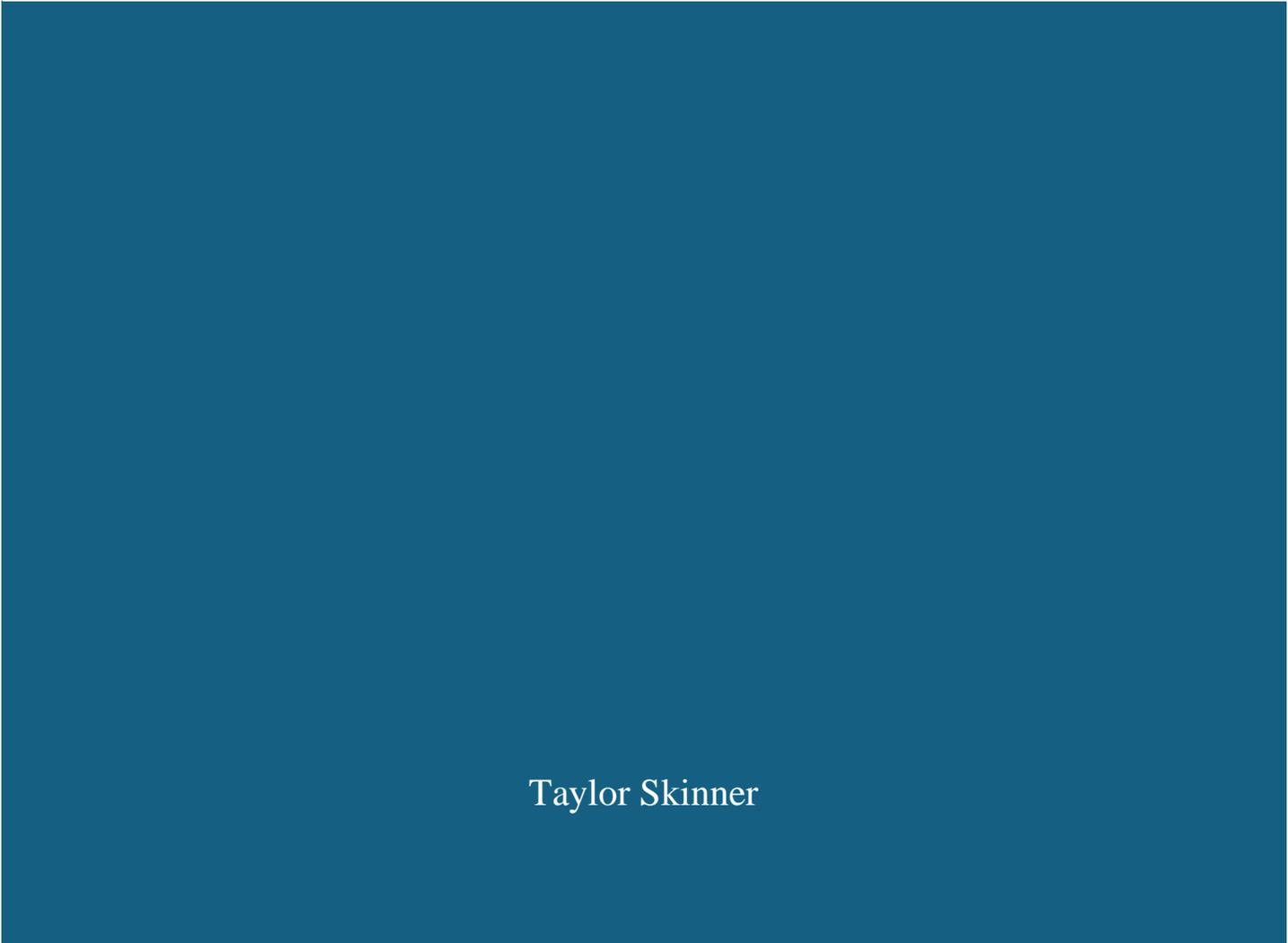




# Company, Audience, Industry Background, & RQ's Visit Florida



Taylor Skinner

## Background

Visit Florida is a non-profit corporation formed in 1996 that acts as a guide to Florida. As tourism is a driving force of Florida's economy, Visit Florida intends to further boost tourism in Florida by providing information that supports a fun, well-planned, unique visit to Florida for both domestic and international travelers. From reporting on the best activities to do in Florida to naming specific to giving Florida travelers resources to navigate the state, Visit Florida is a crucial resource to make the best of traversing Florida. Visit Florida names "enrich[ing] the quality of life in our communities" (What We Do) as its mission, as well as making an impact and living passionately as some of its values (What We Do). These, in tandem with its persistent efforts to preserve Florida's natural ecosystem by giving tips for ecotourism (Tjaden, n.d.), show that Visit Florida is a corporation that looks to support the state of Florida and its people.

## Audience

Visit Florida caters to a large scale of audiences. The segmentation study commissioned by VISIT FLORIDA in 2017 identified five distinct domestic audience segments: Family Memory Makers, Winter Sun Seekers, Adventure Seekers, Experience Seekers, and Impulse Getaways. Demographically, these groups vary in age, income, and family composition, with Family Memory Makers typically consisting of households with children, while Winter Sun Seekers often include older individuals or retirees seeking warmth during winter months. Geographically, these visitors come from diverse regions across the United States, with a significant concentration from northern states. Behaviorally, they display varied travel patterns, from planned family vacations to spontaneous weekend trips. Psychographically, the audience's motivations range from seeking relaxation and warmth (Winter Sun Seekers) to desiring thrilling activities and new experiences (Adventure Seekers).

## Market analysis

Visit Florida continues to be increasingly successful each annual quarter and from year to year as the numbers of visitation in Florida continue to rise. Since 2021, after the COVID-19 pandemic made a dent in the visitation numbers for Visit Florida, the percentage of grand total visitation continues to be record-breaking for the company. Visit Florida's 2021 marketing strategy has set the company apart from its competitors and allowed it to be a leading destination for travelers.

According to the Visit Florida 2021-2022 Annual Report, in 2020 and 2021 Visit Florida improved its overseas visitation by 21%, becoming America's #1 destination point. In the industry of Convention & Visitor Bureaus, Visit Florida has a market share of 6.4% (IBISWorld, n.d.). By the end of 2023, the total visitation was up 2.3% from the previous year, and the domestic visitation was up 1.1%. These increases were marked as the highest-ever visitation rates for Florida, signaling that Florida is the preferred destination for international and domestic travelers.

## Threats

Visit Florida faces a lot of competition from other states and countries and their initiatives to actively increase tourism within their states. Popular tourist hotspots in the United States include places like New York, California, Texas, and Hawaii. They are also facing threats from other tourist hotspots around the globe. Some threats come from the residents of Florida, the weather, and threats directed toward the tourists. The permanent residents of Florida dislike tourists because they tend to find them to be disruptive to their normal routine and "get in the

way.” The weather can pose a threat to tourism; hurricane season lasts about 6 months out of the year. Tourists are likely scared of extreme weather conditions. Additionally, poor weather makes it harder for tourists to enjoy what Florida has to offer, such as theme parks, beaches, and national parks. Tourists themselves may also feel threats directed towards them. The political climate of the state of Florida poses threats to different communities, such as the LGBTQ+ community, people who speak with an accent, and international travelers. This could deter tourists from even considering visiting Florida, threatening the success of Visit Florida.

### Opportunities

Florida is one of the leading states for tourism in the United States, falling shortly behind New York. Visit Florida can expand its reach and make Florida the biggest state for tourism, stimulating economic growth and creating more job opportunities. In this sector, many jobs come as a result of the tourism industry. For example, tourist spots require travel agents, tour operators, theme park workers, and many more. Visit Florida also provides a platform to foster major strategic partnerships with major companies, such as Busch Gardens and Experience Kissimmee. Creating partnerships such as these increases the success of the tourism industry.

### Benefits of Industries

The benefits of the tourism industry include increasing the number of people which in turn stimulates the economy and infrastructure. It provides greater opportunities for employment generation, preserves local culture, and promotes community development. It provides a sense of cultural exchange between foreigners and citizens. The tourism industry provides great opportunities for the states hoping to increase the amount of visitation that they receive.

## Competition

Visit Florida operates in a competitive market with several obstacles and outside influences. On the domestic front, it faces competition from other states in the union, such as California, New York, and Texas, all of which have strong tourist boards and substantial marketing budgets. Diverse attractions in these states may entice travelers to visit them instead of Florida. Internationally, with their alluring tourism efforts, places like Mexico, the Caribbean, and several European nations provide fierce competition. Furthermore, private sector organizations, such as Disney and Universal Studios as well as major theme parks and cruise lines like Carnival and Royal Caribbean, engage in massive marketing campaigns that have the potential to supersede state initiatives by emphasizing their products rather than promoting Florida as a whole.

The state of the world economy can have an impact on discretionary travel expenditures; recessions tend to result in fewer visitors. Domestic travel to Florida is directly impacted by the state of the economy in the United States; during recessions, tourism tends to decline while it typically increases with increasing levels of disposable income. The tourist business has also changed because of technological improvements, with social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok becoming indispensable resources for destination marketing. To effectively reach potential guests, Visit Florida must continuously adapt to various platforms. A strong online presence and strategic relationships are also required to sustain exposure considering the growing popularity of mobile booking apps and online travel agents.

International and state regulatory changes have a big influence on tourism. International tourists may be discouraged by health-related recommendations, travel restrictions, and visa

requirements. Like this, Florida's tourist industry's operational expenses and appeal may be impacted by state laws about environmental preservation, tourism taxes, and hospitality regulations. Environmental variables that are constantly changing, like climate change and extreme weather, provide difficulties. Hurricanes and rising sea levels discourage tourists while also necessitating large sums of money for preparation and recovery from disasters. Furthermore, Florida's tourism industry is very seasonal, with peak times frequently determined by pleasant weather; unanticipated anomalies have the potential to upset this trend.

The COVID-19 epidemic serves as an example of how public health concerns can quickly cause tourism to drop. It is critical to communicate safety precautions and public health policies effectively to ensure that Florida is seen as a safe location. Tourism is also impacted by social and cultural trends. Visit Florida must modify its marketing techniques in response to changes in consumer preferences for eco-tourism, wellness tourism, and experience travel. Aging populations and the growing inclination of millennials and Gen Z to travel necessitate customized strategies for various age groups.

Visit Florida may improve its digital presence through creative marketing techniques including influencer collaborations, interactive virtual tours, and interesting social media content to stay competitive and manage these outside forces. Coherent marketing efforts that promote the state holistically can be created by fortifying ties with public and private players. The emphasis on sustainability activities can draw eco-aware tourists, while thorough crisis management strategies may ensure quick recovery from natural disasters, public health emergencies, and economic crises. One way to lessen the effects of crises in particular industries is to diversify target markets by drawing visitors from a variety of geographic locations and demographic

groupings. Visit Florida can continue to improve its tourism business by making continuous adjustments to these dynamics.

#### Research Questions

RQ1: What segments make up the target for domestic marketing?

RQ2: What are each segment's biggest unaddressed concerns about Florida?

RQ3: What strategies (i.e. digital media, traditional, etc.) best reach each identified segment?

RQ4: How do demographics impact segmentation?

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