

## **Tourism BC to expand personalized service**

The program delivers information more tailored to a potential tourist's needs

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Vancouver Sun

*Wednesday, January 25, 2006*

Tourism BC will boost its annual BC Escapes campaign to attract more U.S. and Canadian visitors to B.C. by building on a recent test program that delivered more focused and more personalized information to potential visitors.

Tourism BC consumer programs marketing manager Joel Tkach said Tuesday that the cost savings will help the agency's return on investment in the annual campaign increase by about 25 per cent.

The provincial tourism marketing agency worked with Xerox Canada last year to deliver 5,000 personalized 24-page brochures between April and August to people who called Tourism BC's travel hotline or visited its website to get information about B.C. getaways. Selected clients who completed a survey about their travel plans were then sent brochures with information and images targeted for their needs.

If a client said they were a family with young children, interested in visiting Vancouver in the summer and staying in medium-priced hotels, they'd receive a brochure with information about things to do with children in Vancouver during the summer and options on mid-priced accommodation.

Tkach said that in the past, that family would have received two brochures with 112 pages of general information but the more focused 24-page brochure is just as effective at enticing people to visit the province and it's far less expensive to mail them.

It cost \$2.45 to mail the traditional package in Canada but just \$1 to mail the smaller brochure. In the U.S., the mailing cost dropped from \$5.80 to \$1.70.

The \$6.1-million BC Escapes campaign last year generated about \$85 million in tourism revenues throughout B.C.

"The biggest positive [of the one-to-one marketing campaign] is getting more relevant information from consumers and using it wisely so they're more interested in exchanging information and continuing a dialogue," Tkach said. "To me, that's the highest level of satisfaction we can get as

direct marketers because it ultimately leads to more visitation and higher numbers."

Tourism BC has a database of about one million North American households and about 65 per cent of them want Tourism BC to send them more information about the province.

"We've learned it's important to be relevant to customers and to deliver the right kind of information to them in the way they want it," Tkach said. ". . . Our one-to-one approach this year will move to an online environment by delivering an e-mail communication to consumers with the same degree of personalization as these printed guides."

Xerox Canada will release the results of similar one-to-one marketing case studies involving other Canadian companies later this year.

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