

Executive Summary

Background and Objectives

To help manage the level of enquiries received by consulates and embassies from Canadians traveling abroad, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade launched the Consular Awareness Program. The program was launched under the title "Bon Voyage, But..." and features a booklet which provides information to direct travelers to sources when preparing for their trip, a series of brochures with information on specific topics related to travel preparation, an information kit, and a video series.

During November 1993, the Department engaged the Phase 5 Consulting Group to conduct a series of focus groups with travelers and travel agents to test the effectiveness of the various materials and to identify any necessary adjustments. This report presents the findings of that research.

Traveler Characteristics and Motivations

The research revealed that travelers have different characteristics and needs related to travel preparation depending on their travel motivations.

- Travelers going on a **sun vacation** are seeking to relax and have a good time and, as such, preparation is focused on ensuring this enjoyment.
- Many young people going on their first foreign trip are seeking an **adventure**. They typically take very few steps to prepare for the trip because they enjoy the element of surprise. As a result, they are more inclined to run into problems due to a lack of knowledge of cultural norms in other countries.
- Experienced travelers in the middle age groups are motivated by the desire to learn and to gain knowledge. Rather than seeking an adventure (with surprises), they want to ensure they take full advantage of the **experience** of the trip. To ensure they take full advantage of the learning experience, they conduct more extensive research on the local culture and laws prior to traveling.
- Retirees and people nearing retirement seek **personal comfort** and well-being when traveling, and focus on preparations related to health. They are also more inclined to experience a health-related incident while traveling.