GREAT ESCAPERS
Why segmentation?

In order to attract more of the right type of visitors and grow Ireland’s tourism economy, Ireland’s tourism agencies have developed an overseas segmentation model spanning the most important source markets: Europe, Great Britain1 and the USA.

This segmentation model is focused on understanding visitor motivations and needs and then grouping those visitors with similar behaviours and needs together (segmenting) in order to better target visitors through sales and marketing activity and also to develop the right type of visitor experiences to meet their needs.

Seven segments were identified as being most likely to visit Ireland; three of these segments are being prioritised based upon their likelihood to actually visit Ireland, and both the economical and geographical return on investment that they would yield for the tourism industry.

The 3 segments with the strongest potential for Ireland are:

- Social Energisers
- Culturally Curious
- Great Escapers

Most visitors to Ireland, display similar expectations, motivations and desires from their ‘Ireland’ holiday. They all want to get away from it all, have fun, experience new things, meet locals etc. They all seek a city break and enjoy a touring holiday. They enjoy nature, walking and boat trips, local food and music.

It is the degree to which certain segments distinctly behave and purposefully seek out certain experiences over others that makes them distinctive and interesting.

Here we focus on the distinctions and nuances surrounding the Great Escapers. We will look at who they are and what motivates them. What are they looking for from a holiday in Ireland, how they come to book their holiday – their holiday journey, and more importantly what we need to know and do as tourism businesses and destinations in order to grow market share from this segment.

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1 Great Britain excludes Northern Ireland
Great Escapers highlights

Great Escapers are

1. In need of downtime to escape from their busy lives so they can reconnect with themselves and loved ones.
2. Sociable and enjoy interacting with local people as a means of understanding the living culture and hearing their stories through music, food and dance etc.
3. Connected with nature and enjoy experiencing and watching the changing landscape as it can offer respite they need from everyday life.
4. Memory makers and will want to make treasured life-long memories while on holiday with their family and/or friends.
5. Off season travellers and will travel mainly in Spring and Autumn.
6. Independent, will hire a car and spend one to three days in a city and then tour mainly in a rural area to discover the local hidden gems.
7. Very price and value conscious.
8. Planners and need a lot of reassurance, planning and seeking personal and trusted recommendations before and during their holiday.
9. Value seekers who will stay in a variety of good-value, quality local accommodation from B&Bs to self-catering.
10. Active and enjoy outdoor activities such as walking, hiking, cycling, water activities, boat trips etc.
Who are they and what motivates them?

Visitors who are looking to escape from it all; seeking a badly needed break from the everyday pressures of work and home

Great Escapers are the segment which are the most motivated by the need to spend quality time together, enjoying new experiences, learning about other cultures and exploring new places together in order to create lasting memories. Great Escapers span a range of age groups with most of them aged between 34 to 54. They have a slightly higher tendency than other segments to have children; however, they travel just as often as a couple as they do with children. The goal is to return home recharged and invigorated, helping them to balance and reassess what’s really important in life.

Great Escapers are looking to experience natural beauty in gentle isolation; to chill out and slow down. They wind down by enjoying the beauty of the landscape and being connected to nature. Rural touring holidays which provide the promise of local, authentic communities and activities are top of their list. However, they will expect to incorporate a stay or visit to one or more cities as part of the itinerary.

Great Escapers are largely risk averse; they are not very interested in being the first to try new things. They therefore need reassurance that their choice has been ‘tried and tested’ and openly seek feedback and recommendations from others to help them decide. They are not particularly large users of social media they prefer personal recommendations from people they know.

They are not as well travelled as other segments and tend to revert to similar holidays in similar countries/destinations. They often feel anxious and worried about their finances; they are therefore price and value conscious and focus on finding good value for money. Hence, they look for bundles and all-inclusive offerings. Destinations which deliver on the Great Escapers motivations, will reap the rewards of their loyalty, promoting repeat family memory-making visits for years to come.

Great Escapers are the most pragmatic of all the segments in their approach to holiday decision-making; they focus on what they want to get out of the holiday rather than the destination itself.

Despite their cautious nature, they do take holidays and they will spend. They are also the group which are most likely to book package deals, take longer holidays and tour a wider area (even the more isolated locations) and are likely to return, hence they are of significant economic value to Ireland. They will typically spend an average 7.17 days on holiday where 1 to 3 of those days is spent in a city or urban environment and the majority spent touring a rural area.
Great Escapers plan well in advance

This group have perhaps the broadest range of factors to consider in choosing and booking a holiday. They have to satisfy the disparate needs of an evolving family unit, with the need for assurances, quality, escapism, safety, cultural enrichment, and those vital memory-making experiences, while still getting what they perceive as value for money. Not surprisingly, they plan extensively and well in advance and weigh up all their options before making a final decision. Great Escapers will seek advice and reassurance from tourist offices, online and from locals at regular stages throughout their holiday – i.e. official and trustworthy sources.

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Data sources: Fáilte Ireland Survey of Overseas Travellers, 2015 and Fáilte Ireland Global Segmentation Research, 2015
60% of visitors are from mainland Europe

Mainland Europe markets of France and Germany present a sizeable market opportunity of 19.2m Great Escapers; 25% of all Great Escapers who visited Ireland in 2015 came from Europe, with Germany being dominant. Being in the Eurozone with ever-improving access, and having a good understanding of Ireland’s brand destination and a greater propensity to travel beyond Dublin, positions Germany and France as strong prospects for Ireland’s destination experience offering.

The GB market, on the other hand has a smaller Great Escaper market, in terms of numbers of people, at 5.6m. However, in 2015, 12% of all Great Escapers visiting Ireland came from GB, which indicates that GB visitors have a greater propensity to visit given their proximity and ease of access. The recent uncertainty in relation to currency and value arising from Brexit, coupled with the need for Ireland’s Ancient East and the Wild Atlantic Way to compete with GB in terms of an easier and evolved staycation market, presents significant challenges for the GB market in 2017 and beyond.

Given the overall geographical size of the USA it is therefore of no surprise that the USA is the largest source market for all segments. The importance of the USA market is borne out in past performance where 16% of all Great Escapers to Ireland in 2015 came from the USA. Although the USA is set to remain a dominant Great Escaper source market, it is important to consider external factors that may impact on the American visitor coming to Ireland. Factors such as travel costs, journey time and, in particular, escalating safety issues, may impact on the likelihood and frequency of travel from the USA. Therefore, all markets are important.

Segment size by market, 2016 (millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Segment Size (millions)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>12.7m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>6.5m</td>
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<tr>
<td>GB</td>
<td>5.6m</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>14.9m</td>
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</tbody>
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4 Source: Tourism Ireland GTI Survey, 2016

€90.46
Great Escapers average spend per day
Stay longer than the average overseas holiday maker

[Image of family with suitcase]
What are they seeking from a holiday in Ireland?

When Great Escapers think of their ultimate ‘get away from it all’ holiday, Ireland is one of the destinations at the top of their list alongside destinations such as Scotland.

This is good news; although there is also a challenge for Ireland to ensure it has strong and distinctive points of difference above other similar ‘cultural-landscape’ destinations such as Scotland. Equally positive is the Great Escaper’s high intention to visit Ireland. Great Escapers from Germany and the USA are the most positive towards Ireland as a holiday destination whereas Great Escapers from the UK and France are more critical and need a more compelling sell. Despite the positive disposition of Great Escapers in general towards Ireland, there is a challenge for Ireland to move ‘intention’ into ‘action.’

The core emotive need for the Great Escaper is to **immerse themselves** into Ireland through a series of unusual and seasonal experiences. First and foremost, driving through the scenic, rugged, unspoilt, primal landscape. Then experiencing first-hand the stunning tracts of landscape via walking and cycle trails, and strolls along the beach, etc. They are very much **interested in living, rather than observing, the landscape.**

Ireland offers the promise of beautiful, unspoilt land and seascapes, authentic culture, magical moments, a focus on people, togetherness and family and an earthy ‘realness’ which Great Escapers seek as a **respite from their busy lives.**

Great Escapers are therefore most likely to visit Ireland in the **Autumn or Spring,** when nature is going through a transformative phase, when there are fewer mainstream tourists (and therefore more authentic experiences), when prices are more attractive and when missing the good weather is not an issue. The challenge is to ensure there is enough to see and do in the off-season.

**Social Interaction with local people is really important** to Great Escapers. They see the **people and landscape as being somewhat fused.** Together they deliver an almost magical sense of a truly original and ancient culture, full of mystic, magic, character and unparalleled traditions and of course strong family, ‘people first’ values. Great Escapers have **little real interest in more formal cultural artefacts** such as museums, historical trails, but rather enjoy interacting with and having fun with local people. They also enjoy **local people being interested in them:** it provides them with the reassurance that they and their lives are interesting to others. Great Escapers will seek opportunities for local interaction in a fun local and authentic environment; for e.g. local music, dance, pub, festivals. While the local Irish pub is an obvious (and important) social touchpoint for Great Escapers, so too is the opportunity to stay in smaller, more authentic guesthouses/B&Bs, hostels, working farms.
What are they seeking from a holiday in Ireland? [continued]

The food experience is as much about witnessing quality local cooking in local restaurants and pubs as it is about the meal itself.

Great Escapers will want to get active together in the outdoors. Therefore, activities need to be appropriate for a couple or family unit of varying age and ability and can range from walking, hiking, cycling to visiting an outdoor adventure park or hiring a boat and spending a day or two cruising along Ireland's waterways. Great Escapers will need reassurance and information around safety, quality assurances, transparency around cost, "do’s' and don’ts", location, services, food, transport, timings etc.

Great Escapers will also want to visit the top attractions, but they’re not interested in interacting with other tourists preferring to be surrounded by the ‘real Ireland’. They will want to feel a strong connection to the story behind the attraction, that they have had fun together and learned something together which will form part of their lifelong memory bank.

It is important to remember that touring in itself is a holiday experience for the Great Escapers and it is therefore important that they feel both safe and familiar with the area. They want to succeed in their own explorations and need to feel self-enabled. Easy, understandable wayfinding and multi-lingual tourist information, good local knowledge and efficient facilities and supporting services are critical to the touring experience.

Great Escapers like touring and finding their way around themselves by exploring the destination therefore it is vital that they have a clear sense of the geographical layout of the country. This has been stated as a barrier, and this in itself, is a major inhibitor for the Great Escaper as they are risk averse and like to plan in advance some of the finer details of their trip i.e. how long it is likely to take and even, consequently, how much it might cost to complete their journey.

Wild Atlantic Way

The Wild Atlantic Way proposition is more appealing to the Great Escapers from all markets than to any other segment. It epitomises how they view Ireland; almost in a mesmeric, romantic and mystical way, an untouched wilderness, full of varied and extreme landscapes; all preserved. The Wild Atlantic Way's unique Atlantic culture and people, whose lives, like the landscape, have been shaped by the sea is equally evocative. It is believable, true, warm, wholesome, faithful and authentic; mirroring Great Escapers own values around family and spending quality time together.

Having a number of cities and large towns on or near the Wild Atlantic Way adds to the appeal for the Great Escapers who will seek a mix of rural and urban experience.
What are they seeking from a holiday in Ireland? [continued]

Being active together along areas of particular beauty and natural interest such as trekking, horse-riding or cycling through national parks, beach and water activities, cliff top walks, boat trips to the islands and whale/dolphin watching is top of their list for Great Escapers. The true, natural wildness of the Wild Atlantic Way is critical for this group and needs to permeate their entire holiday. Wild land and seascapes; the true colours, smells, textures and taste of real food; the flora and fauna; the wild care-free nature of the people, their traditions and customs and even the wildness of the weather all add to that sense of 'a place apart' which Great Escapers most desire from a holiday.

Ireland’s Ancient East

The prospect of getting out and active in a lush green landscape, seeing local towns, villages and communities being brought to life through colour, festivals, arts and food and the overall fusion of an enriching culture, a land of stories told by the local people is really motivating for Great Escapers. The mystical and somewhat magical tone of Ireland’s Ancient East brand appeals to this segment. Almost fairy tale like, but firmly rooted in strong values, traditions and truths. Great Escapers are less interested in museums or more formal heritage attractions but will enjoy learning through local stories and people in communities and through their touring and explorations. Ireland’s Ancient East with its easily accessible multi-city options and large towns and endless touring options (by foot, bike, car, inland boat cruising) ideally complements Dublin as part of a longer stay Great Escaper itinerary. The challenge for Ireland’s Ancient East is to present easily navigable touring routes which can be quickly and easily understood. This provides the assurances and confidence which Great Escapers need.

Dublin and Ireland’s Cities

Although the mainstay of their typical holiday will involve escaping into and engaging with nature, a few days (between 1-3 days) will be spent exploring Dublin and the city’s ‘iconic’ sights (Guinness Store House, Dublin Castle, Trinity College, etc.) during the day, but also the opportunity to explore the real Dublin, encountering real Dubliners, by night.

As with most segments, Great Escapers want to experience ‘the lesser known Dublin’ through walking tours of coastal villages; engaging in the local entertainment scene, and local bars and restaurants.

Apart from Dublin there is little knowledge or appreciation of other cities (with the exception of perhaps Cork and Belfast), although it is assumed that their travels will take them through a variety of smaller towns or villages, where they imagine spending their evenings. The non-Dublin urban experience is about identifying smaller towns and villages of great architectural and historical character, staying in local accommodation, eating authentic food and having social interaction and listening to local music.

The low awareness of cities beyond Dublin presents a significant opportunity for the cities within Ireland’s Ancient East and along, or close to, the Wild Atlantic Way to become touring stop-overs for Great Escapers.
What influences their holiday decision?

Great Escapers are very practical in their comparison of destinations. They focus on what they want to get out of a holiday rather than on the destination itself. Their choice of holiday is therefore very dependent on a destination clearly demonstrating they can deliver on their holiday ‘wishlist’.

Their key motivation for a holiday is essentially seeking an escape from the pressures of their everyday life by slowing down to a different pace of life, feeling connected to nature and enjoying the beauty of the landscape. Everything on their holiday ‘wishlist’ they see as helping to achieve this. For example, they like to be moderately active on a holiday and will research (using both online and offline resources) local activity options to ensure a diverse range available.

Great Escapers are not risk takers and opt for a ‘safe’ option that will deliver on their expectations. They therefore refer to official and trustworthy sources of information such as tourist board websites and literature and are highly influenced by customer reviews. They are the most likely of all segments to book a package deal.

The Great Escaper will research extensively various price options both on and offline and choose the best package deal. They value word of mouth from family and friends and can influence potential future visitors to go where they have been. They are not high users of social media so once in a destination they like to receive or gather information via local people and literature. Once they return home they will share photos and experiences online via Instagram, Facebook and more importantly will chat to their family and friends about what they experienced on holiday.
The visitor journey

The visitor journey depicts the stages a visitor typically goes through when taking a holiday.

The initial motivation for a holiday stems from the need to get away from it all, escape from the pressures of life and reconnect with loved ones. Great Escapers consider a number of countries and destinations categorising them under “great landscape”; “good for scenery” “good for hiking” “great authentic culture” etc. Once the need for a holiday is triggered, this consideration list is called upon. Hence the importance of international marketing of Ireland, the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland’s Ancient East and Dublin by Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland. However, destination influences come from a wide mix of sources such as recommendations from people we know, documentaries, magazines, Irish music and the arts etc.

Great Escapers notice travel related content on their social channels, search online for inspiration and pay attention to travel ads on TV, print and online. They will be particularly interested in destinations with cultured landscape; a place where they can explore, connect with ‘real’ local people, experience new things, have fun and new adventures together and make life-long memories. They search online, visiting a multitude of websites such as: tourist board sites, travel review and travel agent websites and will review travel guidebooks. They read articles in newspaper travel magazines, watch travel related videos on YouTube and browse pictures on Instagram. Great Escapers rely heavily on recommendations of people they know and trust in helping them decide on one destination over another.

Here the top internationally-recognised attractions along with distinctive destination brands such as Ireland’s Ancient East and in particular, the Wild Atlantic Way come to the fore. Therefore, it is important that tourism businesses are aligned with these brands and use their marketing power to present their own business experience to an international audience.

The travel booking stage is quite complex; a variety of on and offline sources of information and influences are sought before they make a choice. They must be easily able to conjure up a mental map that is instantly navigable communicating ease of access, various locations, journey times, distance and a sense of lots to see and do. Failure to provide essential information early on in the visitor journey could result in Ireland being seen as ‘too difficult’, ‘too vague’ and therefore too risky, and the potential visitor goes elsewhere. At this stage the focus is on practical information around travel and accommodation and an assurance of lots to do. Stress free transport connectivity is very important as Great Escapes will want to eliminate travel delays and problems. They start the journey clock from the moment they leave their home until the point of final arrival to their accommodation so it is therefore important that full travel information and timelines are provided up front.

Great Escapers search online for the best deals in flights, car hire and then research accommodation (hotels, B&Bs, self-catering) options that are near to beautiful places with the right mix of escapism and exploration. They also search for offers for couples and/or families.
Generally, transport (including car hire) and accommodation are booked in advance; things to see and do are not booked in advance unless central to the holiday, such as concert/festival tickets or to ensure access to an attraction that requires pre-booking. However this is set to change as more and more online tour operators (OTAs) are starting to push booking facilities for a wider range of experiences. Being cautious and value conscious, Great Escapers spend the majority of time at this stage to ensure they secure the best deals and make the best choice. It is really important that Ireland’s tourism offering makes an impact at this stage offering a range of price points and options, quality experiences and good practical information.

Great Escapers spend the most time of any segment planning their itinerary. Itineraries provide assurance against boredom or disappointment and help mitigate against unforeseen costs. Whereas a large amount of itinerary advice will be sought through personal recommendations, Great Escapers will search online for more detailed, up to date information and special deals.

On arrival, the destination must work and live up to the promise. Businesses that proactively work to ensure visitors have lots of choice and receive the very best destination experience will benefit most. Local information sources are particularly important for Great Escapers including tourist offices, accommodation providers, restaurants/bars, taxi drivers etc.; all of which should be an advocate for your business. Great Escapers will be looking for the real story locally; going where locals go where they are assured of a genuinely different, and less touristy experience as well as local prices.

The post-holiday experience is often overlooked, missing an important opportunity to maintain a connection with the visitor for mutual benefit – their memories and choices are reinforced through word of mouth and your business experience is widely promoted. On return home, they put together albums of the trip, share photos and videos of the spectacular scenery and family/friends photos engaging in outdoor activities via Facebook and Instagram. They write online reviews and recommend Ireland as the perfect Great Escape destination to their family/friends (off and online).

Great Escapers tend to take the same type of holiday each year and are highly likely to return if the destination experience lives up to their expectations. There is an opportunity to tap into their loyalty, their family memories and their price-consciousness by collecting customer data and contacting them with incentives to return.
The Great Escaper journey

**HOLIDAY TRIGGER**

**GREAT ESCAPER INSIGHT**

I need to escape from the pressures of my daily life – complete downtime!

**DESTINATION PRIORITY**

Get on the radar; strong interest in touring Ireland’s unspoilt ‘cultural’ landscape and in particular the Wild Atlantic.

Increase on and offline publicity particularly focusing on the destination’s environmental and cultural profile.

Encourage word of mouth via Trip Advisor and other review sites.

**INDUSTRY PRIORITY**

During the holiday trigger stage the visitor prioritises where they are travelling to - the destination, rather than the business.
DESTINATION CHOICE

GREAT ESCAPER INSIGHT

Value recommendations by
- Colleagues, peers, friends, family
- Environmental media
- Cultural media

Recognised famous sights/must see attractions and famous historical events will appeal to them.

Cultural Events & festivals (e.g. music, food, arts) will also appeal to them.

Value is important and they will seek a quality destination with a range of value price points to select from.

**To be considered, a destination must appear easy and safe to get to and navigate around.** Direct access – door to door journey time. Require mental map of destination for reassurance before booking. Want to tour extensively therefore need lots of assurance around destination infrastructure, services, orientation, distances, pitfalls and hidden costs etc.

DESTINATION PRIORITY

Accentuate the unspoilt landscape – scenic unpopulated images, environmental designations, accolades such as UNESCO.

Show images of outdoor activity within the landscape (walking/hiking etc.)

Present the area as a touring route with suggested itineraries for couples and families.

Highlight towns and cities along the touring route.

Present a unique and accessible local culture, through local pubs, music, festivals, crafts, traditional sports and the arts.

Highlight top attractions; that have great local stories etc.

Promote easy-access, ease of touring, friendly locals and quality accommodation.

Supported by a clear mind-map of lots to see and do and how visitors can get there, including transport options, journey times, distances, weather, recommendations and all relevant information.

Highlight quality, fresh local produce, sustainably produced, well prepared in local restaurants and bars.

Get involved with digital marketing; present a strong image and video bank; curate and re-purpose blog posts and ensure influential peer sites such as Trip Advisor are advocating the right message.

INDUSTRY PRIORITY

Ensure your business is visible on Fáilte Ireland’s websites: the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland’s Ancient East and Visit Dublin.

Curate and re-purpose blog posts.

Invest in Web optimisation and paid searches using key phrases.

Ensure positive recommendations on advocacy sites such as Trip Advisor.

Optimise on and offline publicity from any angle possible (cultural media, environmental, nature and travel media).

Watch for topical trending opportunities particularly topics or people connected with rural and touring holiday destinations, the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland’s Ancient East, and link them to your business or location where possible.
TRAVEL BOOKING

GREAT ESCAPER INSIGHT
Book primarily online. May seek reassurance from travel agent but essentials such as transport (flights, ferry) car-hire and accommodation are primarily booked directly through online channels.

DESTINATION PRIORITY
Ensure the destination visibility and top experiences are strong across all on and offline media and ensure that everything on offer can be easily and instantly booked online.

Use social media and trending tools to ensure the destination is ‘constantly trending’ with relevant messaging and experiences for Great Escapers.

All booking platforms must be mobile enabled.

INDUSTRY PRIORITY
Accommodation and transport providers in particular must be mobile ready and must be present on as many booking sites as possible (including OTAs) with special value offers, particularly pushing value offers outside of peak season.

Package bundles and all-inclusive offers wherever possible; highlighting the savings to the customer.

ITINERARY PLANNING & BOOKING

GREAT ESCAPER INSIGHT
Plan a full itinerary, with varying options, in advance of arrival as assurance of covering off all the best attractions.

Will review and update the itinerary every few days drawing on local knowledge from tourist offices and local people to ensure covering off the very best local experiences and ‘hidden gems’ and receiving the best local offers.

DESTINATION PRIORITY
Provide practical information: journey times, distances, weather etc.

Provide information in various languages in order to make exploring easier and reduce anxiety.

Ensure the destination communicates a large array of things to see and do, highlighting the key attractions and the most locally distinctive cultural experiences including local entertainment, sport (GAA), Gaelic language and islands experiences.

Offer seasonal/tactical events and offers to drive sporadic bookings.

Ensure activities and attractions can be booked easily and directly on mobile with full disclosure of all costs and value pricing options.

INDUSTRY PRIORITY
Be present and visible on all digital platforms – the business must be mobile ready.

Your website must have a booking mechanism.

Ensure you are using strong landscape images along with images highlighting activities for couples and families in stunning landscape. Include evening images of socialising with locals in local bars and restaurants, festivals.

Offer tactical incentives, and all-in packages to encourage impulse-buying.

Partner with another business from your area to produce value bundled offers.

Use, curate and re-purpose blog posts.

Invest in Web optimisation and paid searches using key phrases.

Ensure positive recommendations on advocacy sites such as Trip Advisor.
GREAT ESCAPER INSIGHT

Stay locally in a range of accommodation (B&Bs, hotels, self-catering) mostly in a rural area (village or town) and explore from there by hiring a car.

Will stay in one to three different locations as part of the touring holiday – one likely to be a city.

Although will visit famous ‘must-see’ attractions, generally avoid tourist traps and will opt for more genuine, local experiences.

Enjoy social activity; preferably where the locals go. Local restaurant, bars, festivals and cultural/sporting events.

Great Escapers want to feel they are among people who are interested in them and their lives.

Understanding how local food is made and prepared is an important part of connecting with the landscape.

Want to log their holiday experiences together as part of their life-long memory bank.

Will actively take and share pictures of themselves in stunning scenery.

DESTINATION PRIORITY

Both off and online practical visitor information is vital. This group want relevant, real local information to avoid the tourist trails and to reduce risk of missing out on experiences or deals.

Daily “what’s on” listings are critical, particularly related to the local scene rather than ‘tourist information’.

Great Escapers prioritise recommendations from locals. Key local people such as tourist information staff, taxi drivers, concierges, publicans, café/restaurant staff, craft shops etc. among others are critical in providing the inside track.

DESTINATION PRIORITY

Continue publicity on and offline to reinforce positive memories.

Actively encourage ‘memory collecting’ and ‘memory-making’ by providing opportunities to collect souvenirs or ‘achievements’ and encouraging photo taking and sharing (for e.g. Wild Atlantic Way passport and viewing point markers).

Ask them to return – provide value incentives for them and their friends to holiday.

INDUSTRY PRIORITY

Ensure all visitor facing staff are fully informed to be able to advice on where the locals go and the truly authentic ‘must-see’ experiences.

Start up a conversation! Make the visitor feel special and interesting.

Ask for contact details and develop a database which can be used for further marketing.

Ensure you work with your local tourist information office.

Encourage visitors to share positive reviews.

Surprise them with something which can act as a souvenir of their holiday together.

Cross promote with relevant local industry partners to upsell experiences; keeping it local and keeping it real. Provide special value incentives.

Ensure local accommodation providers are fully aware of and advocate your business.

POST HOLIDAY

GREAT ESCAPER INSIGHT

Openly relay their experience: positive reviews are relayed to friends and family.

High likelihood to return and will actively encourage others to visit.

DESTINATION PRIORITY

Continue publicity on and offline to reinforce positive memories.

ACTIVELY ENCOURAGE ‘MEMORY COLLECTING’ AND ‘MEMORY-MAKING’ BY PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO COLLECT SOUVENIRS OR ‘ACHIEVEMENTS’ AND ENCOURAGING PHOTO TAKING AND SHARING (FOR E.G. WILD ATLANTIC WAY PASSPORT AND VIEWING POINT MARKERS).

Ask them to return – provide value incentives for them and their friends to holiday.

INDUSTRY PRIORITY

Share a social media memory and ask them to return perhaps with family to reconnect, explore and make more memories together.

Gather user-generated content for your website.

Engage in social media conversations.

Run competitions to promote advocacy i.e. share a photo or a caption about something you did on holiday.
Destinations need to

- Use images that are stunning and enticing on all of your marketing material.

- Offer an authentic experience that shows the real Ireland and life of the Irish people.

- Show engagement with the landscape through gentle activities such as walking, cycling, hiking and gentle water-activities including boat-trips highlighting what’s special about the land/seascape in terms of flora and fauna.

- Highlight ‘Big Ticket’ items: famous attractions and events with worldwide reputation which reinforce the ‘quality’ and depth of the destinations. Include accolades which elevate the destination’s international status around nature, the environment and living culture such as UNESCO status and protected areas designated with special environmental and wildlife qualities.

- What’s on locally: present ‘hidden gem’ experiences that are beyond the tourist trail including local cultural, sporting and community events. Information on where the locals go, highlighting good value for money, locally sourced food and entertainment.

- Show local people, treating visitors as locals, in marketing material.

- Ensure all required information about the destination is easily and readily available in a language that can be understood by the visitor. Including transport details both door to door and in-destination, connections, distances, journey times by foot, car and costs etc.

- Offer different options of touring and exploring the area such as by boat including 1-3 day boat cruising of inland waterways.

- Promote access to Gaeltacht areas to allow visitors experience the native language first hand in a relaxed, community setting.

- Promote the islands off Ireland’s West Coast as a very unique and authentic cultural and environmental experience.

- Promote and tell the local stories of regional historical sites in a fun and entertaining way for all the family.

- Offer a range of accommodation options and price points in villages, towns and cities.

- Build in a loyalty programme to incentivise Great Escapers to collect memories and return to build on their bank of memories.
Align your business offering with an Ireland destination brand (either Ireland’s Ancient East or the Wild Atlantic Way).

Use impactful landscape images and video content - not only as a means of attracting business, but also while the visitor is with you and after they leave. This keeps the conversation going, keeps the memory going and encourages wider sharing and promotion of your business.

Think of how you can either present your current business offering or modify your offering to connect more to the local landscape and local culture.

Consider how to offer all-inclusive or packaged options and promote special offers across all channels, especially digital channels.

Your website needs to be easy to navigate and easy to book (for desktop, mobile and tablet). Make your ‘contact us’ details prominent.

On social media, write highlighted posts based on hidden gems, get away locations etc.

Utilise paid search (Adwords) to appear for relevant search terms (your business name and local activities).

Use retargeting advertising (remarketing) to push a final sale. These ads target people who have visited your site but did not convert on the first visit.

Monitor review sites (Trip Advisor etc.) and respond to comments and actively encourage visitors to leave positive reviews and share photos.

Know how to manage the yield in your business in order to effectively and profitably work a number of channel intermediaries. Online Tour Operators (OTAs) are an established booking channel particularly for accommodation; but many are adding ‘things to see and do’ to their booking platforms which present new international sales opportunities for a wider mix of tourism businesses.

Work as a community – both a ‘business community’ cross selling offerings and a ‘tourism community’ ensuring there are local advocates or ambassadors within the community to pass on the inside track to visitors.

Develop a customer database and ask visitors not only for their information but explore their interests as well.

Ensure the local tourist information office is aware of and promoting your business with the correct information.

Offer an added value food experience by sharing how the story of local produce, how it is farmed and prepared.

Speak specifically to Great Escapers core motivations by tapping into their need to feel transformed, to reconnect and reenergised by drawing on people values and their desire to create lasting memories from their time on holiday.

Your website needs to be easy to navigate and easy to book (for desktop, mobile and tablet). Make your ‘contact us’ details prominent.

On social media, write highlighted posts based on hidden gems, get away locations etc.

Utilise paid search (Adwords) to appear for relevant search terms (your business name and local activities).

Use retargeting advertising (remarketing) to push a final sale. These ads target people who have visited your site but did not convert on the first visit.

Monitor review sites (Trip Advisor etc.) and respond to comments and actively encourage visitors to leave positive reviews and share photos.

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