Analytics and the CTC, TNB looked at inquiry data to determine who was currently interested in New Brunswick. The province learned the inquirers were loyal groups of Gentle Explorers and Virtual Travellers seeking familiar settings and visiting friends and family. To meet the department's objectives, the team needed to expand the types of travellers attracted to the province. Through analysis they determined what experiences and product in the province would appeal strongly to three other EQ types of higher yield: Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers and No-Hassle Travellers. They set a course to develop a program of activities that would appeal to these new markets, in order to increase new, higher-yield visits from new travellers interested in the province, rather than relying on the existing customer base.

As illustrated in the diagram below, EQ informs activities within numerous areas at TNB: Marketing, Customer Engagement, Sales and Partnership, Product Development and Research. Focus throughout the Department is placed on understanding what motivates the primary EQ types, and most importantly on why they should choose New Brunswick as a travel destination.

The development of a cross-functional EQ committee resulted in the dissemination and understanding of Tourism New Brunswick's best customers. The Department is proud that there is not one 'keeper' of EQ, but that it is owned and understood by the majority of staff.



Today, EQ research is informing TNB's activities in each of the above areas.

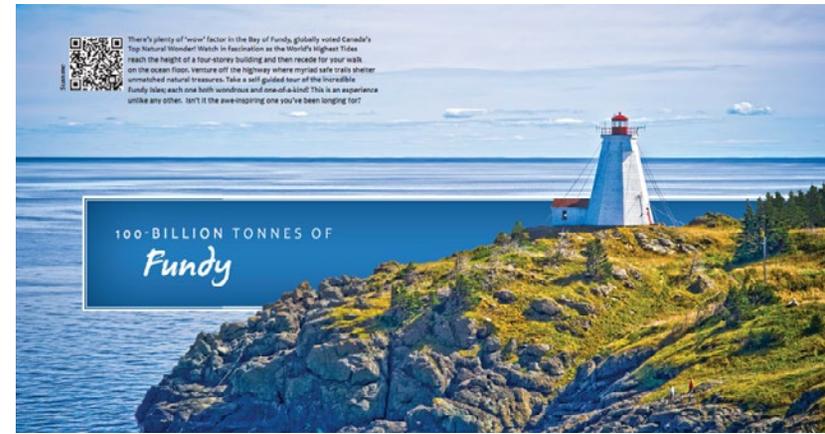
The collective effort has resulted in a more efficient team working on behalf of New Brunswick. The look, tone and presentation of the province as a tourism destination are more consistent, and are specific to either No-Hassle Travellers (NHT) or to Cultural Explorers (CE) and Authentic Experiencers (AE).

"We know that everyone within tourism understands it [EQ], and can name our primary types. When we go out and we talk to our industry, we're all speaking the same language, so industry is hearing a consistent message time and time again from the Department. This builds credibility and agreement from industry and partners."

*Emilie Comeau-Sinclair, Manager Product Innovation,
Tourism New Brunswick*

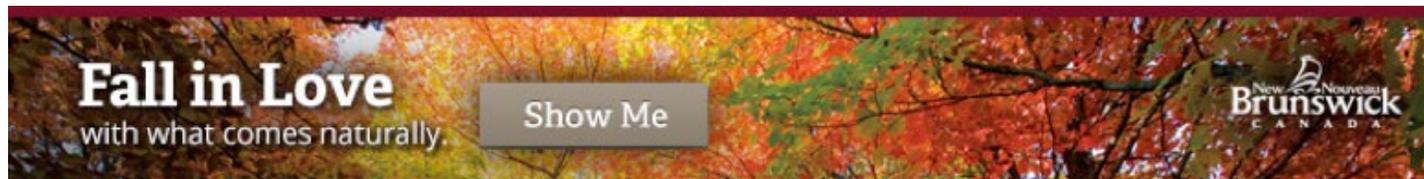


BEFORE EQ



AFTER EQ

Comparing 'before' and 'after' treatments of New Brunswick in TNB's Touring Guide: pages produced 'after EQ' reveal a more targeted approach that is designed to appeal primarily to Authentic Experiencers (AE) and Cultural Explorers (CE). The revised messaging and photography is aimed at AE/CEs who, as EQ research indicates, are known for their connection with nature and its significance to the region.



Web banner targeted toward AE/CE.



Web banner targeted toward NHT.

Tourism New Brunswick's 2012 fall campaign was developed expressly for specific EQ types. Each message was designed to appeal to either AE/CE, or NHT, and the campaign's creative concepts were also reflected on TNB's consumer website. The AE/CE banner was about connecting with nature, where the NHT banner was about connecting with another individual.

In Marketing

From a marketing perspective, focus is on the three primary EQ types and a few niche opportunities where New Brunswick can succeed based on its offering and a clear competitive advantage. The insights from EQ and layering in other relevant research has allowed for strong rationales in decision-making by the team. As Kim Matthews states, *“The benchmark created in 2011 allows us to see where we are making improvements and where we need to make adjustments to get the best return on investment.”*

For example, TNB learned that the travel planning time is longer for Authentic Experiencers, which has prompted the team to adjust when to run campaigns for this market. Overall, EQ has allowed the marketing team to lead and develop:

- An overarching Marketing and Sales Strategy
- A brand narrative that would appeal to specific EQ types and work across all channels
- An approach to assess, categorize and tag³ experiential tourism offerings
- An approach to assess, categorize and tag videos and images and develop content that would appeal to their primary EQ types
- An approach to validate partnership opportunities, leveraging insights from PRIZM data
- Integrated campaigns to appeal and convert traveller types in key geographic markets and niche products
- Cost efficiencies, by choosing jurisdictions in geographic markets where a higher concentration of target EQ types are found

“Every campaign we do, we go back to the EQ research and analyze the data to determine if there are any new insights or ways that we should be thinking of our potential guests.”

*Kim Matthews, Director of Marketing, Tourism Division,
Tourism New Brunswick*

Focus group results in key geographic markets have shown that TNB’s expression of its brand, *‘The Unexpected is in our Nature,’* resonates with its EQ types. Developing a brand narrative that can be expressed either for No-Hassle Travellers or for Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers was challenging, but was accomplished by understanding specifically the values and motivations of the EQ types and aligning the product offering.

In Product Development

Based on its 2010-2013 Tourism Strategy, TNB had begun in early 2010 to develop an experiential tourism product development program called Inner Journeys. The program was a starting point to understand how to evaluate, align and grow experiences based on EQ types. Experiences in the program required a ‘hands-on’ element for the guest and within the first year there were a total of 145 experiences within the collection. For 2012, each experience has been tagged by EQ type for use in marketing, trade and media opportunities.

TNB developed a full-day EQ workshop for industry that was delivered in six locations across the province over two months in early 2011, training close to 300 individual tourism business operators. To make the information as relevant as possible, TNB developed customized materials on its primary EQ types layering in NB data, developed group exercises using existing NB experiences, and provided worksheets and tools such as 10-steps for making EQ work at an operator level. Also among the tools were video personas of the primary EQ types describing their travel to help both staff and industry understand the character of each type and what makes each unique.

³ Tagging is the act of assigning a metadata description to a piece of content, image, video or artifact that helps describe an item and allows it to be found again by browsing or searching.

The Department followed the initial training with a second round of workshops, as well as providing one-on-one support, and has made presentations to tourism associations across the province. Their goal is to ensure the dissemination and understanding of EQ is reaching the operator level, and they are having success.

One example of operators taking insights from EQ and making it relevant for their jurisdiction is the Miramichi River Tourism Association. Linda Gaston, Former Executive Director of the Atlantic Salmon Museum and President of the Miramichi River Tourism Association, described how their region used EQ. Their focus was to ensure the industry had information about the primary NB EQ types (AE/CE and NHT) and how specific product in the region appealed to those travellers. They uploaded relevant content about the priority EQ types to a website, and tagged products and experiences by EQ. Their focus was to educate the industry, in order to provide the best experience in the region with the goal of extending the travellers time in the Miramichi. Explains Gaston:

"After asking a few simple questions, [industry] can then use this website to customize recommendations to the guest."

In Sales and Partnerships

Although more challenging than for Marketing and Product Development, the Trade and Media teams also look for ways EQ can inform their operations. EQ (combined with PRIZM) is one of the tools the team uses to qualify journalists and media outlets in available geographic markets. Margaret Mackenzie, Manager Media and Trade Sales, explains:

"Thanks to ACTP and our Senior Research Analyst we are able to work with PRIZM data to help identify media opportunities. The media team pitches stories to outlets that match our EQ segments."

In TNB's Collaboration and Culture

TNB is working more collaboratively and with a greater focus thanks to EQ. Alignment with a strong understanding of EQ types, marketing messaging, images and content has improved and streamlined process within the Department. This has created a greater efficiency in conducting business. TNB is pulling business insights based on one common research platform informed by EQ and leveraging "EQ'd" content and assets across all channels, improving alignment across activities and channels.

TNB's front-line staff have also been trained in understanding EQ types and how best to host NB's guests. The organization developed an internal work book for all staff, and have conducted training specifically for the visitor information center and call center staff to ensure customer service and style is consistent across all channels.



"Everyone in the Department – from the Minister down - can name who our customer is, and what product we are selling."

*Kim Matthews, Director of Marketing, Tourism Division,
Tourism New Brunswick*

Challenges

The biggest challenges that TNB faced in implementing EQ that industry saw it as a 'program' rather than a research tool and the time it takes for change to occur through each layer of the supply chain, whether direct or indirect. Simplifying the language around EQ for operators and referencing it as a tool rather than a program has helped alleviate confusion. As Emilie Comeau-Sinclair explained, *"It's constant, you constantly have to bring it [EQ] back on the table"*. Time and shared continued successes will only help the full integration of EQ within New Brunswick, specifically as operators see other operators improve their business.

TNB's Travel Trade and Travel Media departments have struggled with identifying best practices on how best to leverage EQ insights beyond alignment of content and messaging. However, by the second year using EQ, these units were taking advantage of the Department's improved, targeted content and images.



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Shediac Bay Cruises, New Brunswick

"What we have come to realize is that we are using [EQ] without realizing it because everything [content] now is all tagged and written to EQ types."

--Melanie Britton, Manager, Trade Sales

From an industry perspective, Linda Gaston states,

"it is difficult to stay on top of [EQ], especially in the peak of the season. You have to make sure that your staff is on top of it. Most travellers are not interested in answering the survey to find out their EQ type, so we have to dig a different way to get a sense of their traveller type."

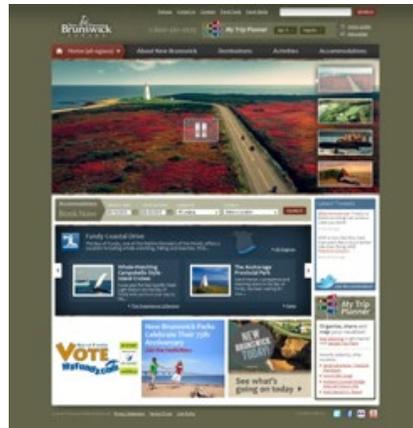
Training staff to understand the EQ types helps identify and engage appropriately with customers. Focus is now less on asking travellers to answer the EQ quiz and more on taking the EQ knowledge and applying it.

Results

Kim Matthews says that decisions about what TNB does and doesn't do are much easier now that they are focused on specific EQ types. Throughout the Department decisions are made based on a common view of customers and what experiences New Brunswick has to offer to its guests.

EQ has provided a common language with tourism partners such as the CTC and ACTP, and internally within the Department. *"We are more aligned and streamlined,"* states Melanie Britton. It has improved relations with industry and industry associations as it is clear that TNB is leveraging EQ across all activities and programs, resulting in a constant and consistent message from the Department.

TNB has put significant effort into evolving its messaging to best align with its primary EQ types. A case in point is the consumer website (www.tourismnewbrunswick.ca). Relunched in 2012, the entire site has been developed and rewritten based on New Brunswick's target EQ types. Three months after the launch of the new website, product and booking enquiries via web traffic were up 6.5%.



BEFORE EQ



AFTER EQ

Comparing TNB's consumer website design 'before' and 'after' simplifying the design for the key EQ groups: NHT or AE/CE. The department incorporated what was termed the 'EQ widget' as a call to action, which provided separate paths for each group. Site goal conversions did improve in 2012.

Advice for others considering using EQ

Kim Matthews advises to new licensees to work with Environics Analytics first to help determine the most appropriate EQ types to target, so the EQ implementation can be more tailored to jurisdictional needs. She also indicates there needs to be a balance between consideration and action:

"[EQ] will have you one step ahead in ensuring proper context is applied. Don't rush it. Get it figured out as an organization before you try to roll it out across your area. With that said, do not spend years analyzing data: make some decisions and tweak or evolve as you go -- learn what works and what does not."

Emilie Comeau-Sinclair recommends knowing all EQ types for your market, while focusing on two or three for marketing purposes:

"We were so focused on the primary three EQ types, that we didn't give the front line staff the right tools to serve all EQ types...Just because we are marketing to three, [we can't forget that] all types are coming, and the front line staff has to be able to identify and serve their guest with the right advice."

"EQ has made a significant impact, but it takes dedication and effort to ensure it moves from research to a 'way of life' or 'philosophy.'"

*Emilie Comeau-Sinclair, Manager Product Innovation,
Tourism New Brunswick*

Future plans with EQ

Moving forward, TNB will continue to work with operators and industry partners to make EQ actionable at an operator level. Great strides have been made; however, as stated by Emilie Comeau-Sinclair, it requires bringing EQ back to the table, and ensuring it remains at the centre of what they do. *“We have an opportunity to evolve and grow our product offering, based on EQ and that is our focus.”*

From a marketing perspective, TNB will continue to measure and tweak its campaigns based on what it has learned thus far. Focus will be placed on maximizing learning from social channels and ensuring a consistently integrated campaign is developed, executed, monitored and measured.

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Margaret Mackenzie, Manager Media and Public Relations, Tourism New Brunswick

Linda Gaston, Executive Director, Atlantic Salmon Museum and President, Miramichi River Tourism Association

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