



VISITOR ORIENTATION RESEARCH

COLORADO TOURISM OFFICE

REPORT

Prepared by:

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VISITOR ORIENTATION RESEARCH

FINDINGS FROM IN-HOME INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED IN NEW YORK,
CALIFORNIA, AND GEORGIA

INTRODUCTION

Corona Research is pleased to present this report to the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO). The following report includes a description of the project design, methodology, implementation, and findings from the research, including both detailed and key findings.

BACKGROUND

In August, 2008, the CTO retained Corona Research to conduct market research with various audiences in three cities outside Colorado, related to their typical travel planning process and how they orient themselves to Colorado. Corona conducted in-home interviews with individuals, couples, and families from these different audiences.

PROJECT DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Corona Research conducted a total of 39 interview sessions. Interviews were conducted in three different locations, each comprising a seven-mile radius in the New York, Atlanta, and San Diego metropolitan areas, respectively. Appendix A provides documentation on how the specific markets and radii were selected, along with maps of the specific radii.

Recruiting was initialized by a mailing distributed to a listed sample of residents with addresses within the defined seven mile radius in each of the three metropolitan areas chosen. The letters announced the upcoming interviews and encouraged interested respondents to call Corona's office to speak with a representative. Upon calling, potential participants were asked a series of questions to determine whether they qualified to participate in the study. If the caller qualified, the recruiter scheduled the caller for an interview.

Callers were asked for some demographic information such as ethnicity, age, and level of income, for the purpose of assuring that interviews would be conducted with a mix of individuals. Additionally, potential participants were asked about their travel habits. Recruiters made certain that the caller was open to travel beyond his or her own state by asking about past travel and intentions to do so in the future. Potential interviewees were given a list of several destinations, and were asked if they were interested in traveling to those destinations. They were not eligible unless Colorado was identified as a destination of interest. The full screener is provided in Appendix C of this report.

Finally, another major requirement for eligibility was that the caller did not have strong preexisting firsthand knowledge about Colorado, as measured by their not having traveled to Colorado within the past five years.

Overall, the recruiting team attempted to recruit a mix of ages, ethnicities, travel interests, and family statuses, with nearly all respondents residing in middle class to affluent neighborhoods.

Once qualified and signed up, all participants were sent a confirmation letter, by either mail or email, that confirmed the date and time of the interview, which took place inside the participant's home. Each registered participant also received a reminder call the day before the one-on-one testing session to help increase the participation rate.

All participants were offered cash incentives for participation. Each participant received \$80 at the end of the 45-50 minute interview session. Corona staff interviewed participants in their homes for two purposes: to get participation from more than one family member where applicable, and also to allow participants to use their own resources for travel planning as they saw fit.

Participant Profile: Charts summarizing the characteristics of the participants in each location are provided below:

PARTICIPANT PROFILE – LONG ISLAND AREA (HOLBROOK, RONKONKOMA AND VICINITY – SUFFOLK COUNTY), NEW YORK

Number of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 13
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4 interviews with males ▪ 5 interviews with females ▪ 4 interviews with male/female couples
Age Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 22 to 72 ▪ Mean age: 50; Median age: 55
Have children?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes (8); No (5)
Have children under 18, still living at home?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes (2); No (6)
# leisure trips/vacations each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two (6) ▪ Three or four (3) ▪ Five to nine (4)
Length of typical vacation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Over one week (7 to 10 days) (5) ▪ Varies, take short and long trips during the year (3 to 12 days) (5) ▪ 10-14 days or longer (3)
Ever been to Colorado?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes (3): 5 years ago for business, 10+ years ago, 30+ years ago ▪ No (10)
Who do you typically travel with?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With immediate family (2) ▪ With a friend, a group of friends, siblings (4) ▪ With spouse (5) ▪ With spouse and another couple (2)
Interests when traveling (participants typically chose more than one)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outdoor activities (4) ▪ Sightseeing (3) ▪ Fairs, events, cultural activities, gambling, music, food (6) ▪ Historical sites (3) ▪ Family-oriented activities (2)
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anglo/White (13)
Annual Household Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$35,000 to \$49,999 (4); \$50,000 to \$74,000 (1); \$75,000 to \$99,999 (1); \$100,000+ (7)

PARTICIPANT PROFILE – SAN DIEGO AREA (POWAY AND RANCHO BERNARDO VICINITY),
CALIFORNIA

Number of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 13
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6 interviews with males ▪ 5 interviews with females ▪ 2 interviews with male/female couples
Age Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 29 to 72 ▪ Mean age: 46; Median age: 44
Have children?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes (10); No (3)
Have children under 18, still living at home?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes (7); No (3)
# leisure trips/vacations each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two or three (8) ▪ Four to six (3) ▪ Seven or more (2)
Length of typical vacation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One week or less (6) ▪ One week to one month (4) ▪ Several short trips and one long trip each year (3)
Ever been to Colorado?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes (3); primarily had driven through ▪ No (10)
Who do you typically travel with?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With immediate family (7) ▪ With a friend or a group of friends (2) ▪ With spouse (4)
Interests when traveling (participants typically chose more than one)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outdoor activities (6) ▪ Sightseeing (8) ▪ Fairs, events, cultural activities, gambling, shopping, dining (5) ▪ Historical sites (2) ▪ Family-oriented activities (1)
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anglo/White (11) ▪ Other (Asian, Hispanic) (2)
Annual Household Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$35,000 to \$49,999 (2); \$50,000 to \$74,999 (3); \$75,000 to \$99,999 (1); \$100,000+ (7)

PARTICIPANT PROFILE – ATLANTA AREA (STONE MOUNTAIN, SNELLVILLE VICINITY), GEORGIA

Number of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 13
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 interviews with males ▪ 9 interviews with females ▪ 2 interviews with male/female couples
Age Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 25 to 60 ▪ Mean age: 39
Have children?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes (9); No (4)
Have children under 18, still living at home?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes (7); No (2)
# leisure trips/vacations each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two to three (7) ▪ Four to five (5) ▪ Six or more (1)
Length of typical vacation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Three to seven days (8) ▪ One week or more (4) ▪ Several short trips and at least one long trip each year (1)
Ever been to Colorado?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No (11) ▪ Yes (2); participants had been to the state anywhere from 20 to 30+ years ago
Who do you typically travel with?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With immediate family (6) ▪ With a friend, group of friends, sibling(s) (3) ▪ With spouse or significant other (2) ▪ With a group of couples or other family members (2)
Interests when traveling (participants typically chose more than one)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outdoor activities (7) ▪ Sightseeing (9) ▪ Fairs, events, cultural activities, gambling, shopping, dining (5) ▪ Historical sites (1) ▪ Family-oriented activities (3)
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ African American (9) ▪ Anglo/White (4)
Annual Household Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ \$35,000 to \$49,999 (4); \$50,000 to \$74,000 (4); \$75,000 to \$99,999 (3); \$100,000+ (2)

Time and Location: As previously stated, the interviews were conducted in three different cities. The following chart denotes the timeline of the interviews in each locale.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Total Number of Interviews</u>
<u>Long Island, NY</u> Suffolk County Area	Friday, September 5 th to Monday, September 8 th	13
<u>Atlanta, GA</u> Lilburn, GA Area (NE of Atlanta)	Saturday, September 13 th to Tuesday, September 16 th	12 + 1 by phone
<u>San Diego, CA</u> Poway, CA Area (NE of San Diego)	Thursday, September 18 th to Sunday, September 21 st	13

Interview Guide: The complete guide for the interviews that was developed by Corona Research is presented in Appendix B. The guide was used as a standard but somewhat flexible guideline for interview conversation, in that the interviewer had the option to diverge from the guide if appropriate.

Because of the relatively uncharted nature of the research, the interview guide evolved notably during the course of the research, and the final version is presented in the appendix.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

ORGANIZATION OF KEY FINDINGS

The primary goal of this research was to determine how potential visitors to Colorado orient themselves to the state in order to plan their trip. To this end, the research team first sought to provide an overview of the planning process for each of the pre-existing audience segments identified by the Colorado Tourism Office (e.g., affluent, family, etc.). However, it became clear that while there is some variation in travel goals between various segments (e.g., finding family-friendly attractions, finding nightlife), there were not clear group differences in orientation to the state that varied by segment. Instead, visitor orientation took place with a different segmentation pattern, as described below.

After describing each planning segment, the research team provided three other types of information. First is a summary of general issues that affect the overall planning process, including the initial decision to visit Colorado, and the research and planning process. Second is additional feedback on a few features of the materials provided by the Colorado Tourism Office (website, Visitor's Guide, and map). Third is information about web searching and how visitors search for vacations and find (or don't find) www.colorado.com.

PLANNING SEGMENTATION

In the end, the research team identified three basic planning orientations, which were more or less independent of other market segmentations. In the study, they are identified as:

- City/Town-Focused Planners, who plan their vacations around a specific city to visit;
- Planners with Highly Focused Plans, who tend to have a very specific destination or activity in mind that narrows their planning considerably; and
- Activity/Attraction-Focused Planners, who tend to search for an activity, locate a town or city that offers it, and then plan around that city;

To a great extent, then, planning took place on a city level, either as a first step or as a second step. Either a city was identified initially, or a city was selected as a result of searching for activities. The next step in planning then involved determining other potential activities (including logistical activities such as dining and lodging) within a radius of the selected city.

The next three sections of the report provide a detailed look at each of these three planning orientations, in decreasing order of size. (As an aside, two of the 39 interviews did not fit into any of the categories and comprise a de facto fourth segment of "non-planners".)

It should be noted that this research included only 39 interviews. While large segments were uncovered with this method, it is likely that other smaller segments exist that would be uncovered with more research.

GENERAL PLANNING ISSUES

Above and beyond the segmentation, a number of interesting findings were seen relative to trip planning. While some of these extend beyond the scope of the study, they occurred with enough frequency that the research team believed it relevant to include them in the findings. These include:

1. Eligibility for the interviewing process was predicated on the individual not being particularly knowledgeable about Colorado, as measured by not having traveled to the state within the past five years. Even with this broad definition, the level of knowledge of Colorado was exceedingly low, with most interviewees being unable to name more than one city and many interviewees having an impression of Colorado as being little more than ski resorts. For most interviewees, there simply was not a pre-existing geographic framework with which to begin planning a vacation. While this was certainly not the case for all interviewees, the typical low level of knowledge indicated that significant and basic education about the state needs to be a vital and early component of trip planning materials.
2. While all interviewees stated in the recruiting materials that they had an interest in visiting Colorado, few had any pre-existing notions of what a vacation in Colorado would be like, aside from winter sports (which were not of interest to many interviewees). As a result, most did not have a top-of-mind awareness of Colorado as a destination, which means that they would need an external prompt, such as marketing or word of mouth, to initiate planning for a Colorado vacation.
3. Planning tended to focus on cities, as described in detail in the discussion of planning segments. People tended to hone in on a city, either of its own right or as the host of an activity they liked, and then plan around that city, with a willingness to travel within some convenient radius. A regional organization of planning data tended to be confusing to them, because they couldn't easily tell if specific cities or activities were within their preferred radius.
4. Because awareness of cities was generally low, the above process meant that many interviewees were planning their vacation from a pseudorandom city that they could name or recognize, regardless of whether that city was actually the best fit for their interests. Once the city was selected, they tended to lock onto that city and have a reluctance to change that base even if their subsequent research supported consideration of a different part of the state.
5. Some respondents did not recognize or need a "grand plan" for the Official State Vacation Guide's layout. They merely flipped through the guide looking for individual ideas on a more tactical level. Others were more strategic and recognized the region-based design, but generally not without some initial confusion. Specific areas of confusion are provided in the report, and a "How To Use This Guide" outline at the beginning of the guide would appear to be useful to these planners.
6. Once deciphered, the regional layout of the Official State Vacation Guide was generally not well received. Planners spent considerable effort trying to locate cities and determining if those cities fell within their preferred radius of their "base city". The regional layouts did not support this activity.
7. While many individual elements of the Official State Vacation Guide were lauded, particularly the high-quality pictures and the ease of identifying activities (if not always their specific locations), several tactical suggestions were offered, such as explaining alien terms like "14ers", "Front Range", and "Public Lands", providing larger fonts for middle-aged and older readers, and other issues.
8. Many common Internet search terms led to the www.colorado.com web site, and many interviewees quickly found the site on their own when conducting Internet planning. Those

who didn't were generally those who began their search by city (e.g., "Denver vacations"), and they generally ended up on local tourism sites without seeing www.colorado.com.

9. Many interviewees who found the www.colorado.com web site did not realize that it was an official state web site, and assumed that it was "just some private web site". When informed of its pedigree, most commented that they would have given it more weight if they had known.

MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

1. **A prerequisite of a vacation to Colorado is awareness of Colorado.** While not directly related to geographic orientation, the recruiting process for this study showed that many people who would have an interest in a Colorado vacation may not necessarily think about Colorado without an external catalyst such as advertising. The regions of the country where the research was conducted were close to other high-interest vacation spots such as Florida, New England, Las Vegas, and other locales, and Colorado often wasn't a top-of-mind vacation venue, even where interest existed. While this report does not serve as an evaluation of marketing efforts, it does suggest that active marketing will have a positive impact.
2. **Colorado must be □defined□ early in marketing materials.** Knowledge of Colorado among potential visitors was extremely limited. It is not an exaggeration to say that for many people the research team interviewed, their only knowledge of Colorado reflected visions of grade school history textbooks - log cabins, white people, snow - and the movie "Dumb and Dumber". The terms "14ers" and "public lands" and "Front Range" meant nothing to most interviewees, as did the names of specific towns and cities. As an initial geographic orientation, marketing materials need to define what Colorado is, in its most basic terms: where it's at in the U.S., what its cities are, its general topography and features.
3. **The diversity of Colorado and its possibilities must be quickly presented.** Trip destinations are frequently pulled from top-of-mind, and potential vacationers from distant markets have poorly formed mental images of the state. People need to have an image of a place to spur its consideration as a destination. For many people Colorado IS skiing and snow and cold – perhaps year round – and many are not interested in skiing, nor cold weather generally. Advertising should emphasize the four seasons, and passive as well as active endeavors. Include modern images and racial and ethnic diversity and vacation opportunities reflecting an array of interests. (Note that this recommendation is not advocating minimizing Colorado's strong image as a winter sports state, but rather making sure that audiences are aware of other types of activities.)
4. **Design materials for the traveler who is least familiar with Colorado.** Your target audience is those who are unfamiliar with Colorado and need an introduction to the state, as

mentioned above. Vacation planning will congeal around one concept, generally either a city or an activity, so materials need to radiate outward from those concepts. Otherwise, vacation planning is at risk of being non-optimal because the tendency is to latch onto the first city that is recognizable or that is identified as a candidate.

5. **Marketing materials with a city-centric organization are easier for vacation planners to grasp.** For nearly all travelers, the ideal organization of information would allow them to search for activities and attractions in and around each city. Many would like to first select a city, and then see what is available to do there. Others have a preliminary step of finding a city by figuring out where a preferred activity takes place, but they then fall in line with the city-centric model to expand that vacation. By defining radii around each city, the activities available in nearby cities that are within driving distance will be easily located. This organization will avoid separating nearby cities with an arbitrary border, as well as lumping together cities which are quite far apart but in the same region, as currently defined. An example of a potential city-centric concept is shown in Appendix D.
6. **If retaining the regional organization, it is important to introduce the concept visually via a map.** A regional organization is not intuitive for most people, and its use is made more difficult by the omission of a complete state map with all of the regions labeled together at the start of the region introduction section (page 12 of the current guide). When reaching that point, many people have not yet discovered the map in the back cover, and that map is not mentioned in the guide. Even so, the fold-out map does not eliminate the need for an overview map on page 12.
7. **Denver's name recognition and entry point is a way to promote other cities and the state in general.** For many people living in remote states, Denver is often the only city in Colorado they have heard of. It should be recognized that most people thinking about Colorado are really thinking about Denver (though they may also be envisioning Denver in a mountain-town climate and environment). If a feature in the marketing materials called "things to do in and around Denver" included a "farther afield" segment that feature lots of things that can be accessed within a few hundred miles of Denver, those activities are more likely to be seen. Similar strategies could be used for other gateways such as Colorado Springs or even major highway routes into the state, but Denver was easily the most common entry point for interviewees, both physically and mentally. (Note that the interviewees were conducted well out of driving range, though, and therefore likely overcount air travel.)
8. **Mature vacationers do not resonate with Colorado's active image.** Many older interviewees were put off by the focus on strenuous outdoor activities in the guide. Devoting a small section of the guide to "mature travelers" pointing them to guided tours,

train rides, historical sites, and other attractions – particularly those where there are unlikely to be families and small children – could be valuable to that group.

9. **□Old standards□** that are popular with visitors, even if not unique to Colorado, may be a means of increasing the state’s exposure and attractiveness to potential visitors. For example, amusement parks, water parks, and theme parks were popular with many families, but were difficult to locate in the guide. Similarly, many people requested a section on dining to point to both special and unique restaurants, and also a listings section including chain restaurants where people know their children will eat. Gambling and casinos was also a popular request for the table of contents, as was a section on “nightlife.” In short, some proportion of the market may be less interested in Colorado than they are in “going on vacation”, and they look for activities that they know they’ll enjoy, irrespective of setting.
10. **Consider making recommendations for what to see for multiple-day trips to the state.** Many mention liking the “if you have one day,” “if you have one week,” etc. suggestions that can be found in independent travel guides like Fodor’s or Frommers, where a sample route with the best things to see is provided. Colorado is a somewhat exotic locale for many people, and those making the trek do not want to miss the “best things.” It is recognized that this may be a challenge, though, given the mission of supporting tourism for the entire state.
11. **An official state tourism organization carries weight.** Many interviewees who visited www.colorado.com assumed that it was “just a private web site”, and commented that they would have given it more attention if they had known it was “official”. This might have the effect of better promoting the state and helping people optimize their vacation experience.
12. **A focus on the function and readability of the marketing materials would increase the usability of the guide.** Many people over 40 complained that the font was too small throughout the guide. Many did not notice that the listings were “tabbed” because the tabs are not on both sides of every page. Page numbers are often hard to read because they are superimposed on photos. Photo captions do not always tell people the location of the image. Important pages like the trip planner on page 70, the essentials on page 72, and the back cover map are not mentioned in the Table of Contents. Cross-referencing does not exist throughout much of the guide. Most people say the guide is beautiful and they love the pictures, but many of the artistic aspects make content go unnoticed even when people are explicitly searching for it.

SEGMENT 1: CITY/TOWN-FOCUSED PLANNERS

DEMOGRAPHICS

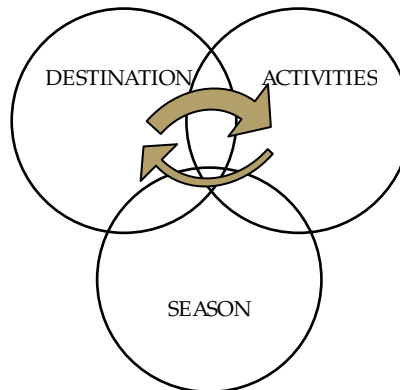
Location

New York: 5
Georgia: 6
California: 5

Segment

Family: 3
Mature couple: 6
Single, young: 6
Couple, young: 1
Affluent: 6

16 Interviews



GENERAL

All identify a city to visit and then research activities nearby.

Ruled out Winter/ Skiing
Yes: 9
No: 7

*Knowledge of Colorado**
Recall Level: 7
Recognition Level: 6
Low Level: 3

* Recall Level = ability to name three or more Colorado cities from memory, Recognition Level = ability to recognize three or more Colorado cities when looking at a map, Low Level = Unable to name any Colorado cities and limited recognition of any cities when viewing a map.

VIGNETTE □ A PROTOTYPE OF CITY-FOCUSED PLANNING

Last winter, Jeremy's wife suggested they start planning a trip for the spring. For the past four years, they have vacationed at a resort in Florida that they like, but she decided she'd like to see something new. They like to vacation where they can dine out, do some sightseeing – particularly of natural or historic sites, and have a nice place to relax. Typically, they gravitate toward the beach. Friends of theirs just visited Charleston, SC and have been raving about how much they enjoyed it. Jeremy goes to the internet and googles Charleston hotels to see if there are places they'd like. He reads reviews on Travelocity and TripAdvisor to get a sense of which locations people like and what they found to do there. After tentatively identifying an area of town where they might like to stay and hotels with amenities they like, he searches for tourist attractions in and around Charleston to see what else they might like to do while there. During the course of this searching, he sees something interesting in Greenville, and he looks at a map to see how far from Charleston it is to Greenville. While browsing, he sees that a festival of houses and gardens is taking place in Charleston in April. Knowing that is something they will both enjoy, he checks prices for airfare and hotels during that time, and prints out information about the festival and about several hotels that look promising to show to his wife. She likes the idea, so he goes ahead and books the trip. If nothing special had jumped out at him during his search, he and his wife would have brainstormed other places they might like to go, and he would have then conducted searches on those locations.

OVERVIEW OF MARKET SEGMENT

This was the largest planning segment of the four identified groups, representing 41 percent of interviewees. This group initially planned their vacation by identifying a city that they knew in Colorado, and then building a vacation around that city. Activities in that city played a very secondary role in vacation planning; in general, the city was selected and then activities were planned within that city.

Families were less likely to fall into this planning segment than were other markets such as singles and couples.

Planners in this segment typically begin their travel planning about two months in advance. However for long trips (1 to 2 weeks) or international destinations, planning could begin up to one

year in advance. For a majority of those in this segment, their most recent vacation was to a city with a beach in the southeastern U.S. or Caribbean.

PICKING THE DESTINATION CITY

When planning vacations, city-focused planners tend to select a city for consideration based on their prior knowledge of that city – whether that knowledge comes from prior experience, word of mouth, or the media. Places that they cannot generate from their top-of-mind memory or hearsay do not get considered, at least not in the initial stage of planning. However, places that they stumble upon while researching their top-of-mind places may be selected for consideration if they capture attention. For this reason, it is significant that knowledge of Colorado was very limited overall, with many people having very little knowledge. Of the 16 interviews falling within this planning segment, 7 were able to name 3 or more cities in Colorado, and are termed the “Recall Level” of knowledge (this is still not a high level of knowledge, but the ability to recall at least three cities from memory suggests some knowledge of the state). Another six couldn’t name three cities, but they recognized at least three cities when shown a map of Colorado. They are identified as having “Recognition Level” knowledge. The remaining three were unable to name or recognize any cities (“Low” knowledge).

Given that this segment planned their vacation around cities, their level of knowledge impacted how they selected their destination city. Even those who could name some cities in Colorado typically did not know much about those cities. A majority believe that Denver is snow-packed and below 0 degrees all winter, for instance. Many guess that Denver is “in the mountains” or in a bowl with mountains all around. Some believe it is cold even in the summer.

Those with low-level knowledge of CO (couldn't name or recognize any cities): For three of the 16 people in this planning segment, Colorado was completely off the radar. The only thing all 3 knew about Colorado was that people ski there, and they were unable to name any cities in Colorado.

Two of these people started their planning by looking up the location of the major airport in Colorado, generally through airfare sites such as Travelocity. None of these people were particularly interested in skiing, and they couldn’t generate any other reason to visit Colorado relative to other potential destinations. (Recall that all had indicated Colorado as a destination of interest during the screening process.)

All of these were women under age 35 who tend to travel alone or with friends or family members. Two of these women travel primarily for sightseeing in new places, the other travels primarily to hang out with friends in a new place.

Recognition-level knowledge of CO (recognized at least 3 cities): This group represented six of the 16 people in this segment. Most, but not all, could spontaneously name Denver as a city in Colorado, and they recognized the names of other cities when they saw them on the map. However, they generally could not spontaneously generate other city names.

These six people started their planning by searching for activities in and around Denver. Many said explicitly that they were gearing toward Denver because that was a place they’d heard of.

Recall-level knowledge of CO (named at least 3 cities): These seven people could name at least three cities in Colorado without assistance, though their general knowledge level of the cities was low beyond naming them.

Four of the seven people in this group said that if they were going to plan a trip to Colorado they would start by searching for activities in and around Denver because they like to vacation in cities. Three of the seven began their planning by selecting a less-major city because they explicitly don’t like to vacation in cities. (Each group was represented in the New York, California, and Georgia interviews, so there was no strong geographic pattern.)

DECIDING WHEN, WHERE, WHAT

When asked to plan a hypothetical trip to Colorado, all of the people in this group said they would begin by identifying a city/town in Colorado and then seeing what there is to do there. Depending on what they found, they would select a different city and start again, repeating the process until they found a city with “enough” to do nearby. In practice, though, many interviewees locked onto the first city they named, and doggedly planned their trip around that city, even when further research showed that their preferred activities were more prevalent in a different part of the state.

More than half of these city-oriented planners picked a season to visit Colorado up front, or at least, explicitly ruled out visiting during the winter months. The remaining seven people said they would decide what season to visit depending on the activities they selected. Among nearly all interviewees, there was uncertainty about Colorado’s climate, with many assuming a year-round cool or cold climate statewide.

“I would click on the attractions to see where they are. Because I know Denver, I’d go there, and if there were enough attractions, I would just go there. ... (later after browsing web and guide) If I spread it out a bit, I might use Denver as a home base.” – *New York, mature couple, M, 61, # 2*

“I look for the big cities first and then I’ll look around the region. As long as I have the option to be somewhere where it’s more of a city feel, I don’t mind staying in a place that’s smaller.” – *Georgia, single, F, 39, # 3*

“If I see things of interest, I think you can even go online and just go city by city, I’m pretty sure. So, if something [in the guide] interests me, I’d go back to the internet. Like, here, Leadville Twin Lakes, this looks interesting, so I’d go online and see what’s to do there, if there’s enough to keep me busy that I’d like.” – *New York, mature couple, F, 56, # 1*

“I would think Denver is the place to go because there’s more things to do there.” – *New York, family, F, 34, # 12*

“I’m looking for vacation packages in Denver because that’s the one that I know. We’d find things, print them, email them to each other. We would decide what season to go based on what we want to do.” – *Georgia, single, F, 29, # 7*

“The urban areas we want to set as our tent pole.” – *Georgia, mature couple, M, 60, # 11*

USING PLANNING RESOURCES

Several people in this group started their planning by looking at a map or an airline’s website to select a city. Then, most proceeded to conduct a google search for something like, “things to do in (city)”. As a result, most began their planning with Internet searches that led to city-specific tourism websites rather than Colorado.com.

People in this group had a more difficult time using the Colorado.com website and the Vacation Guide to plan their trip because the website required a two-stage process of searching activities and then sorting by city, and going back and forth repeating this process for every activity of interest. They generally wanted information about cities and had trouble initially deciphering the regional organization.

Similarly, while the paper guide has a specific Denver region that worked reasonably well for those identifying Denver as their destination, those looking for info on other specific cities had a difficult time locating the appropriate region for those cities, and then were often disappointed by the

small quantity of information presented for the specific city they were interested in. It was often difficult for these people to judge distances and convenience within a region.

MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

1. **Raise awareness of cities and their unique offerings.** People need to have an image of the city to spur its consideration as a destination. This group isn't focused on any particular activity or attraction, so anything "unique" can make a destination worthwhile to visit. Buena Vista has hot springs, Boulder has the Pearl Street Mall, Colorado Springs has the Garden of the Gods. Those unique traits are enough to spur consideration of those cities, then people will search for lodging, dining, and other things to do in or around those cities to see if they can find enough to do to make a trip feel complete.
2. **Marketing materials should organize the information to make it easy to search for activities of many types in and around a city.** Currently, using the Tourism Office's materials to plan a trip is difficult for this group. Even when Denver is the city they are considering, each new activity they look at gives them information about the whole state and they have to narrow back down to Denver. Ideally, a city-focused planner could search for activities in and around Denver and get a list of lots of different activities, events, and attractions. Having to look at specific activities, one at a time, is not the best organization for this group; neither is the region focus which artificially separates some places from others that are within a short driving radius.
3. **Use Denver to promote other cities.** For many people living in remote states, Denver is the only city in Colorado they have heard of. Recognize that most people thinking about Colorado are really thinking about Denver. If "things to do in and around Denver" include lots of things that can be accessed "with a day's drive", those activities are more likely to be seen. A person researching Denver as a destination who encounters Buena Vista's hot springs in the list of "things to do in and around Denver", may expand their consideration to Buena Vista because they now know it's only a few hours drive from Denver (where they are likely flying in) and has something unique they can tell their friends about (hot springs!). This would help visitors maximize their vacation enjoyment.

SEGMENT 2: PLANNERS WITH HIGHLY-FOCUSED PLANS

DEMOGRAPHICS

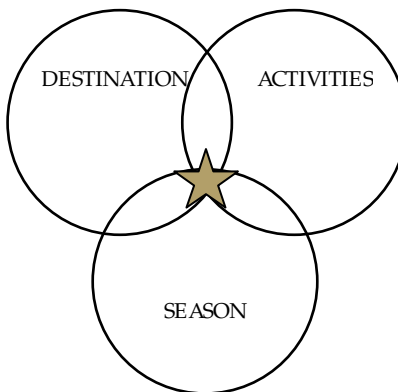
Location

New York: 2
Georgia: 5
California: 4

Segment

Family: 6
Mature couple: 2
Mature single: 1
Couple, young: 1
Single, young: 1
Affluent: 3

11 Interviews



GENERAL

All have a concrete plan for where to go and/ or what to do.

Ruled out Winter/ Skiing
Yes: 6
No: 5

Awareness of Colorado/ Colorado Destination
High: 7
Low: 4

VIGNETTE □ A PROTOTYPE OF HIGHLY-FOCUSED PLANNING

Matt's brother has visited Colorado more than once and is always recommending that Matt bring his family out for a visit. His brother has told him about a ranch that his family spent a week at this summer, where they had a great time, and he thinks that their two families should go there together next summer. Matt goes to the website for the ranch and he agrees that it looks perfect for a family vacation. His wife agrees. They typically take a two-week vacation during the summer, so Matt starts planning assuming that they will spend a few days driving to Colorado, sightseeing along the way, then they will spend a week at the ranch with his brother's family, then they'll have a few days to do some sightseeing in Colorado before they head home. He'll look for a different route to take on the way home so that they can see even more of the country. With this rough plan in place, Matt will spend the next year developing a specific plan for their full route and every stop they will make along the way. He will use maps, the internet, travel guides, and his brother as resources to help plan his trip.

OVERVIEW OF MARKET SEGMENT

Planners in this segment typically begin their travel planning anywhere from one month to one year in advance. Several people in this group say they enjoy the planning as much as the trip. This was the second-largest planning segment of the three identified groups, representing 28 percent of interviewees.

Seven of those in this segment were familiar enough with Colorado that they already knew exactly what they would do if they were taking a trip to Colorado. Three of the households interviewed had previously visited or lived in Colorado (long enough ago that they passed the interview screener), two had friends or family who had visited or lived in Colorado, and two had a hobby that would draw them to Colorado. These seven people are the "High Knowledge Planners." Even though they typically knew little about Colorado in absolute terms, this group generally had some sort of pre-existing knowledge about Colorado that drove their destination decisions without doing formal research, and had a specific vacation in mind that defined the core location of their trip. Recommendations from previous visitors or even their own long-past visits were a primary source of information. In 5 of these 7 cases, the male was the primary trip planner, in one case the female was the primary planner, and in two cases both adults planned the trip together and saw their contributions as equal.

The remaining four people in this segment knew almost nothing about Colorado, and are termed “Low Knowledge Planners.” In all four cases the female was the primary trip planner. One of these planners had previously driven through Colorado, the others had no previous experience with Colorado. All four were planning as if they were going to take a ski vacation to Colorado, in each case because they could not think of any other reason to visit Colorado. Because skiing was the only thing they associated with Colorado, their planning was highly-focused, however, these four were quite different qualitatively from the seven high knowledge people described above.

PICKING THE DESTINATION

High Knowledge Planners:

The mature couples in this group were both from California and had both been to Colorado before, though it had been many years. (One also had a daughter currently living in Fort Collins). One of these couples had been on a train ride and gone through an old town with a hot spring, and they wanted to go back and spend more time. The other couple would like to go to visit their daughter and sightsee while there, and also try to attend an Elderhostel program while there.

The father in one of the families in this group had lived in Colorado as a child and wanted to plan a trip back to see the aspens change color in the Fall. The other families in this group had friends or relatives who had taken vacations in Colorado and made recommendations about where they might like to go. One of these families was looking at a family ranch called Harmel’s. The other family was interested in a ski vacation. *Note: Of the 39 households interviewed, this was the only household that was seriously interested in visiting Colorado to ski and also had experience with skiing.*

The mature single woman in this group had an ongoing goal to visit all of the national parks. She initially was not aware that Colorado had a national park, but when she spotted Rocky Mountain National Park on a map during the study, was adamant that that would be her reason for coming to Colorado. The young couple was interested in taking a weekend trip in September to see a Rockies game and a Broncos game because the man was a “sports nut”.

It should be noted that, once this core activity was addressed, some of these people would then somewhat shift to a search-by-city mode to find other activities in the nearby area.

Low Knowledge Planners:

All of the people in this group seemed to assume that they were planning a skiing vacation because that was the only thing they knew of to do in Colorado. In all of these cases, there was a sense that because skiing is Colorado’s claim to fame, the only reason to go would be to ski.

DECIDING WHEN, WHERE, WHAT

High Knowledge Planners: For this group, the process of deciding when to go, where to go, and what to do, was more of a simultaneous synthesis, rather than a sequential process. In each of the cases, the purpose for the vacation determined at least two of these three decisions. For example: skiing necessarily happens in the Winter, the aspens change color only in the Fall, football and baseball seasons only overlap in September, Harmel’s Ranch is an activity destination, as is Rocky Mountain National Park. In all instances, the people had a very specific experience in mind, and that experience required a specific season and/or destination. Their only other decision criteria were specific logistical issues such as flights and hotels.

“I’m thinking, as a sports nut, that in September baseball and football are both going on, so if I can plan a weekend and go to a Friday night baseball game and a Sunday football game, and on Saturday do a brewery tour ... first we’d get the game schedules and find a weekend with games on Friday and Sunday...” – *New York, couple, M, 35, # 8*

Low Knowledge Planners: This group began by deciding that they were going to Colorado to ski in the winter. None of the four had skied previously. Their first planning step was to look for a resort

package, or lodging near the skiing. Then they would compare prices and targeted clientele (i.e., families, students, etc.) and choose a resort.

"[Dad speaking] I know I want to ski. And just try to get a feel of [Colorado], not just the tourist part – you have to venture into the native part if you really want to know a state." "[Mom speaking] I'd go online and look at resort packages." – *Georgia, family, M & F, 30, #5*

USING PLANNING RESOURCES

High Knowledge Planners: Those in this group had very specific resource needs. They tended to start their research with very specific internet searches (e.g., Rockies schedule, Elderhostel, Harmel's ranch, when to see the aspens change). Most were looking to find additional activities near their goal location, as well as lodging and dining in those areas. Some needed to choose a specific location (e.g., to ski, view aspens, etc.) and those locations may be determined by the accessibility of other activities. Some needed route information for driving to the state from their home state, and information about planning a scenic route to their destination. In essence, though, they were centering their vacation around a specific event.

Low Knowledge Planners: Many in this group began by searching for "resort packages" or "ski packages" and looking for pictures of lodging options. Once online, many reverted to searching for "things to do in Colorado" emphasizing that some were planning a ski vacation simply because they weren't sure what else there was to do in Colorado.

None of the people in this group had skied previously, and many showed interest in other activities that they discovered during their web/guide search. In essence, they re-oriented toward an activity-based planning approach once they began, but their initial belief that skiing was the primary activity in Colorado led them to approach the planning process from a winter/resort area perspective, thus helping them define their season of travel and Colorado region ahead of time.

MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

FOR HIGH KNOWLEDGE PLANNERS

1. **Materials must provide lots of specifics.** This group is probably the least likely to use the Colorado Tourism Office's resources. Because their trips are somewhat well-defined before they begin the research process, they begin the process not wanting to browse for activities, but to find specific dates and locations to help plan their trip. For example, in the interview with the sports planner, he was disappointed to not be able to get to game schedules for the Rockies and Broncos through the website, and the research team noted that the address provided for Mile High Stadium by Colorado.com was in fact the corporate address and not the actual location of Mile High Stadium. That misled this person into believing he should find a hotel near the corporate headquarters. Because many in this group know specifically where they are going, they need to be able to search by city to find additional activities that will be in their vicinity. Another interviewee wanted to know estimated dates for when each ski resort typically opens and closes. A third interviewee wanted to know where the closest lodging was to Rocky Mountain National Park.

FOR LOW KNOWLEDGE PLANNERS

2. **Raise awareness of the breadth of activities available in Colorado.** Individuals in this group, when asked what they knew about Colorado, could say no more than "skiing." (Not even "winter sports", but rather "skiing".) For the most part, they could not name any

cities, landmarks, or activities in Colorado beyond skiing. As we noted in the implications for the first segment of city-focused planners, people need to have a mental image of a place that appeals to them for them to consider it as a destination. This group was not particularly excited or motivated by the current image they have of Colorado, which was cold and snowy. Providing alternative images is important.

SEGMENT 3: ACTIVITY/ATTRACTION-FOCUSED PLANNERS

DEMOGRAPHICS

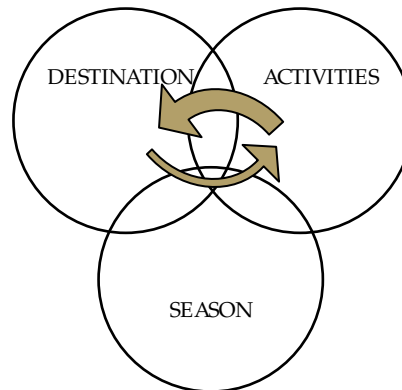
Location

New York: 5
Georgia: 1
California: 4

Segment

Family: 6
Mature couple: 2
Mature Single: 2
Affluent: 7

10 Interviews



GENERAL

All begin planning with activities or attractions.

Ruled out Winter/ Skiing
Yes: 7
No: 3

Knowledge of Colorado
Recall Level: 5
Recognition Level: 2
Low Level: 3

VIGNETTE □ A PROTOTYPE OF ACTIVITY/ATTRACTION-FOCUSED PLANNING

Jessica was watching TV one night when she saw an ad for a big amusement park in Ohio. She knew her kids would have a great time there, and the ad also mentioned a spa nearby that she would love. Jessica jotted down the name of the park and told her husband about it later that night. He thought it sounded like a great summer vacation for the family, and he knew the location was within a day's drive from their home, so the family of five could drive instead of fly and keep their travel costs down. Jessica got on the internet and found a hotel near the park that was within the family's budget and had received good reviews. Then she used MapQuest to map the route from their house to the park, and looked for tourist attractions along the route where they could stop for sightseeing along the way.

OVERVIEW OF MARKET SEGMENT

This was the third-largest planning segment of the four identified groups, representing 26 percent of interviewees. This group initially planned their vacation by identifying activities that they like, and then working to identify locales where those activities exist.

Families were more likely to fall into this planning segment than were other markets such as singles and couples. For nearly all of the families in this segment (families being distinct from other household types such as singles and couples), their most recent vacation was to an amusement park in the U.S.

As with the previous planning segment, knowledge of Colorado was very limited overall, with many people having very little knowledge. Of the 10 interviews falling within this planning segment, 5 were able to name 3 or more cities in Colorado, and are termed the "Recall Level" of knowledge. Another two couldn't name three cities, but they recognized at least three cities when shown a map of Colorado. They are identified as having "Recognition Level" knowledge. Another three couldn't name any cities and did not recognize any cities ("Low Level" knowledge).

Planners in this segment typically begin their travel planning about two months in advance. A few people in this group describe themselves as "last-minute planners" who begin planning no more than one month in advance.

PICKING THE DESTINATION

Families were particularly common in this planning segment, and tended to have a different approach than did non-families. Their various approaches are presented below.

Families: Five of the six families in this group said their first planning objective was to find activities that their family would enjoy. These families were looking for amusement parks, white water rafting, and other active endeavors that would entertain the kids, and most were also looking for “adult things” like hot springs, shopping, or dining that the parents could enjoy. The sixth family was envisioning a road trip and was looking to identify natural wonders and historical sites to plan a route around.

“I’d say what we do is pretty constant – it’s deciding where we want to do it [that is the decision criteria]. We try to find a place that has it all.” – *California, family, M, 42, # 9*

Matures (singles and couples): Interests were diverse among the mature segments. The mature couples both were interested in road trips through the mountains: one couple would look into a tour package, the other would plan their own route. They were interested less in a destination than in a series of destinations.

One of the mature singles wanted to see tourist spots, preferably on a sightseeing tour. The other mature single was interested in finding a smaller town with “enough” to do. She would start by searching for lake cabins and seeing where they were located and what else was in the area.

DECIDING WHEN, WHERE, WHAT

When asked to plan a hypothetical trip to Colorado, all of the people in this group said they would begin by identifying things to do: major tourist spots, family attractions, scenic routes, etc.

More than two-thirds of these activity-first planners (7 of 10) picked a season to visit Colorado up front, or at least, explicitly ruled out visiting during the winter months. The remaining three people said they would decide what season to visit depending on the activities they selected.

“I’d want a list of tourist spots, and then I’d want places to stay by those spots. I’m an outdoor guy – I teach golf. I’m not a winter person – I’m a golfer – I go inside in the winter and come out in the spring. If I was going with golf buddies I’d look for golf. Every vacation I’ve ever had, I go with a buddy or a lady friend. I usually have my golf clubs with me, but at this point in my life I could be talked out of it.” – *New York, affluent mature single, M, 63, # 10*

“If I knew something about Colorado, I’d research it. Maybe also look at tours just to get ideas.” – *New York, mature couple, M, 58, # 13*

USING PLANNING RESOURCES

Three of the families approached the Colorado visit planning from a somewhat generic standpoint, that is, not looking for activities that were unique to Colorado, but just looking for activities that would entertain their families. Colorado was not considered a unique destination at all to this group. The other three families attempted to plan a trip that was unique to Colorado, and tried to find Colorado-specific activities that they couldn’t do at home. Likewise, all of the matures were looking for activities that were unique to Colorado.

Those who were not looking to plan a road trip were ultimately trying to find a location that offered “enough” activities to fill a vacation. Those people started by browsing activities and making mental notes of where the activities that interest them are located. For many of the families, Denver quickly popped out, and then they transitioned to a search-by-city to find additional activities and build a specific package. Those looking to plan a road trip were interested in finding the major tourist attractions, like natural wonders, historic sites, etc. so that they could plan a route to see as much as they can.

“I would look into all these things to do ... lots of them are in Denver, so Denver might be a good place for us because there’s lots of things to do. ... I’d have to take more time to look into other places to see what else there is to do. If I had more time, I’d go into other cities and see

what's to do there. ... I was looking for a map ... to see what cities are near Denver, so then I could search by city." – *New York, family, F, 34, # 12*

MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

1. **Make amusement park listings easy to find.** Amusement parks, water parks, and theme parks were all popular with the families in this segment. One interviewee was unsuccessfully looking for amusement parks in the guide and was told by the interviewer that there is a Six Flags Amusement Park in Denver; the interviewee could find no mention of this park in the guide.
2. **Provide several scenic tour plans akin to those found in independent travel guides.** This group, more than the others, consists of people who want to keep moving and be entertained. High-energy attractions are popular, as are driving tours with lots of stops. Some want a guided tour with a group, others want suggestions for taking their own drive. Many mention liking the "if you have one day," "if you have one week," etc. suggestions that can be found in independent travel guides like Fodor's or Frommers, where a sample route with the best things to see is provided.
3. **Matures would like to see an activities guide geared toward their age group.** Many older interviewees were put off by the focus on strenuous outdoor activities in the guide. Devote a small section of the guide to "mature travelers" pointing them to guided tours, train rides, historical sites, and other attractions – particularly those where there are unlikely to be families and small children.

SEGMENT 4: NON-PLANNERS

We classified two of our interviewees, or 5 percent, as non-planners. There was one non-planner in New York and one in Georgia.

One of the non-planners (mature couple, M, 70) typically used a travel agent to plan his trips and generally just requested that she “find him a vacation”. During the interview, this person seemed to hope to use the interviewer in a similar fashion, asking the interviewer about what there was to do in Colorado. The second non-planner (family, F, 39) tended to travel with extended family, including her father, who typically did most of the planning. While she had an interest in traveling to Colorado, it became apparent that she would not plan such a trip herself.

During the course of the interviews, many facts came to light about the planning process that are somewhat independent of how people orient themselves to Colorado. These are documented below.

STEP 1: DECIDING TO COME TO COLORADO

Specific vacation destination ideas come from recommendations from family and friends, magazines, newspapers, places the people have been before and liked, places parents know of or have been before and want to show to kids, and sometimes TV shows or ads. We heard many times that people tend to just know where they want to go and begin their research and planning after they have decided where to go. Many people repeatedly visit the same places. If they are not already familiar with Colorado and what is available to do there, they will not generate it as a travel idea. This was observed often in the interviews: people were interested in Colorado, but it would not generally occur to them as a destination without some external prompt.

"Before we do research we'd just talk about it and decide where to go - we know what's in our budget." – *New York, couple, F, 31, # 8*

"You don't see much on Colorado. I see New Mexico, California, Nevada, but not Colorado. We're not skiers. Theater, sightseeing, etc. is good; not cold weather. I'm a cruise person. Too bad you can't cruise Colorado." – *New York, mature couple, M, 72, # 5*

"I have to admit, you don't see a lot of Colorado pop up on the various pop-ups [on the internet]. Part of it is that MSN must read what I click on, but destinations do interest me, so I will read those surveys, and unless it's ski related, it doesn't seem like Colorado pops up a lot. Even recently I was on one for fall colors and it didn't have Colorado in there this time. Which usually it is, because everybody mentions the aspens." – *Georgia, family, M, 40, # 12*

"I see Colorado as mostly about skiing. In New York you don't really hear too much about what is going on in CO." – *New York, family, F, 34, # 12*

In addition to low awareness of Colorado is the problem of misconceptions about Colorado. In the course of the interviews, the research team was told that the states bordering Colorado included: Vermont, Arkansas, Kentucky, Iowa, South Dakota, Idaho, Montana, and Missouri, as well as Chicago and Mexico. Some people said they considered it to be a Midwestern state, others said a Western state, a Southwestern state, or a Northwestern state. People frequently believed that Colorado is home to the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone National Park, and the Sundance Film Festival. A few select comments are presented below.

"I don't know what you'd do in the summer there." – *California, family, M, 35, # 12*

"You think, log cabin-y kind of stuff." – *Georgia, single, F, 29, # 7*

"I'd guess Colorado Springs as the capital – if it's not, you got me." – *New York, affluent mature single, M, 63, # 10*

"Boulder is the capital." – *California, family, F, 40, # 2*

"I like the checklist that they have here [in the Official State Vacation Guide] about the weather – clothing by season. I'm sure a lot of people may not be familiar with Colorado's weather." – *Georgia, single, F, 39, # 3*

"It's like a desert, right? It's supposed to be hot." – *Georgia, family, F, 39, # 9*

"I was just familiar with winter activities, but wasn't familiar with the other seasons." – *California, affluent couple, F, 31, # 13*

In addition, people who are not from Colorado, and live in a different part of the country from Colorado, also have concerns about how welcome and safe they will be in Colorado.

"Do they like New Yorkers in Colorado? A lot of people don't like New Yorkers. Raise the prices on the menu! The New Yorkers are here!" – *New York, mature couple, M, 70, # 3*

"Are there any black people in Colorado?" – *Georgia, single, F (African American), 29, # 7*

"I'm scared by that search and rescue card [mentioned on website] – it makes hiking and skiing seem very dangerous." – *Georgia, mature couple, F, 59, # 6*

Step 1B. Deciding where to go in Colorado

One strong finding from the research was the lack of familiarity with Colorado, both in terms of its environment and its geography. Most interviewees were hard-pressed to name more than one city (usually, but not always, Denver), and generally, nothing was known other than that "it's a city in Colorado". (As a side note, the movie "Dumb and Dumber" was often cited as a reference for those who could name Aspen.)

This lack of familiarity with specific cities in Colorado often resulted in people initially considering a city solely because of its name as they set about their orientation process. As one example, the town of Hot Sulphur Springs was noticed on the regional map of the Official State Vacation Guide by several participants (likely due to its relatively large font and location near the middle of the map), and they specifically began hunting for information on that town. This may be an additional reason to make sure people can easily get a list of the cities/towns in each region.

"Now the town of Golden, I would have to go there." – *New York, mature couple, M, 61, # 2*

"Golden – that jumps out." – *New York, affluent single, F, 27, # 4*

"[Interviewer: why did you pick Colorado Springs as your potential vacation destination?] It just sounded like a place that'd be interesting. Just from the name, the springs, I was thinking of like hot springs I'd see or something like that." – *New York, mature couple, F, 56, # 1*

"If I was looking in here to choose a place to go, I'd probably choose Grand Junction, just because it's not as big, and I like the name." – *Georgia, mature couple, F, 59, # 6*

"Steamboat Springs ... I'm not sure what that is, but it sounds interesting." – *California, affluent couple, F, 34, # 13*

STEP 2: PLANNING A TRIP TO COLORADO

Most of the interviewees would plan a trip that was constrained to a single location, and they did not want to do much traveling once they arrived. Most said that they would take day trips to an attraction an hour or two away, but return to a “home base” at the end of each day. A few interviewees indicated that if they were planning a trip of 7-10 days or longer, they might spend a few days in one location and a few days in another location. Only a couple of interviewees were interested in taking a road trip inside the state.

“I try not to do too much driving while on vacation if I can help it.” – *California, family, M, 35, # 5*

Because of this, most of the interviewees wanted to be able to look at the offerings of a particular city/town all at once, and also they wanted a list of other cities/towns within about a two hour radius, so that they could then search the offerings for those towns.

“I feel like things have to be easy ... someone like me who hasn’t been to Colorado doesn’t really know that much. I was looking for a map on the webpage like they had in the book to see what cities are near Denver so that I could search city-by-city. I don’t want to be searching for hours and hours to plan a vacation.” – *New York, family, F, 34, # 12*

“I would rather have it by city. Northeast ... Southeast ... I don’t know where that is.” – *California, single, F, 29, # 7*

“I don’t know what cities are in the regions, easily. Great pages on things to do, BUT show me the major cities!” – *Georgia, single, F, 34, # 2*

Step 2B. Other vacation planning considerations

Many people are planning a trip that will involve multiple people – sometimes just a spouse/partner, sometimes children, and sometimes other friends or family members. In nearly every case, one person was anointed as “the planner”, and this person handled all of the arrangements, typically with little oversight and a rubber-stamp approval from others in the party. In these situations, the planner was generally working to accommodate the needs of others and make sure that the destination and activities suit everyone.

“I’m planning a trip with the both of us in mind.” – *New York, mature couple, M, 61, # 2*

“My husband would read the whole [guide] and zero in on something – he knows what to look for for him and me.” – *New York, mature couple, F, 56, # 1*

“I try to accommodate everybody [travels with friends or sisters]: we don’t like museums, we don’t like nature, we like shopping, we like to get our nails done, get our hair done.” – *New York, affluent single, F, 27, # 4*

“I see you have hot springs, so I would try to find rafting near hot springs so we could all be happy.” – *New York, affluent mature couple, F, 55, # 6*

“It’s kind of still a dictatorship. We might take some ideas on what we want to do, but since I do 99 percent of the driving and I pay for it ... I guess it’s a complete dictatorship or almost a complete dictatorship. Unless it’s four on one and it’s really bad and I’ve made a dumb mistake, then I’ll turn over the ruling, but generally it’s me.” – *New York, affluent family, M, 44, # 11*

In addition, families tend to seek out “family activities”, while those traveling without children tend to intentionally avoid “family activities”. Young people want to find areas where there are people their age.

“We tend to go when there’s no children, because we’ve been there, done that – we try to go when it’s not family time just because the mass of people – we try to go September - October, or April - May. Easier for us old folks. – *Georgia, mature couple, F, 59, # 6*

“We look for places with less children. Our kids are grown, we like to dine out where there’s not a lot of kids around.” – *California, mature couple, F, 72, # 3*

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK ABOUT THE OFFICIAL STATE VACATION GUIDE AND
MAP

COLORADO TRAVEL REGIONS

The inability to translate regions into cities was the single largest source of frustration with the current Vacation Guide, as many interviewees had trouble visualizing distances within a region, and identifying cities and towns within a region.

"I'm not sure where Boulder is and they just say Northwest, Southwest ... I don't know locations of everything." – *California, couple, F, 34, # 13*

[Looking for info on Aspen] "On p.4 it tells you where each region's information is, but if you're like me, I don't know where Aspen is." – *Georgia, single, F, 29, # 7*

"Northwest, southwest mean nothing to me. I've heard of Aspen, Vail, Telluride, Colorado Springs, but I don't know where they are." – *New York, mature couple, M, 61, # 2*

"Is Denver central? Can I get to the southeast corridor? Northeast? ... You need a jumpoff point." – *New York, mature couple, M, 72, # 5*

"I would rather have it by city. Northeast ... Southeast ... I don't know where that is." – *California, single, F, 29, # 7*

"I thought pages 14-21 [in the guide] were parts of Denver. ... They should put a map at the start of the listings so a person can confirm they're in the right spot. I'm guessing about where Rocky Mountain National Park and Colorado Springs are." – *New York, single, F, 22, # 9*

"I don't know what cities are in the regions, easily. Great pages on things to do, BUT show me the major cities!" – *Georgia, single, F, 34, # 2*

"Could the regions be named more descriptively [by features] in the Table of Contents? I don't know what each region offers. I don't know what's there." – *New York, affluent family, M, 44, # 11*

"It's a lot of cross-referencing for someone who's never been [to Colorado]. I wouldn't know how far Aspen is from Denver, I wouldn't know any of that. Which section [region] gets the snow? Where's the winter stuff [skiing, etc.]? – *Georgia, family, F, 29, # 4*

"I'm not sure what region Grand Junction is in – I would like the cities in each region listed." – *Georgia, mature couple, F, 59, # 6*

Further frustrations arose from the somewhat symbolic nature of the regional maps on each region page (pp. 13-21). Only one person "got" the artistic layout – if you assume the page is a map of Colorado, the regions are placed on the page roughly where they would appear on the map. Some people didn't notice the maps at all. Several wanted the bullet sizes denoting cities to be more informative. Is Meeker really the same size of city as Fort Collins? The mini maps (e.g., see Shopping p.68) were not seen as very helpful for people who don't know where the cities are yet, or when there is no reference for where in the region the activity is. Some people assumed that everything within a single region must be within a short drive from elsewhere in that region, while others assumed that distances within regions were large and so concentrated on only one city or town.

"[Trying to plan a trip to Grand Junction] Not much on the shopping page. You know, if you don't know the area, what good'll those maps do you? They're just little squares, there's nothing in them. So, if you don't know the state, you don't know the area, there's nothing written in them, there's no cities or anything listed – what good does that do you? In the Northwest, they just mention Breckenridge and Summit County. Shopping, I think, is a big thing for women, so they might want to expand that. I look for antique shops and quaint shops - anybody can go to an outlet mall [that's what's mentioned for the NW region]. ... It would just take a lot more research." – *Georgia, mature couple, F, 59, # 6*

OTHER FEATURES OF THE OFFICIAL COLORADO VACATION GUIDE

In general, many individual features of the guide were well-received. Many of the photos piqued interest, and interviewees' attention was often captured by individual features, ads, or writing. While some viewed the document merely as "a bunch of ads", most recognized that it would have some value in their planning process. However, during the course of the interviews several themes for potential improvement arose.

UNDERSTANDING □THE GRAND DESIGN□

Most interviewees used the guide in one of two ways. A significant number merely browsed the guide, looking for "tactical ideas and suggestions". An individual photo might pique interest, or an advertisement. Others were more strategic, starting at the Table of Contents and Page One, and working through the guide page by page.

For the first group, the grand design of the guide, with its regional layouts, lists, and focused articles, were more or less irrelevant. This group was merely sifting for specific ideas, though they may have stepped back with a different perspective over time, recognizing the short duration of the interviews.

The second group recognized the grand design to varying degrees, though it generally involved significant initial confusion and problem-solving before they discovered what it was. To a great extent, these interviewees detected that a system was in place, but had trouble deciphering what that system was. Based on the observations of the research team, it appeared that the major challenges lay in a) recognizing the regional overviews on pages 12 through 21, and b) recognizing that the regional pattern was repeated later in the guide. (It is noted that the introductions on pages 12 through 21 do not guide the reader to the more detailed regional data via recommended page numbers.) Adding to the confusion was the fact that few interviewees noticed the map in the back cover during their initial review, which could have given them a context for the regional overviews. Many visitors would like to see a complete map overview to the state at the beginning of the section introducing Colorado's seven regions (p. 12), before each region is discussed individually. It is probably worth noting that, when asked directly, many people said they had not looked at p.12 because they believed it was an advertisement.

Most people also think that if the Tourism Office is going to use a regional theme that they should stick with it throughout the guide, particularly in linking activities to their regions. Several people noted specifically that the region descriptions don't mention where skiing is located, and the section on skiing does not give a region reference for each resort.

Since the "Strategic Readers" tended to start at the front of the guide, it might be useful to have a "How to Use This Guide" write-up near the Table of Contents.

"They could have presented it all in one page first. My only annoyance - I'd like the big picture before I get to the details." – *Georgia, family, M, 43, # 8*

"[Pages 12-21 of the guide] didn't give me a good overview of the state as a whole. I need to see it all together; I can't do it myself. [Interviewer directs to map inside back cover] ... it puts all of those little pieces together for me which is what I said I needed done, so that's good. (laughs)" – *New York, mature couple, F, 56, # 1*

"[Interviewer: Can you tell what region the skiing is in?] I'd like to think it's north of Denver, according to the ski map back here, it's north, northeast of it. [Interviewer says, no, he looks at map, p.48 where "North" is pointed to the lower right of the page (a typically SE orientation).] Oh no! Oh boy is that misleading. Oh wow! Oh that's just wrong! So, I guess the northwest [region] is where all the skiing's at? Is that right? I don't know where it's at. As a skier, I'd have come right to this page, and that gives me every expectation that I need to be thinking of hotels north of Denver. The region thing isn't tied in." – *Georgia, family, M, 43, # 8*

FOUR SEASONS

In general, the "4 Seasons Served 40 Ways" article was well-liked. Often people wanted that section to be longer, more detailed, and give references for every item. Some wanted it to note the region where each activity was available as well.

"This is interesting. I like this. Winter, spring, summer, fall, giving me times of what's going on. I've not seen something like that before and I like that." – *New York, mature couple, F, 56, # 1*

"Now what I do like, they have activities broken up by the seasons - winter, spring, summer, I like that." – *Georgia, family, F, 29, # 4*

"I was kinda expecting there to be more than two pages. Well, Four Seasons Served 40 Ways - 2 pages - not exactly what I was expecting. I was expecting at least 8 pages [a couple of pages for each season]. I think definitely that could have been expanded." – *Georgia, family, M, 43, # 8*

UNFAMILIAR TERMS

Several people encountered a word or phrase they didn't recognize while browsing through the guide. Public lands and BLM were unfamiliar to many people, as were 14ers and Front Range.

"This says '14-E-R-S' [spelled out], what is that?" – *California, family, M, 35, # 5*

"Public lands? I'd think that was a garbage dump, some industrial site." – *New York, affluent single, F, 27, # 4*

"Public lands – what is that? I don't know what's the difference between public lands and national parks." – *New York, affluent mature single, F, 53, # 7*

"Is 'Front Range' a city?" – *Georgia, family, F, 29, # 4*

MISSING ACTIVITIES

Many people suggested additional categories of activities that they would like to see in the Table of Contents, or commented on the categories that were offered. Others offered feedback about the articles referenced on the cover of the magazine.

"Where do you gamble around here? Do they have casinos? Where's the nightlife in the guide?"
– *New York, mature couple, M, 70, # 3*

"[Table of contents has] a lot of activities outside: We're beyond that. We wouldn't go to the mountains unless there was a bus." – *New York, mature couple, M, 72, # 5*

"The book is not geared toward seniors; it's overly focused on activities." – *Georgia, mature couple, F, 59, # 6*

"Behind the scenes section would be neat." [Interviewee was very disappointed in the "Locals share their favorites" mentioned on the cover because it was difficult to find, and when she did find it, she was disappointed because it was 'small and useless'. She was expecting something very different than a two question Q&A about one thing in each region and was hoping more to find hidden gems for destination travel.] – *Georgia, mature couple, F, 59, # 6*

"The cover says 215 things [reasons to come to Colorado now]. I would like them enumerated." [Respondent leafed through the Guide searching for a list of 215 things.] – *New York, affluent mature single, F, 53, # 7*

READABILITY OF GUIDE

Small font size and photo captions that did not give the location of the shot were frequently bemoaned. In particular, many readers would see a picture that intrigued them, but they could not follow up on it to determine what the picture was and where it was taken.

Many asked for page numbers to appear on every page, and not be superimposed on photographs. Many also thought the listing sections would be easier to discern if the tabs in the listing sections were placed on both sides of every page. There were also a few requests for an index at the back of the guide to make it easier to re-find specific attractions that were noticed while browsing.

A major complaint was the lack of cross-referencing provided in the guide. There is no mention of the back-cover map (which was frequently not found by the reader), the travel planner (p. 70), weather (p.72), etc., in the Table of Contents. The region introduction page for each region (p.13-21) does not point to the region listings in the back of the guide (important because many people overlooked p.12, thinking it was an ad). And virtually everyone was surprised to find the "25 Hot Ideas" for each region buried back in the pages of listings. It was widely believed that those pages would be much more appropriately placed with the region overview pages in the front of the guide.

Perhaps surprisingly, a fair number of people would not have noticed the map in the back cover. The back cover does not indicate that there is a "MAP INSIDE!" (which some thought might be warranted), nor does the front cover, Table of Contents, nor the region introduction nor listing pages.

"Seniors have a lot of money to spend, make the font bigger!" – *California, mature couple, M, 69, # 4*

"This magazine isn't a Cosmo or something, you don't know what's in there, so the table of contents should be easy to read. [Page 3] is hard to read – make it all bold; with the pictures it's too much." – *New York, affluent single, F, 27, # 4*

"This is just like a magazine, not like a user-friendly guide of Colorado. It's not gonna be a tool [for planning] – I would just go on the internet." – *Georgia, family, F, 30, # 5*

"The region overview page doesn't direct you to the other region information in the guide." – *Georgia, family, M, 43, # 7*

"I go more for the pictures now than the writing, now that we're older and have to use glasses." – *New York, affluent mature couple, F, 55, # 6*

"They may want to try to keep their font a little bit larger. Mine's [my vision's] not as bad as some people, but for most guys I know at 43, this would be a tough read." – *Georgia, family, M, 43, # 8*

"Photo captions should be what the image is, not just the photo credit." – *New York, affluent mature single, F, 53, # 7*

"In the picture caption they credit who took it and when, but I don't know where." – *New York, single, F, 22, # 9*

"Another thing that's irritating: I noticed that they don't have page numbers on all the pages. And even if it's a black page or another page, if you're flipping through this way and you're looking for page numbers, you're not looking at the other side. And here you really can't see them – 8 and 9 are hidden in the green grass, just take the green grass off the bottom of the page and put the number down here. My biggest complaint with my magazines is I can't see the pages." – *Georgia, mature couple, F, 59, # 6*

LENGTH OF TIME TO GET A GUIDE

While many people said they would request a guide if they were coming to Colorado, several felt that the delivery time through the mail was unacceptable, and that they would use other sources rather than wait. It should also be noted that a number of young people did not know that free guides existed – although many of those were also more likely to download the guide from the internet than order a paper guide anyway. While there were not sufficient observations to draw a firm conclusion, it appeared that the likelihood of ordering a hard-copy guide increased with age.

"The one problem, I'll tell you, with the tourism place: They take too long. Every time you call them it takes two to three weeks to get [a guide] ... by the time I've gotten them I've gone on to other places." – *New York, mature couple, F, 56, # 1*

"I wouldn't order a guide. I don't want to wait for mail." – *New York, affluent single, F, 27, # 4*

"I would do that if we had time. I know sometimes it takes 2 weeks to get it or 3 weeks to get it. If I was planning it far in advance, I would probably do that." – *Georgia, mature couple, F, 59, # 6*

"I get too much junk mail, and I want information quickly. I would use the internet to plan." –
Georgia, family, F, 46, # 10

OFFICIAL STATE MAP

Nearly every interviewee ignored the map if they planned to fly, and they generally mentioned that they wouldn't look at it until they arrived in Colorado. Similarly, many of those who planned to drive (more likely to be families) often said that they wouldn't look at it until they were in the car, noting that they didn't need a Colorado map until they were in Colorado. A smaller number stated that they would use it for planning purposes, though their initial assumption was that it was merely a road map that didn't contain planning information. While the map contained information that interviewees valued, very few used the map for anything other than general viewing of roads until prompted.

When prompted to examine the map in detail, reactions were mixed. Interviewees tended to like the mileage charts and the photo montage of "10 Great Experiences". When an interviewee happened to find a particular information element that was relevant to their search, they noted it positively. However, it was much more common that the map was set aside and ignored even when it contained highly relevant information (including, for most participants, the straightforward "big picture view" of the state that they needed to orient themselves).

INTERNET SEARCHES

Residents were asked to begin a vacation planning process, and if they used the Internet, the research team logged their movement on the Internet.

Specific search terms are listed below reflecting the initial searches of people who elected to use the Internet in this exercise. (Not all New York interviews are available because the software initially didn't record the visits.)

Note that all visits to Colorado.com refer to the old web site active early in 2008. The new web site was not yet operational when the research was conducted. Additionally, after learning that many interviewees knew little about Colorado, the interview team eventually set the initial starting point at "Google Maps" to save time since interviewees tended to either look it up themselves or ask the interviewers for help.

Interviewee	Initial Search	Initial Site Visited	Colorado.com placement on Page 1?
1	interesting geographic (sp) places Colorado Misspelled term produced no hits of interest, immediately replaced by 'scenic places colorado'.	www.allgetaways.com	No
2	Colorado vacations	www.colorado.com	Yes (1 st listing)
3	Family Things to do in Colorado (sp). Initial misspelled hit brought no sites of interest, replaced with 'Things to do in Colorado with children'	http://family.go.com/travel/things-to-do/colorado/for-children/	No
4	www.travelocity.com	www.travelocity.com	N/A
5	Colorado	www.colorado.com	Yes (2 nd listing)
6	Colorado Visitors Bureau	www.colorado.com	Yes (1 st listing)
7	Colorado Initial hit brought no sites of interest, replaced with 'Colorado visitor'	www.colorado.com	Yes (2 nd listing)
8	Colorado resorts	www.coloradoresort.com	No

9	Things to do in Colorado (after initial browsing of U.S. map in Google Maps)	http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g28927-Activities-Colorado.html	Yes (1 st listing)
10	(Browsed U.S. Map in Google Maps)	(None)	N/A
11	Colorado (after initial browsing of U.S. map in Google Maps)	www.colorado.com	Yes (2 nd listing)
12	Denver (after initial browsing of U.S. map in Google Maps)	http://www.denver.org/	No
13	Colorado Fall Colors Dates (after initial browsing of U.S. map in Google Maps)	www.colorado.com	Yes (1 st listing)
14	(Browsed U.S. Map in Google Maps)	(None)	N/A
15	Colorado Chamber of Commerce (after initial browsing of U.S. map in Google Maps)	www.denverchamber.org	No (Colorado.com had paid ad on page.)
16	(Browsed U.S. Map in Google Maps)	(None)	N/A
17	Denver Colorado (after initial browsing of U.S. map in Google Maps)	http://www.denver.org/	No
18	Denver sites (after initial browsing of U.S. map in Google Maps)	http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g33388-Activities-c5-Denver_Colorado.html	No
19	Colorado	www.colorado.com	Yes (2 nd listing)
20	Colorado tourism	www.colorado.com	Yes (2 nd listing)
21	Colorado dude ranches	www.coloradoranch.com	No (Colorado.com was one of several paid ads)
22	Colorado Initial hit brought no sites of interest, replaced with	www.tripadvisor.com	Yes (2 nd listing)

	'www.tripadvisor.com'		
23	Colorado	www.colorado.gov (Interviewee followed links immediately to www.colorado.com .)	Yes (2 nd listing)
24	Colorado	www.colorado.com	Yes (2 nd listing)
25	Colorado Tourist Attractions	http://www.roadsideamerica.com/location/co	Yes (5 th listing, plus paid ad)

The research team developed full logs of all sites visited during the exercise, and can make them available electronically. The above sites represent only the initial search. However, in many instances the research team requested that visitors go to www.colorado.com for review purposes, so the electronic files will overrepresent natural discoveries of the web site.

The team observed four key facts about Internet planning exercises.

- First, many searches produced www.colorado.com hits high in the search results.
- Second, the most common searches that did not produce www.colorado.com hits were searches involving cities, which was a common geographic orientation for trip planning. In these cases, potential vacationers typically ended up at local tourism sites or at private sites.
- Third, when browsing www.colorado.com, visitors often found links of interest and clicked those sites, which made them leave the www.colorado.com web site. While the research team would yield to the Colorado Tourism Office's web analytics, it appeared that returns to the www.colorado.com site were not common once the person left.
- Fourth, several participants who found the www.colorado.com web site did not know that they were on the official state tourism web site. Several commented that they would have valued their site visit more highly if they had known, and that they assumed that it was "just another private web site".

APPENDIX A: SELECTING CITIES FOR RESEARCH

Because the research was conducted on site at interviewees' homes, it was necessary for efficiency purposes to select specific geographic markets for the study. Based on the project requirements and objectives, the research team recommended conducting interview sessions with respondents across three unique geographic locations. After initial conversations with the client, Corona Research set out to identify an optimal mix of three locations to be used in this study.

Corona first gathered information on the sizes of major regional markets, and then developed a simple algorithm to identify the most representative set of three communities. The model examined sites based solely on market size and geography, though other subjective judgments were made in the final selection.

The modeling used included the following steps:

1. The populations of all metropolitan areas in the nation were gathered, based on the most recent federal estimates (July 1, 2007). Additionally, population data was gathered for all non-metropolitan areas on a collective basis.
2. These areas were classified according to region (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West, per the U.S. Census) and community size, the latter being divided into three categories that each held equal proportions of the U.S. population.
3. A straightforward optimization was conducted to identify the combinations of region size and community size that represented the largest number of people, assuming that a selected city was representative of both its population size category and its region. Constraints were also included to force the selection of one metro area in the Northeast and one in the West, per the request of the Colorado Tourism Office.
4. Once the representative region and population size were known, Corona selected the city that held the midpoint population within that category, weighted by population.

This approach provided recommendations for research in three metro areas, but the smallest of those (Florence/Mussel Shoals, AL) had a population of only 143,000, which was deemed by the research team as being perhaps too small for future marketing efforts. As an adjustment, the research team then ran the model again, but limited all data and all selection to metro areas with 1.5 million people or larger. The 39 metro areas that remained in the candidate pool coincidentally comprised almost exactly half of the U.S. population. In other words, considering a U.S. population of 301 million people, the 150 million living in the 39 largest metro areas were considered. This provided an adequately sized pool of cities from which to choose, while represented major markets for which marketing could be efficiently undertaken.

The model was run again with this new constraint, and results were examined. As a final step, when examining the results of the model, the research team made some subjective judgments comparing the mathematically optimized metro areas versus other *near*-optimum metro areas to arrive at the final three markets. The goal of this subjective analysis was to identify three markets that were representative in ways other than raw population and region. The final markets selected were as follows:

- 1 Northeast metro area with more than 6.1 million people – New York/northern New Jersey metro area (18.8 million people)
- 1 Southern metro area with 3.3 million to 6.1 million people – Atlanta, GA (5.3 million people)
- 1 Western metro area with 1.5 to 3.3 million people – San Diego, CA (3.0 million people)

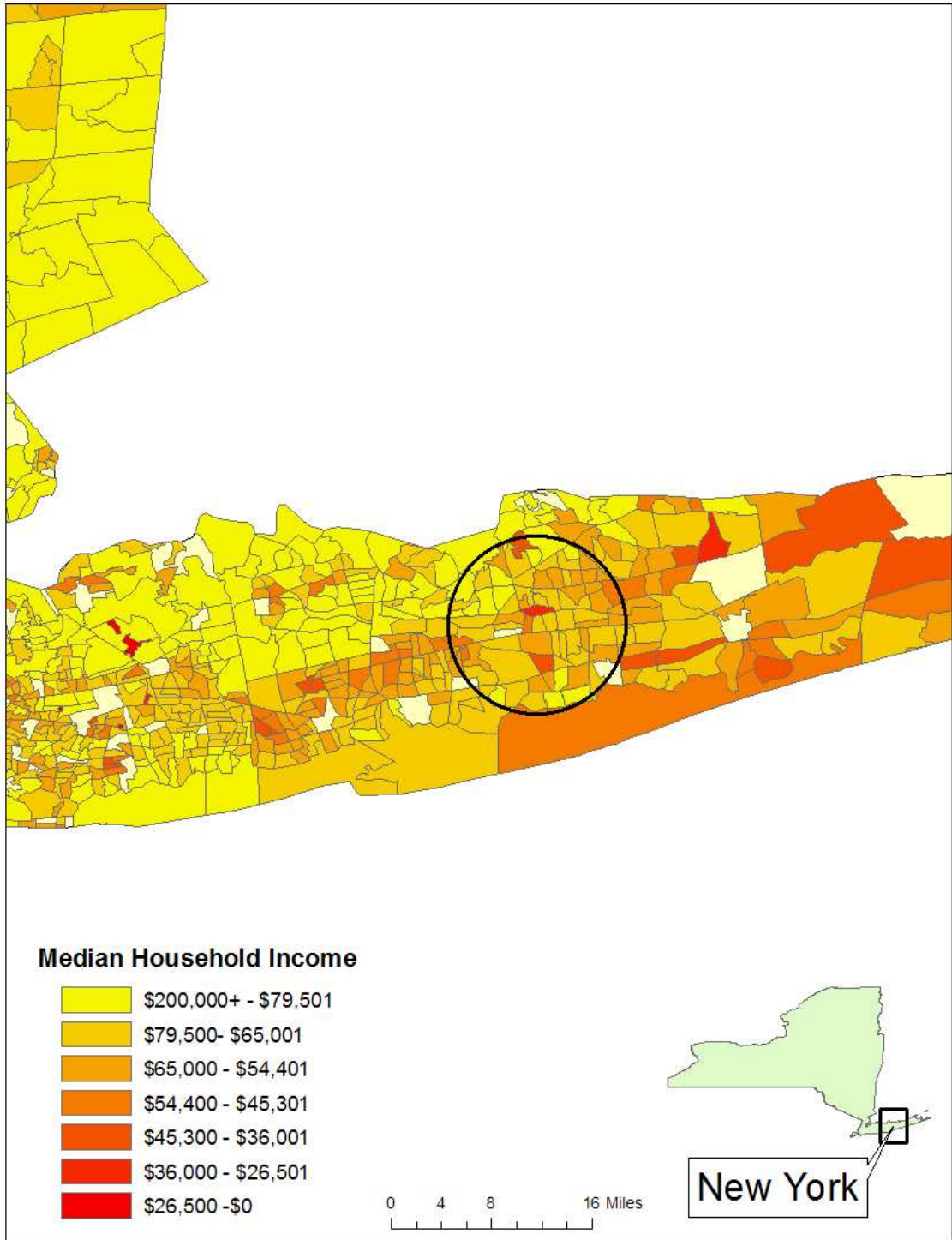
Although initial model results indicated Miami as the optimal location in the south, Atlanta was chosen by the research team to replace Miami due to its very close population size (nearly mathematically optimum), and a judgment that it is somewhat more representative of the entire South region than Miami. In a similar fashion, San Diego was chosen to replace Portland after original model results, primarily due to the sheer size and attractiveness of the California market (based on discussions with the client) and, if San Diego can be considered a proxy for the population in the southern part of California, then respondents from that area represent a “pool” of nearly 20 million people.

Selection of radii within each city for recruiting area. Two tactical research objectives required a further narrowing of the actual recruitment areas for the research. First, the Colorado Tourism Office has particular target markets for marketing, one of which is affluent households. Therefore, it was desired to draw recruits from (primarily) middle class to upper class neighborhoods. Second, there were practical considerations for recruiting, in that the recruiting process is much more efficient if recruits are drawn from a particular radius as opposed to an entire metro area.

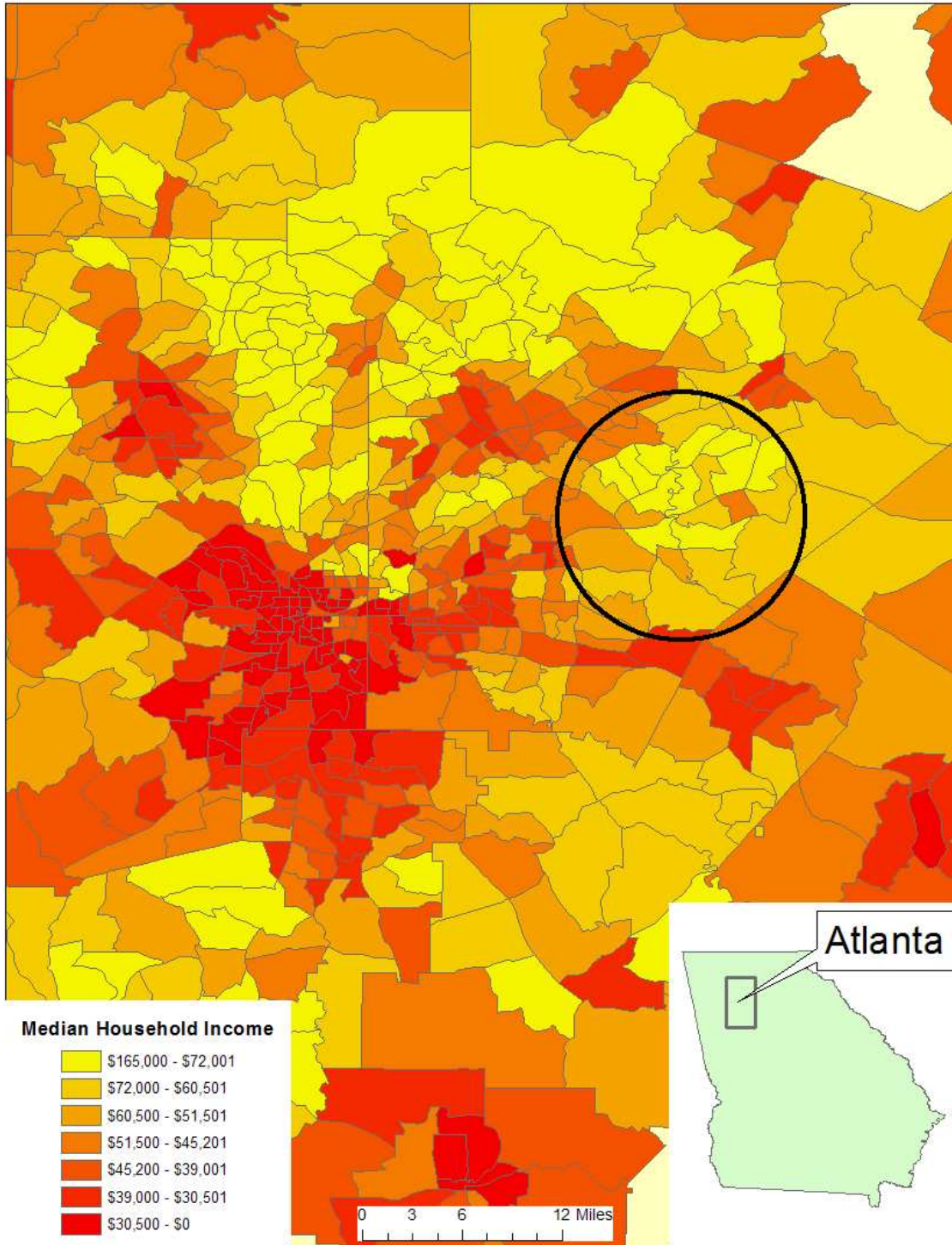
Once the metro areas above were chosen, the research team examined all census tracts in each metropolitan area and classified each census tract according to its median household income from the 2000 US Census. The rankings were assigned by equally dividing the median incomes in each census tract into seven levels and color-coded as such. (A color-coded map of census tracts for each metro area is included in Appendix A with the chosen radius). Then, a seven mile radius was created and overlaid on the color coded metro area with the goal of finding a location where the circle encompassed a somewhat representative sample of the metro area in terms of selected key variables, and which had a low proportion of low-income households. These radii tended to have higher median incomes than their respective entire metro areas, as planned, but had similar age and education profiles. The selected radii tended to have proportionally larger populations of families and married couples, but in part those criteria tend to correlate with higher incomes.

Once a desirable location was found, the census tract at the center of the circle was identified and this census tract was specified to a commercial list firm that provided a listed sample of households within seven miles of that census tract. This process was performed for recruiting purposes for all three metro areas.

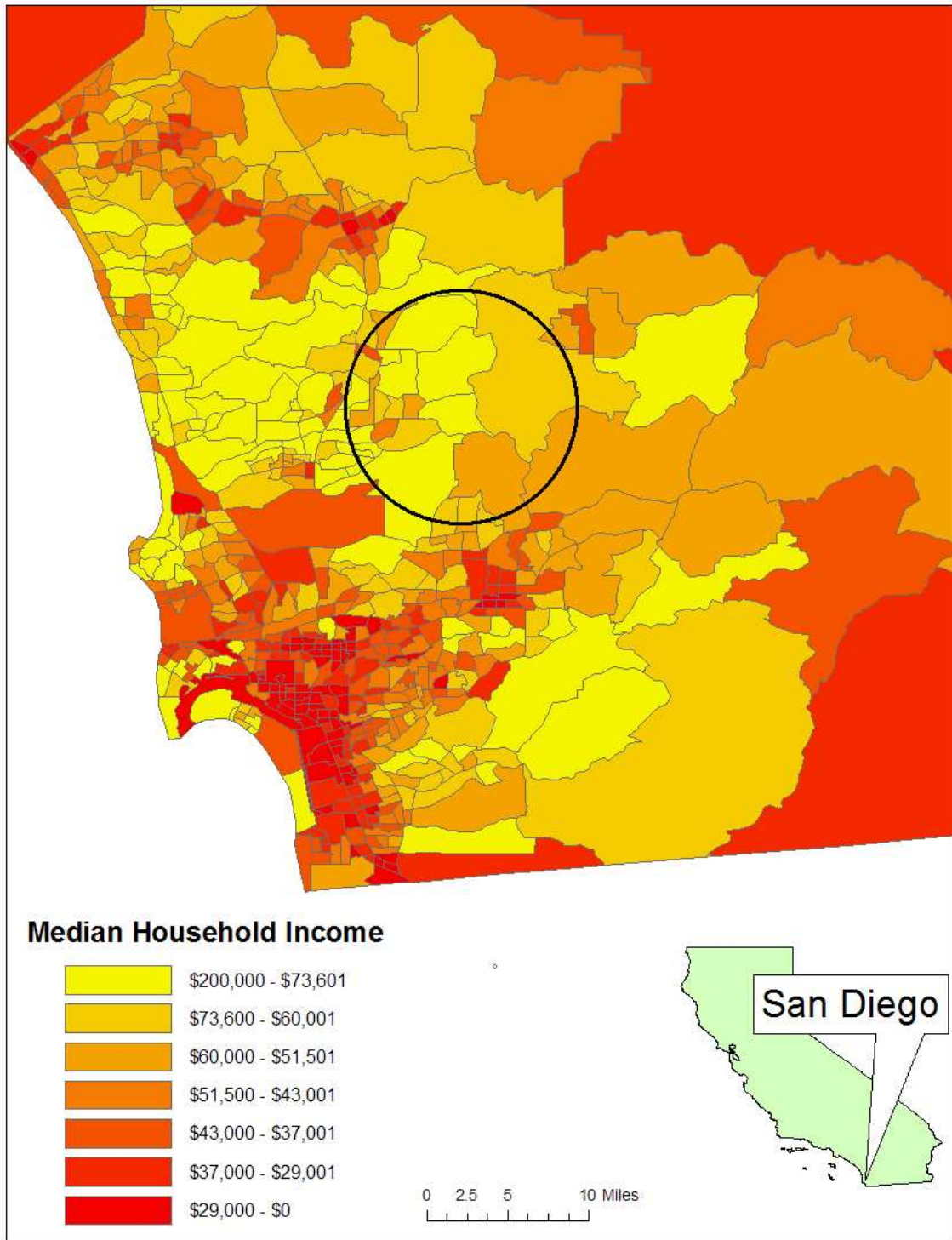
NEW YORK RECRUITING AREA (LONG ISLAND – HOLBROOK, RONKONKOMA, ETC.)



ATLANTA RECRUITING AREA (STONE MOUNTAIN, SNELLVILLE, ETC.)



SAN DIEGO RECRUITING AREA (POWAY, RANCHO BERNARDO, ETC.)



APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTRODUCTION:

Thanks for participating in our research on travel planning. Before we get started, let me give you a brief introduction about what we're going to do today, and why. Our firm, Corona Research, has been hired by the Colorado Tourism Office, a state government agency. They've asked us to conduct research with people in different areas of the country on how people plan their trips, because there are many different ways to do it, and they want to better understand how people go about it so that they can put together materials that are useful and helpful for potential travelers.

We're going to be talking to you about how you plan your vacations, and later on we'll ask you to do some "pretend" travel planning so we can observe how you use different resources to help with travel planning. The interview will last about 90 minutes, and at the end of the session we will pay you \$50. We want to include everyone who would typically be involved in your trip planning. Is everyone in your family who would be involved in travel planning here right now?

Great! We want to emphasize that we are in no way testing or evaluating you, and are not trying to sell you anything. Just so you know, all of your responses will be kept strictly confidential and are only used for the purposes of this study. Your responses will be reported anonymously along with those of other unnamed interview participants. We will be video and audio taping this interview for later analysis, and these recordings will be kept strictly confidential and only used for the purposes of this study. [May want to also reassure participant that we are not trying to sell anything.]

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

- 1) To get started, can everyone tell me their first name and their age?

	<u>First name</u>	<u>Age</u>
Interviewee # 1		
Interviewee # 2		
Interviewee # 3		
Interviewee # 4		
Interviewee # 5		

PLANNING FOR A RECENT TRIP (5-7 MINUTES)

[Interviewer: as the interview is conducted, if this trip appears to be a planning anomaly for some reason, go to the "typical trip" section. If interviewee is giving lots of details, ask throughout whether that is typical of their usual planning process, and then skip the next section.]

- 2) When was the last time you took a trip where you spent at least one night away from home, did not stay at the home of a friend or relative, and went to some place that you hadn't been to before?
- 3) Can you tell me briefly in 30 seconds or less, where did you go, how long were you there, and what did you do?
- 4) How long before you took that trip did you start planning for it?

- 5) Whose idea was it to take that particular trip? Who was the first person to suggest it? [Determine which family member chose the location, which chose the activities, etc.]
- 6) Did anybody resist it? Was anyone pushing to go someplace else?
- 7) What drove the decision to go on that particular trip? Was it something to do, someplace to see? What was the core part of that trip where, if you couldn't do it, you wouldn't have gone?
- 8) What resources did you use to plan the trip: advice from people you know who had previously been there, books, websites, travel agent, etc. [Get specific resources if possible. If they bought a travel guide, was it a Lonely Planet, Frommers, etc.? What websites did they use to find flights, hotels, events/attractions etc.]
- 9) What plans or reservations did you make before you left on the trip?
- 10) What things (activities) did you decide to do after you arrived at the destination?
- 11) Who took care of trip logistics, reserving places to stay, to eat, getting tickets for events or attractions? Tell me about the process. Did that person make the decisions themselves at the time, or did they have to come back and get buy-in from others? (Which others?)

TYPICAL TRAVEL PLANNING (5-7 MINUTES)

- 12) Was this trip typical of other trips you have taken in terms of how you planned it, and the kinds of things you did?
- 13) What are your typical vacation goals (relax, get out of town, see new things, etc.)?
- 14) What kinds of activities do you typically do while on vacation? (sit on beach, gambling, sightseeing, etc.)
- 15) Do you typically know when you will have vacation time before you decide where you will go? Or do you decide where to go and then find a time to go?
- 16) Do you typically know what you want to do on a vacation before you decide where specifically you will go? Or do you decide where to go and then decide what to do there?
- 17) Who in the family typically initiates the idea to take a vacation?
- 18) Who in the family typically suggests activities to do while on vacation? When you think about suggesting vacations, how is the power distributed? Split up between everyone so that it adds up to 100 percent.
- 19) When it comes to the final decisions, split up the power. Add it up to 100.
- 20) What resources do you typically use to decide where to go, how to get there, where to stay, what to do while there, etc? [Get specific websites, specific kinds of books guides – why do you like those in particular? organization, etc.]
- 21) How far in advance do you typically begin planning for a trip?

KNOWLEDGE OF COLORADO (5-7 MINUTES)

Now I have a few questions about your knowledge of Colorado. Remember that you were chosen for this study because you are not very familiar with Colorado, so we are not expecting you to know any of these things, we're just trying to get some ideas about what kinds of things people know about Colorado.

- 22) How familiar are you with Colorado?
- 23) What comes to mind when you think of Colorado?
- 24) Are there any activities that come to mind when you think of Colorado?
- 25) Can you name any cities or towns in Colorado? How/What do you know about those places? Do you know where they are? (e.g., in the mountains, north, south, etc.)
- 26) Can you name any landmarks in Colorado? What about attractions? (looking for Rocky Mountain Nat'l Park, Coors Field, etc.)
- 27) I'm going to give you a blank sheet of paper (shaped like Colorado!) and I'd like you to draw on it for me a few major features in Colorado. [Skip this if respondent seems annoyed by questions about Colorado.]
- 28) [Show respondent map of Colorado that is in back of the guide.] Take a minute to look at this map and let me know if there are other cities or landmarks that you recognize or that sound familiar now that you see them.
- 29) What do you imagine the weather in Colorado is like? (Probe additionally for summertime, mountains, etc.)
- 30) What do you think the weather in Denver is like in the winter?
- 31) How do you imagine the geography of Denver? Do you think of Denver as "up in the mountains"?
- 32) How far in miles or driving time do you think it is from one side of Colorado to the other (West to East). [Actual mileage is about 420 miles, est. driving time is 6.5 hrs.; N-S, 300 mi, 4.5 hrs.]
- 33) Do you know what other states are next to Colorado? [Utah, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona] Are you more familiar with any of those states than you are with Colorado? How do they compare to Colorado in your mind? In terms of your interest in visiting them?

PLANNING A TRIP TO COLORADO (20 MINUTES FOR PLANNING + 20 MINUTES FOR QUESTIONS)

Now, we'd like you to pretend that you're planning a trip to Colorado. I want to reassure you that we're not trying to sell you anything or convince you to actually take a trip to Colorado, we just want to learn how you would go about planning a trip to Colorado. Assume that you have decided to go to Colorado, but you haven't decided when to go, where in Colorado you will go, or what you will do there.

34) What would be your first step in planning this trip? How would you get started on planning this trip?

35) Walk me through the things you would do before you would be ready to leave on this trip.

[If they say they would use the internet] We have the internet set up on this laptop, and we'd like you to go ahead and spend a few minutes looking up whatever you would look up to plan your trip. We will just sit back and watch you for a few minutes and ask a few questions as you go along. [If they get to the Colorado.com, see if they notice the vacation guide and say they would order it, or ask if they would order it. If they get hung up on finding flights or airports, after a minute or two tell them to assume they found a flight into Denver, and ask them to go on from there to whatever they'd do next.]

[After 10 minutes or so move on.] Now we'd like you to take a look at some materials from the Colorado Tourism Office. If you were to request online that they send you information about Colorado, you would receive this guide and map in the mail. Take a look at these for a few minutes and let us know what you think about them.

36) First, tell me, would you have requested something like this (map and guide) through the mail? Have you requested materials like this before from any places you were thinking of visiting?

[We will have an observation record sheet to fill out during this part to record what is happening. Observer will be gathering micro-data, and interviewer will map the process below.]

37) How useful did you find the guide, overall?

38) Would you use something like that to plan a trip? Would it be helpful? Would you use it as your primary planning tool? Would you use it first (to get ideas) or last (to look for other things near where you're going)?

39) Did you notice that the listings were organized by region? What did you think about the organization by regions? Was that helpful? (If so, how, if not, how could it be improved?)

40) Look at the region overviews on pp. 12-21. Did/Does that help you get a good sense of the state. Did you use that section? Did you find that section helpful?

41) Look at tables of contents on p. 3 and p. 4. [If interviewee looked at those while planning] were those helpful? Did that point you to everything you were looking for? [If didn't look at those] would that have been helpful? Does that point you to everything you were looking for?

42) Look at the map in the back cover. [If didn't use it] did you know it was there? [For everybody] Is that a good map? Why or why not? Was it easy for you to find?

43) Look at the trip planner on p. 70. Did you use that information? Is it helpful for you? How so or why not? Was it easy for you to find? What about the information on pages 72-73?

44) Was there other information you would have liked to have in the guide? Is there anything missing that you were looking for?

45) Would you have preferred a different organization of the information in the guide? What suggestions do you have?

- 46) How useful did you find the official map?
- 47) Did you look at the 10 great experiences? Why or why not? Is that section helpful to you?
- 48) Did you look at the facts and figures? Why or why not? Is that section helpful to you?
- 49) Was there other information you would have liked to have in the map? Or would you have preferred a different organization for any of the tables?
- 50) How far would you be likely to drive in a day while you were vacationing? Would you pick one spot and stay there the whole time? Take day trips from there? Spend a few days in one location, then drive to another location for a few days?
- 51) If you were really planning a trip to Colorado, what else would you do at this point? Where would you go from here? (research, planning, etc.)

APPENDIX C: SCREENER FOR CTO IN-HOME RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION: Hello, and thanks for calling us. We are working with a client in the tourism industry who would like to know more about how people plan vacations. First of all, where are you calling from?

(Determine which area the caller is from): Okay, thanks. If you are qualified and selected to participate in an interview, you will receive \$50 in cash for participating in a 90 minute discussion at your home. Two interviewers will come to your home at a time that is convenient for you, to talk with you and all members of your family who participate in your vacation planning. They'll have a video camera with them to record the interview, but it's just for analysis purposes. The goal of this is kind of fun, and our client just wants to observe how people plan a vacation. Does this sound interesting to you?

We have to get a variety of people to participate, so we have particular slots to fill. Would you be interested in answering a few more questions to see if you qualify for an interview? There are 15 questions.

Great! Just to confirm, if you qualify, we will schedule a time for two interviewers to come to your home to talk with you about how you plan vacations. If you typically plan vacations with a spouse or partner, or any children or other family members, we would like them to participate in the interview as well. Will that be possible?

Great! Just so you know, all of your responses will be kept strictly confidential and are only used for the purposes of this study. Please answer honestly – we have a broad range of people that we are recruiting.

52) Note which area they are calling from:

- a) MSA # 1 (New York)
- b) MSA# 2 (Atlanta)
- c) MSA # 3 (San Diego)

53) Do you or does anyone in your household work for any of the following types of companies or organizations?: (Read list, TERMINATE if yes for any)

Market Research	
Marketing	
Advertising	
Tourism/Travel industry	

54) Determine if the caller is male or female

- a) Male
- b) Female

55) What is your age? _____

(Must be 25 or older, also we need to make sure we get people that fit "mature" requirement)

56) Do you have any children?

- a) Yes

- i) Are any of these children under 18 and living at home? (Yes or No)
- b) No

57) How many leisure trips or vacations do you usually take each year? [Assess what they usually do for a vacation, if they are likely to travel out of their own state]

- a) One [TERMINATE]
- b) Two (couples)
- c) Three or more (families/actives)
- d) Five or more (affluent/mature)

58) How long are you away from home for your typical vacation?

- a) Less than one week
- b) One week
- c) More than one week but less than two weeks
- d) Two weeks
- e) Other _____
- f) Not usually firmly planned

59) When you travel out of state for a trip or vacation, how do you get to your destination?

- a) Fly (Affluent more likely to fly)
- b) Drive (car, RV) (mature more likely to drive)
- c) Other _____

60) How often do you use the Internet? _____

61) Who in your household is the primary influencer in deciding where you go when you travel?
[Read first three]

- a) You
- b) A spouse or partner
- c) Someone else
- d) "About equal"
- e) Other _____

62) I'm going to read you a list of six states. For each state, please tell me whether you have ever been to that state, and if so, when you were last there. Have you ever been to...?

	Ever been? (1=Yes, 2=No, 3=Don't Know)	If Yes, when was last visit? (Date or number of years ago.)	If Yes, do you remember what you did there? (1=vividly, 2=some, 3=not really)	If No, do you have any interest in going?
a) Arizona				
b) California				
c) Colorado				
d) Illinois				
e) Louisiana				
f) Montana				

[If trip to Colorado was within last ten years or if they vividly remember the trip, TERMINATE]

[If no interest in going to Colorado, TERMINATE. We need people who don't know what they'd do or see, or who want more info.]

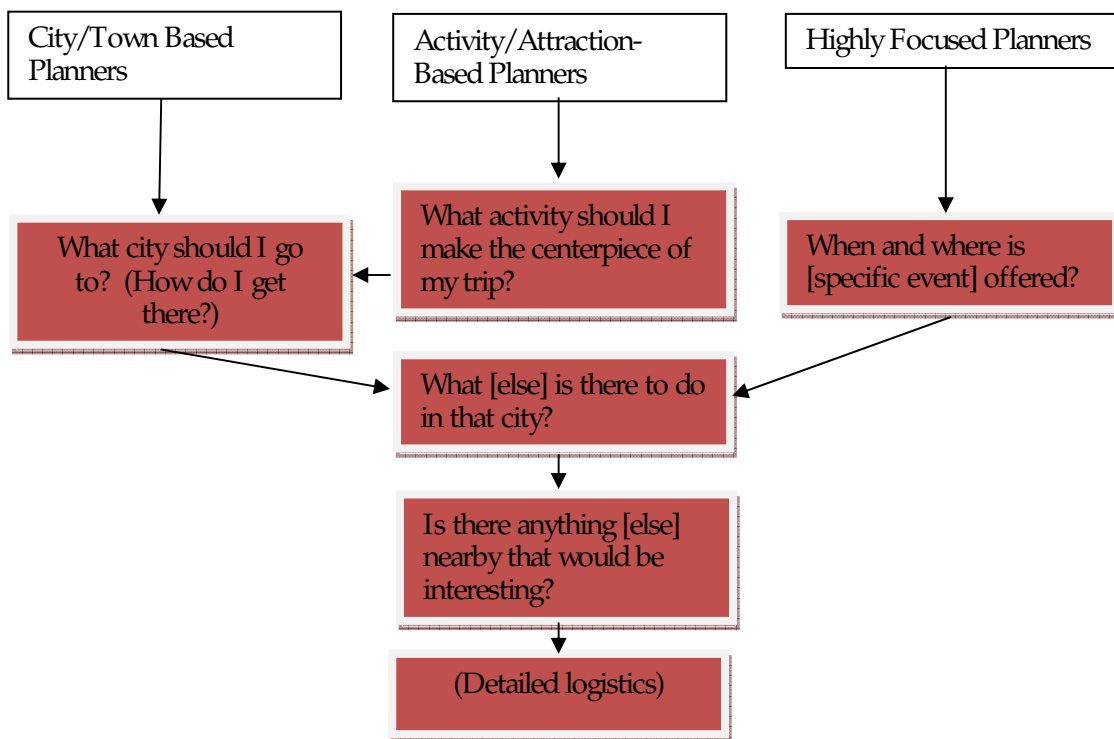
- 63) When you take your next trip out of state, do you think you'll go:
- a) By yourself
 - b) With a friend
 - c) With more than one friend
 - d) With your spouse or partner
 - e) With your spouse or partner and others
 - f) With family, including children
- [None of these are cause to terminate, just need a mix]
- 64) Please tell me whether you would be interested in each of the following vacation activities [Circle all that apply]:
- a) Go hiking, climbing, rafting, skiing, or another outdoor activity
 - b) Try a new activity or adventure that I've never tried before
 - c) Go to a music festival or food and wine tasting event
 - d) Visit an old mine or a fort, sightsee, or learn about an area's history
 - e) Stay in a resort town where spas and fine dining are available
 - f) Find a place where there are fun things to do for my family
 - g) What else? _____
- [Just classifying their interests]
- 65) What ethnic or racial group are you a member of?
- a) Anglo/White
 - b) Hispanic/Latino
 - c) African American/Black
 - d) American Indian/Native American
 - e) Asian/Oriental/Pacific Islander
 - f) Other _____
 - g) Refused/Don't Know (TERMINATE; we need to know this in advance.)
- 66) Which category includes your household's annual income? I'll read a list, and you can stop me when I reach the correct category.
- a) Less than \$10,000 [TERMINATE]
 - b) \$10,000 to \$34,999 [TERMINATE]
 - c) \$35,000 to \$49,999 (families/actives make this or more)
 - d) \$50,000 to \$74,999 (matures/couples make this or more)
 - e) \$75,000 to \$99,999
 - f) \$100,000 or higher (affluent group makes this or more)

Okay, that's all of the questions, and it looks like you're eligible. [Arrange interviews.]

APPENDIX D: POTENTIAL LAYOUT OF A LOGIC-FLOW VISITOR PLANNING GUIDE

Based on the research, it appears that there is a strong preference for city-centric planning guides. Many travelers will pick a city as a vacation “base” (for various reasons, including more or less random selection) and then have an interest in learning about things to do in that city and in a radius around that city. Others will pick a city based on an activity that they like, and then conduct a similar radial search for other activities to fill out the vacation. Typically, people said the farthest they were willing to drive for a “day trip” while on vacation was about 2 hours each way.

From this feedback, it appears that most of the planning population falls into a small finite number of logic patterns that are followed in vacation planning as follows:



Within the context of this logic path, we present the following pages as a potential example of a logic-inspired layout, where the guide has three main parts, in the following order: an overview of Colorado to orient visitors to the state as a whole, an activities section that points visitors toward cities where their preferred activities are located, and a cities section that summarizes the activities and resources (hotels, etc.) available in each city. Note that the following pages represent a concept and a flow, but the research team recognizes that a trained graphics team could likely improve on many specific elements. As such, consider this a concept that would need further refinement, but that represents a guide flow that matches vacationers’ orientation and planning process.

Part A. Introduction to Colorado.

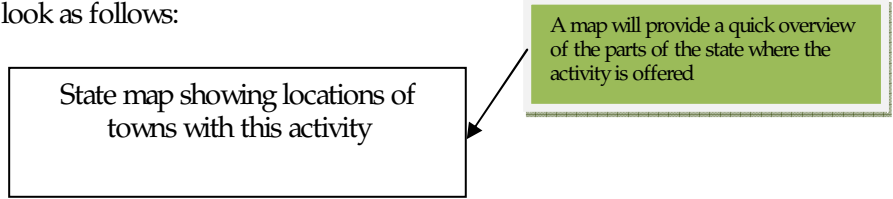
This section would provide a gross overview of Colorado, with key facts about the state such as location, geography, climate, and other basic background information. The goal would be to give the reader a basic orientation of the state. State-level feature articles, photos, etc. could be included in this section. A map of the state should also be presented on a page in this section, with cities clearly labeled and given dots that correspond to the population of each city.

At the end of this section, users would encounter a "Features of this Guide" section, which would point Activity-Based planners and Highly Focused Planners to Part B and City-Based Planners to Part C.

Beginning a guide with this "quick overview" will give an initial grounding and base of knowledge to users whose familiarity with Colorado is low.

Part B. Activity Guide

This second part of the guide would provide an overview of available activities in Colorado, to help Activity-Based Planners and Highly-Focused Planners to select a destination. An easy-to-read summary for each activity might look as follows:



Whitewater Rafting

<u>Location/Nearest City</u>	<u>For more information on this city, see Page</u>	<u>Market Size</u>	<u>Details</u>
Ashville	21	Large market/presence	Class 5 rapids, short descent
Bennington	56	Moderate market/presence	Primitive backcountry rafting
Carbon City	32	Large market/presence	Commercial outfitters, equipment available
Danville	17	Small market/presence	Rafting through town
Elmira	15	Niche market/presence	Class 2 rapids, good for beginners

Large market/presence
Moderate market/presence
Small market/presence
Niche market/presence

A city list will allow users to quickly identify a city for initial consideration. They can then easily find additional information on that city in Part C (next page).

Some indicator of the magnitude of the activity (symbols, shading, or even numbers) will help users find a location that meets their needs. Some may want to participate in the most active/popular place, while others may want to move off the beaten path.

A very short description of what makes each locale unique relative to this activity would provide users with a fast means of distinguishing among Colorado's offerings.

Activity-based features, ads, photographs, and other value-adding features can follow the initial overview.

Part C. Cities, Activities, and Radii of Interest

On the website it would be fairly straightforward to produce an easy-to-read summary for each individual town or city that provided information about the community and the activities available, and provided comparison information for the five nearest cities, the nearest city with a population of 10,000 or more, and Denver. An example summary is provided below:

Map of State, Showing Location of Town of Apple Valley and other major cities.

Map of Area, Centered on Town of Apple Valley

Maps will orient the visitor about the relationship of nearby towns

Any references to other cities will include a page number to locate that city, or it will be referenced below as a nearby city.

City Name: Apple Valley

[Logistical Information – Climate, Nearest Airport, Nearest National/International Airport, etc.]

[Short marketing description of Apple Valley]

General logistical and marketing information will let the visitor know what to expect.

A quick description of the activities offered in a city will allow fast comprehension by the user.

City	Go to Page	Distance (Miles)	Community					Activities									
			Population	Shopping	Dining	Hotels	Hiking	Rafting	Historic Sites	Spas	Hot Springs	Theme Parks	Museum	Skiing	Trains	Etc.	Special
Apple Valley	-		Large	Moderate	Moderate	Large			Moderate			Moderate					Special
Other Nearby Cities																	
Belmont	21	5	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate				Moderate							
Caledonia	24	17	Niche	Niche	Niche	Niche											Special
Dunbar	36	22	Large	Large	Large	Large				Moderate				Moderate			Special
Edgington	75	28	Niche	Niche	Niche	Niche											
Farewell Falls	88	31	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate							Moderate				Special
Capitol City	25	138	Large	Large	Large	Large			Moderate			Large	Large				

- Apple Valley Tigers AA Baseball Club
- Apple Valley Jazzfest
- Mystic Falls Waterfall and Nature Trail
- Greater Dunbar Regional Airport
- Caledonia Alien Observation Planetarium

Large market/presence
Moderate market/presence
Small market/presence
Niche market/presence

Some indicator of the magnitude of the activity (symbols, shading, or even numbers) will help users find a location that meets their needs. Some may want to participate in the most active/popular place, while others may want to move off the beaten path.

When perusing a city, users can easily identify and peruse nearby cities and put together a "regional" vacation without having to work within the confines of pre-defined "regions".

Distances to nearby cities allow the user to easily judge the travel involved in moving between cities.

Communities may have unique offerings that cannot be templated.

Locale-based features, ads, photographs, and other value-adding features can follow the initial overview.

Part C (Alt). Cities, Activities, and Radii of Interest

Summaries of every town, with automatic construction of tables as shown in Part C, is feasible on a web site, but may be impractical in a written guide. If so, a guide could use the same format as above, but selecting approximately 25 towns (an example list is given on the following page) and presenting a table like that below including all cities that are within approximately a 25 mile radius of that city. "Hub" towns should be selected strategically to ensure full coverage of all towns in the state within one of the 25 "hubs" (some towns may appear in multiple hubs), and "hub" towns should be reasonably large enough to hold a tourism infrastructure such as hotels and restaurants. This is similar to a region organization, but focused much more heavily on the cities and towns in a "hub" and the nearness of all places within a hub. Also in the table is included the nearest city with a population of 10,000 or more (here, Durango), and the state capital, Denver. An example summary is provided below:

Map of State, Showing Location of Town of Cortez and other major cities.

Map of Area, Centered on Town of Cortez

City Name: Cortez

[Logistical Information – Climate, Nearest Airport, Nearest National/International Airport, etc.]

[Short marketing description of Cortez]

City	Go to Page	Distance (Miles)	Community				Activities										
			Population	Shopping	Dining	Hotels	Hiking	Rafting	Historic Sites	Spas	Hot Springs	Theme Parks	Museum	Skiing	Trains	Etc.	Special
Cortez	-																
Other Nearby Cities																	
Dove Creek	21	35															
Dolores	...	11															
Towaoc		15															
Arrida		8															
Yellow Jacket		16															
Pleasant View		20															
Cahone		26															
Lebanon		8															
Mancos		17															
Durango		46															
Denver		384															

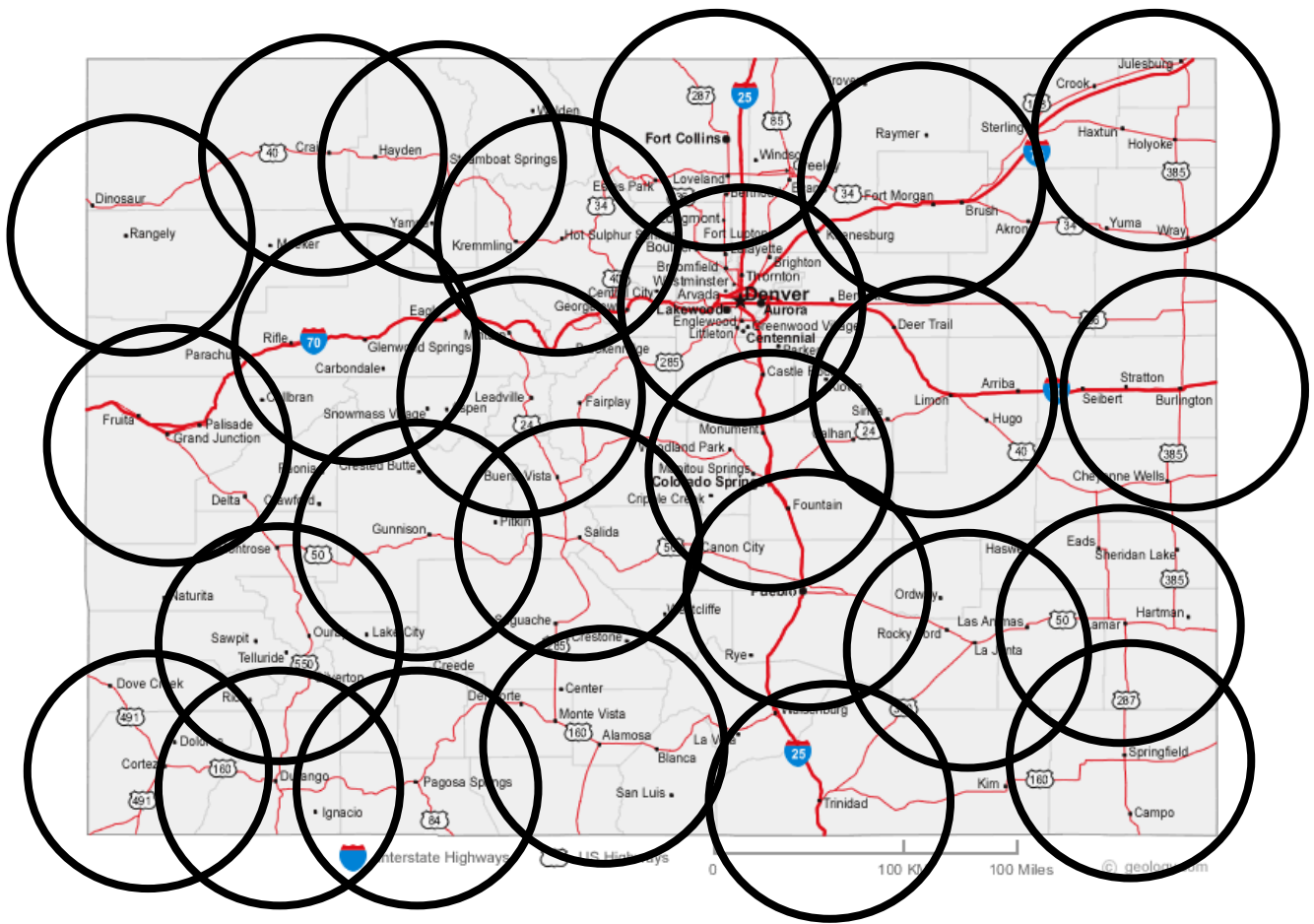
Locale-based features, ads, photographs, and other value-adding features can follow the initial overview.

Possible selection of 27 "Hub" towns by Geographical Radius:

Radii could be extended for selected cases to provide full state coverage.

Alamosa
 Burlington
 Colorado Springs
 Cortez
 Craig
 Denver
 Durango
 Fort Collins
 Fort Morgan
 Glenwood Springs
 Grand Junction
 Gunnison
 Holyoke

Hot Sulphur Springs
 La Junta
 Lamar
 Leadville
 Limon
 Pagosa Springs
 Pueblo
 Rangely
 Salida
 Springfield
 Steamboat Springs
 Telluride
 Trinidad
 Yuma



Another possibility might be to define radii by a combination of population and geography, to ensure that “hub cities” are built around areas that have enough tourist infrastructure and activities to provide sufficient interest to potential visitors. One potential rule might be to ensure that a “hub city” summary include the smallest radius that encompasses a population of 50,000, but within limits to 25 miles and 100 miles. A set of hubs under such a rule could look like the following:

Possible selection of 19 “Hub” towns by Population and Geographical Radius:

Radii could be extended for selected cases to provide full state coverage.

Alamosa
 Breckenridge
 Burlington
 Boulder
 Colorado Springs
 Denver
 Durango
 Fort Collins
 Fort Morgan

Glenwood Springs
 Grand Junction
 La Junta
 Montrose
 Pueblo
 Rangely
 Salida
 Steamboat Springs
 Sterling
 Vail

