

The Divergent Media Preferences Of Border Buddies:

US vs. Canada



Study by

Development Counsellors International
Tourism Practice
December 2014



It's no secret that Canadian visitors are the primary international visitors for most U.S. travel destinations. With the rise of investment from Brand USA in courting the Canadian traveler, many U.S. destination marketing organizations (DMO) public relations professionals are turning their attention to pitching media outlets north of the border. The goal? Maximize the financial investment being made in the market by increasing awareness of their destination through feature editorial coverage.

But how do editorial and writer preferences in Canada differ from those of their American counterparts?

In late 2013 and early 2014, Development Counsellors International surveyed 100 travel and lifestyle journalists in both countries to determine the similarities and differences in editorial preferences. The findings not only aid U.S. and Canadian media relations specialists in accurately presenting information to writers in both countries, but provide insight for international public relations professionals who are engaging with media from these countries at ITB, WTM, VMEX or the variety of international media marketplaces that have recently arrived on the global radar.



UNITED WE STAND

What are the most useful items in an online media room?

While there is little disparity among market preferences, 11% more Canadian media find access to images and photos as useful in an online media room.

Images/Photos



Press Releases



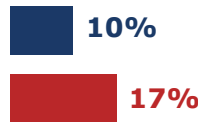
Story Ideas



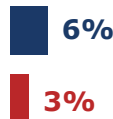
Itineraries



Videos



PR Contact Information



What social media platforms do you reference to spark story ideas?

While 25% of media in both markets do not reference any social media platforms to spark story ideas, 20% more journalists in the United States leverage LinkedIn for this purpose. Pinterest was noted by 19% of U.S. media, but not at all referenced by Canadian media – an interesting twist given Canadian media’s strong preference for image availability in online news rooms.

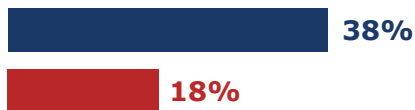
Facebook



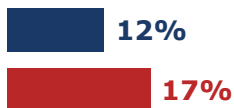
Twitter



LinkedIn



Instagram



Pinterest



YouTube



None



Out of 100%, what percentage of your stories begin with a pitch from a publicist?

Try not to get discouraged that travel media do not consider the “power of the pitch” as an influential story source based on this question.

5 Percent



10 Percent



25 Percent



30 Percent



50 Percent



In an additional question provided only to media in the United States, an interesting finding emerges: 62% of respondents indicate that “pitches” influence the topics on which they will write.

How do you determine what you will write about?

United States Media Preferences	
Personal Interest	79%
Assignment	69%
Trends	67%
Pitches	62%
Other Media	27%
Colleagues	26%
Friends	17%

Since the term “pitches” could reflect either a pitch from a publicist, a pitch from a freelance writer to an editor or junior editor to a senior editor, we leave you with this: Media relations is a billion dollar business... Let the record show there’s still value in mutual collaboration.

What social media platforms do you use to distribute content while on assignment in a destination?

With the rise in influence of digital media, destinations are continually seeking to leverage the investment in visiting journalist programs by maximizing the presence of visiting media while they are traveling in a destination. No matter the market, Facebook and Twitter are kings.

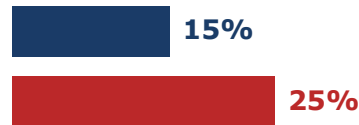
Facebook



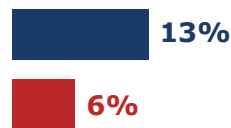
Twitter



Instagram



LinkedIn



Pinterest



YouTube



U.S. Canada



WHERE WE DIVERGE

What words in an email subject line catch your attention?

Inspiring a journalist to open an email is half the battle. Thus it's important to know what words best resonate in each market when trying to capture a journalist's attention with an email subject line. Nearly 1/3 of Canadian journalists are captivated by the word "new." Journalists from the U.S. were not swayed by the term "exclusive." (Note: Percentages noted below equal the percentage of journalists indicating the response out of a total of 100 journalists.)

United States Media Preferences	
Press/FAM Trip	13%
New	13%
Invite or Invitation	9%
The Destination Name	9%
My "Publication's Name" or "Column Name"	5%

Canadian Media Preferences	
New	28%
Invite or Invitation	18%
Press/FAM Trip	18%
The Destination Name or Topic	13%
Exclusive	8%

What story angles are you tired of being pitched?

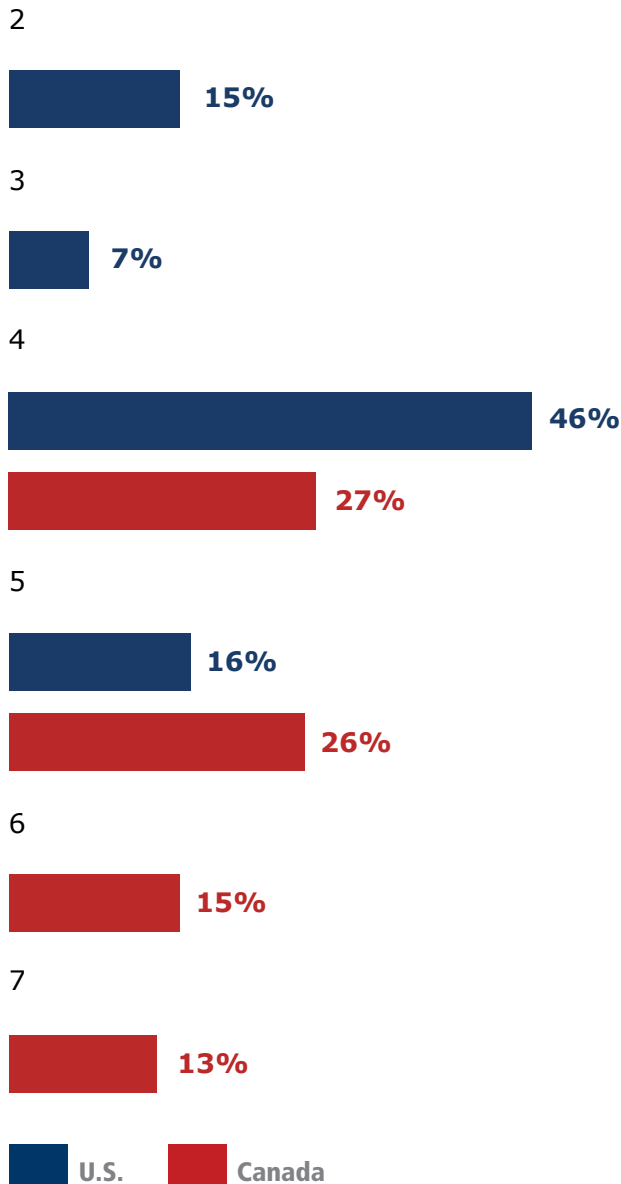
As a publicist it's always good to remain on top of the story angles journalists are no longer interested in pursuing. While the low percentages below indicate a vast quantity of divergent responses, one thing remains clear, journalists don't want their time wasted! So pitching angles that are not custom-tailored to their beat is futile. (Note: Percentages noted below equal the percentage of journalists indicating the response out of a total of 100 journalists.)

United States Media Preferences	
Hotel Renovations/New Staff	15%
Irrelevant Angles (Not Geared To Publication)	11%
"Something For Everyone" (Generic)	10%
Book Reviews/Authors	7%
Farm To Table	6%
Holiday—Themes	4%
"Experts"	3%

Canadian Media Preferences	
Hotel Renovations/New Staff	11%
Facts—Not Stories	10%
Farm To Table/ Sustainability	9%
Irrelevant Angles—Stories Unrelated To Me/My Audience	8%
New Dining/ Food Trucks	6%
Family—Friendly	5%
Holidays/ Special Events	4%

How many days is the ideal length for a press trip?

While both markets are unanimous in their top preferences of 4 (1st choice) to 5 (2nd choice) day press trips, American travel writers are more pronounced in their preference for four day visits to a destination. Market preference truly diverged after the top two preferences, with American journalists preferring shorter press trips and Canadian journalists preferring longer press trips.



What activity takes up the largest portion of your day?

It's often difficult to place yourself in someone else's shoes. So we wanted to provide publicists with a sense of what a "day in the life of a travel journalist" looks like these days.

United States Media Preferences		Canadian Media Preferences	
1st	Writing	Tie for 1st	Email
2nd	Email	Tie for 1st	Writing
3rd	Editing	2nd	Research

What is the best time of the day to attend a media event?

As publicists, we're often trying to woo journalists from their offices for a bit of face-time. So we were curious, in the midst of a busy day—writing, emailing, editing and researching—what's the best time to meet a journalist face-to-face?

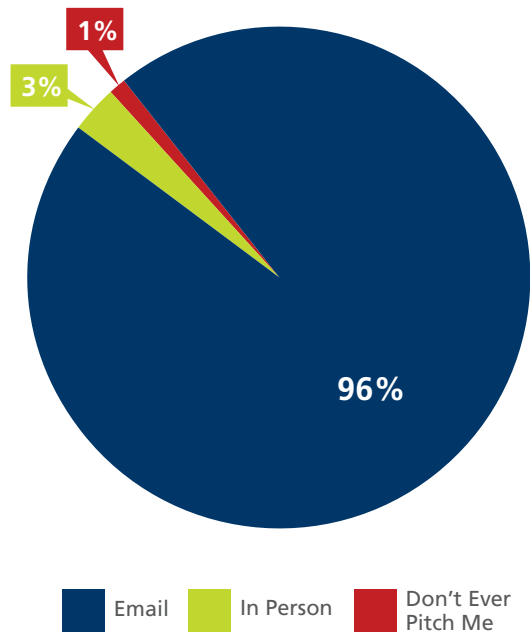
United States Media Preferences		Canadian Media Preferences	
1st	Lunch	1st	Lunch
2nd	Cocktail reception	2nd	Cocktail reception
3rd	Dinner	3rd	Dinner
4th	Breakfast	4th	Breakfast
5th	Never	5th	Never (with only 1 response)

MORE INSIGHT INTO AMERICAN MEDIA

In addition to the questions above, we delved even further into the mindset of U.S. travel and lifestyle journalists.

How do you prefer to be pitched a new story idea?

Safe to say, email continues to be the platform most preferred by journalists.





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