

# Leveraging the Vermont Brand



INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
WOODSTOCK

January 2011



# Agenda

Applicable  
insights  
drawn from  
the findings  
of the  
Vermont  
Brand  
Research

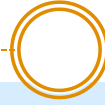
- Vermont brand research background and purpose
- Opportunities for Vermont hospitality industry
  - Target your marketing investments
  - Meet and exceed expectations
  - Make a connection

# Vermont Brand Project Goals



- Common and current understanding of Vermont's Brand
  - Is our current thinking aligned with customer perceptions?
- Understand where the opportunity lies
- Identify effective strategies for promoting Vermont
- Determine the triggers for conversion

# What is our message?



*A place of rural beauty, a place where farms produce wholesome food and where mountains, lakes and trails offer vigorous, refreshing outdoor recreation, a place where history is important and relationship to the land still means something. Vermont is a safe place, away from the noise and crime of the cities.*

*~ describes promotion of Vermont in 1891,  
taken from article written by Tom Slayton (2003)*

# Research Methodology



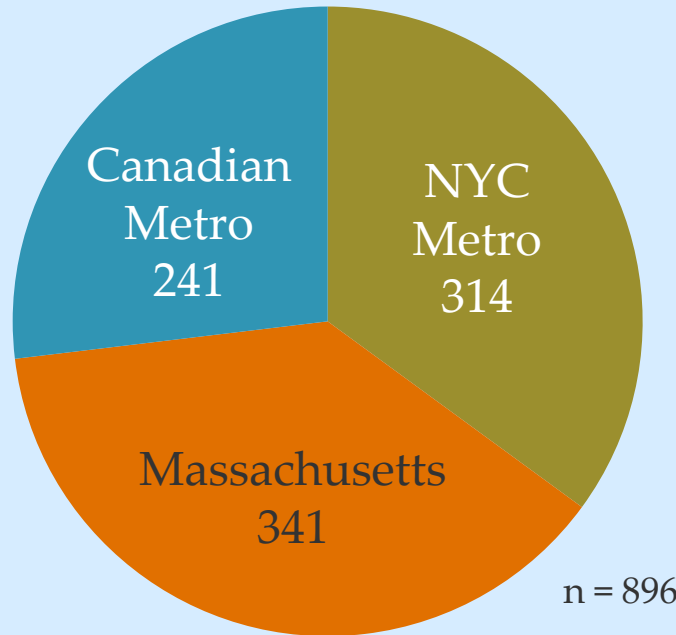
- Online surveys
- Sample sources:
  - Inquiry databases from Department of Tourism & Marketing and Vermont Ski Areas Association
  - Purchased sample through Resource Systems Group, Inc.
- Respondent criteria:
  - Vacationed within the last two years
  - Spent at least \$50 at vacation destination
  - Lived within defined geographic market
    - NYC metro, MA, VT, Ottawa, Toronto, or Montreal

# Sample

Vermont Vacation  
Providers



Out-of-State  
Vacationers



Vermont Residents /  
Vacationers



For the purposes of this study, a “vacation” was defined as: *“any day or overnight trip outside of your usual travel or commuting pattern, where you participated in any leisure/non-business activities”*

# Vacationer Market Segmentation



## By Geographic Market

New York City Metro

Massachusetts

Canada Metro\*

Vermont

## By Season

Summer

Winter

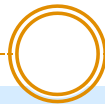
## By Destination

**Vermont**

Not  
Vermont

\*includes Ottawa, Toronto, and Montreal

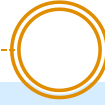
# Meet the Vermont Vacationer



- Married, have a household (HH) size of 2, and average age of 45
- Employed full-time, have a graduate degree, with a HH income \$150K+
- Use online sources and family & friends for vacation planning information
- Vacation with their spouse and/or friends, stay in hotels and B&B/inns, and stay between 2 – 6 nights
- Do outdoor activities on vacation
- Want to be seen as “adventurous”, “outdoorsy”, “spontaneous”, “thrifty”, “independent” and “idealistic”
- What’s important?
  - Good value, not crowded, warm/friendly people, easy to get to, and diverse experiences



# Opportunities for Vermont Hospitality Businesses



- Match your marketing investments to your target markets
- Provide features and services highly valued by visitors
- Make a connection to Vermont, and to each other

# Customize messages to market preferences



Preferences	NYC Metro	MA	Vermont	Montreal	Toronto	Ottawa
<b>Activity</b>	Cultural	Outdoor	Outdoor	Shopping	Shopping	Shopping
<b>Length of stay (nights)</b>	3 – 6 (46%)	2 (40%)	3 – 6 (40%)	3 – 6 (35%)	3 – 6 (49%)	3 – 6 (31%)
<b>% travel w/ children</b>	37%	29%	27%	36%	33%	22%
<b>Travel Info Sources - % of market using source by type</b>						
<i>Travel agent</i>	22%	21%	17%	41%	39%	43%
<i>Social media</i>	17%	15%	18%	30%	28%	22%
<i>Visitor rating sites</i>	28%	25%	26%	15%	19%	16%
<i>General interest magazines</i>	20%	23%	27%	40%	48%	47%



**Cultured  
traveler  
looking for a  
longer, luxury  
escape**

## **New York City Metro Vacationers**

- Majority are 41-50 (26%), married (63%), and college educated (65%)
- More likely (than MA, VT) to travel with children and take longer trips (1-2 weeks), and stay in a house/condo (than VT, CAN)
  - More likely (than MA) to spend \$1,000 or more on vacation, participate in cultural activities, and want to be seen as extravagant





## Looking for practical, outdoor, short getaways



## Massachusetts vacationers

- Majority are 51-60 (28%), married (69%), with a HH size of 2 (42%)
- More likely to take 2 night trips
- More likely (than NY, CAN) to spend \$100-\$300 on vacation and less likely to spend >\$1,000; more likely to spend <\$50 traveling to destination
  - More likely to want to be seen as thrifty (than NY, CAN)
- More likely to participate in outdoor activities and less likely (than NY, CAN) to do cultural activities



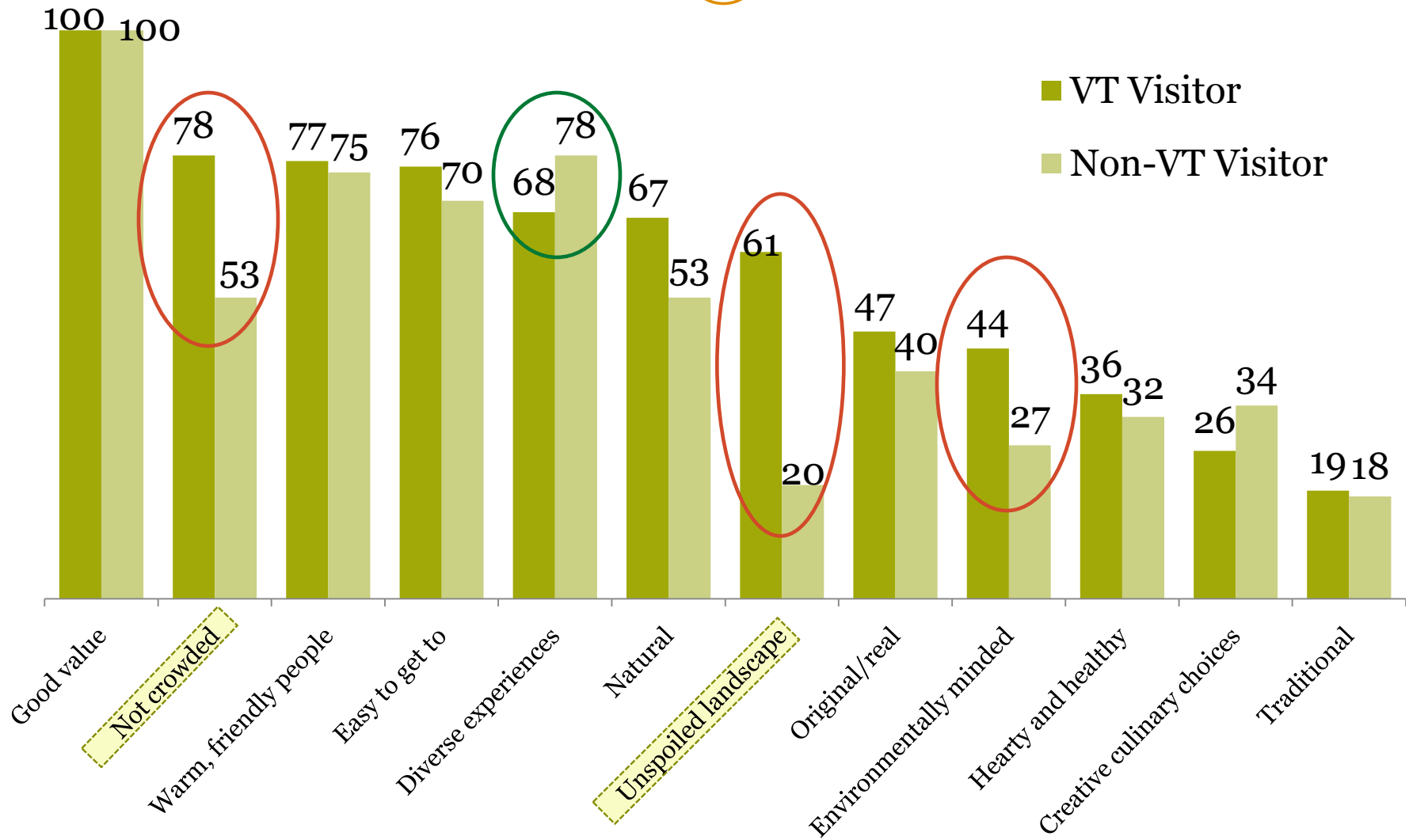
## Looking for affordable, outdoor experiences

### Vermont

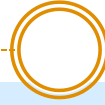
- Majority are married (73%) and 51-60 (29%)
- More likely overall to have HH income less than \$50K and not have a grad degree
- More likely to take a day trip (than NY, CAN) or one night vacations; majority stay at hotel (41%)
- More likely to spend \$50-99 at destination
- More likely overall to want to be seen as outdoorsy; and thrifty and natural (than NY, CAN)



# Highlight features that are valued by visitors



# Deliver on expectations



## ■ Good value

- Do you offer sufficient amenities and thoughtful necessities for your guests?
  - I forgot my toothbrush ... or My luggage is delayed

## ■ Not crowded

- Have you observed traffic flow and layout of your establishment?
- What is the longest wait time for visitors? Do you have activities to help them pass the time?

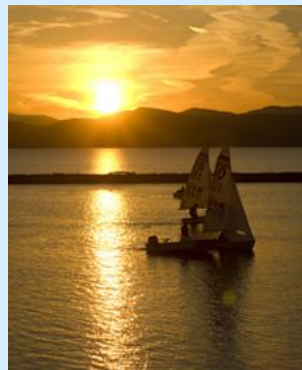
## ■ Warm friendly people

- Is your staff knowledgeable about you, about the area, about Vermont?
- What tools do you give your staff to help them welcome visitors?
  - Samples, coupons, or maps?

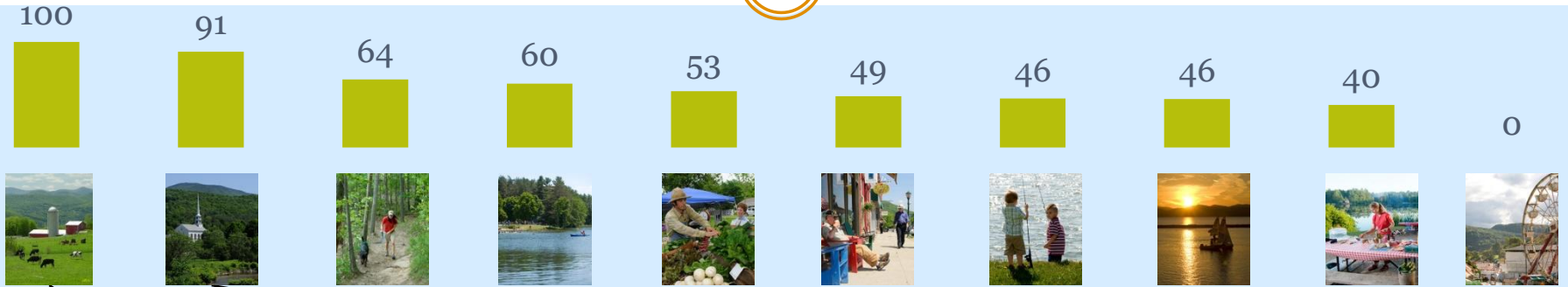
# Make a connection to Vermont



A mix of summer iconic, activity, and people image types were tested.



# Use images strongly associated with Vermont



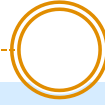
Scale = relative degree of representation

Most representative of Vermont

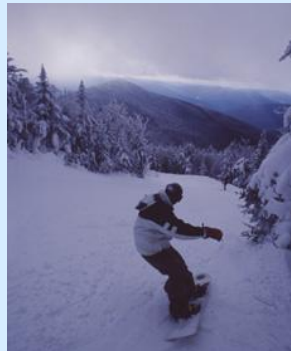
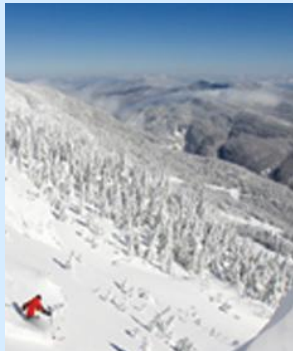
2<sup>nd</sup> most representative of Vermont



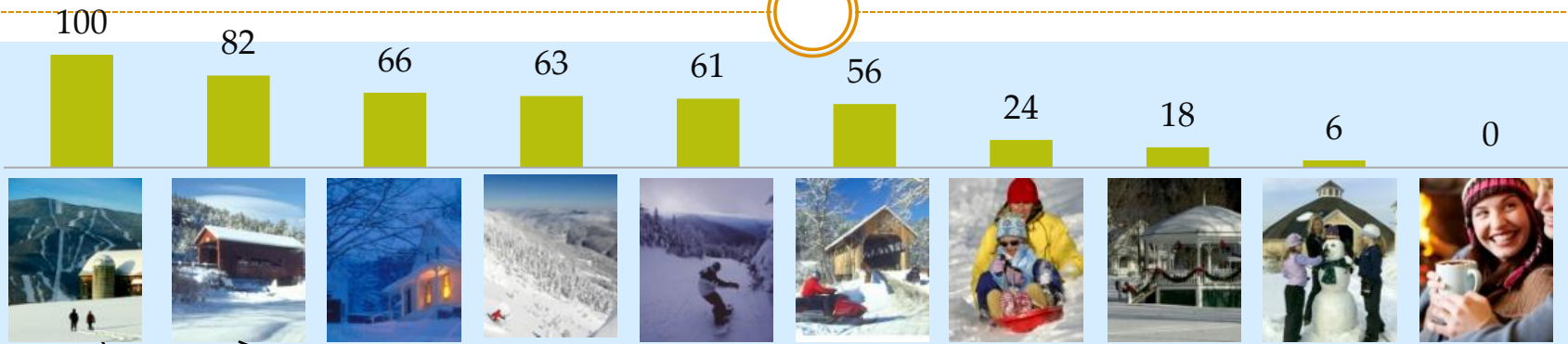
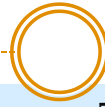
# Vermont Winter images tested



A mix of winter iconic, activity, and people image types were tested.



# Iconic images are strong identity for VT Winter



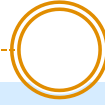
Scale = relative degree of importance

Most Relevant to VT

2<sup>nd</sup> Most Relevant to VT



# Speak the language of your customer



- Use words that evoke emotion and put the visitor in the moment.
- Use your copy to provide a sense of place - Incorporate words that visitors identify with Vermont.

## *Emotions*

- Pure and Simple
- Unhurried
- Unspoiled

## *Culture*

- Down home
- Local color
- Authenticity

## *Sense of place*

- Farmland and forests
- Mountains and lakes
- Fresh air
- Fresh tracks
- Beautiful

# Summer positioning: Connecting with words

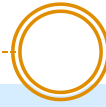
## Vermont. Reconnect.

Thriving downtowns blend seamlessly into farmland and forests. Artisans, from glassblowers to bakers, greet visitors, unassuming and unpretentious. Free spirits and old souls are equally welcome, and equally comfortable. It's about connecting, and you'll find it in Vermont.



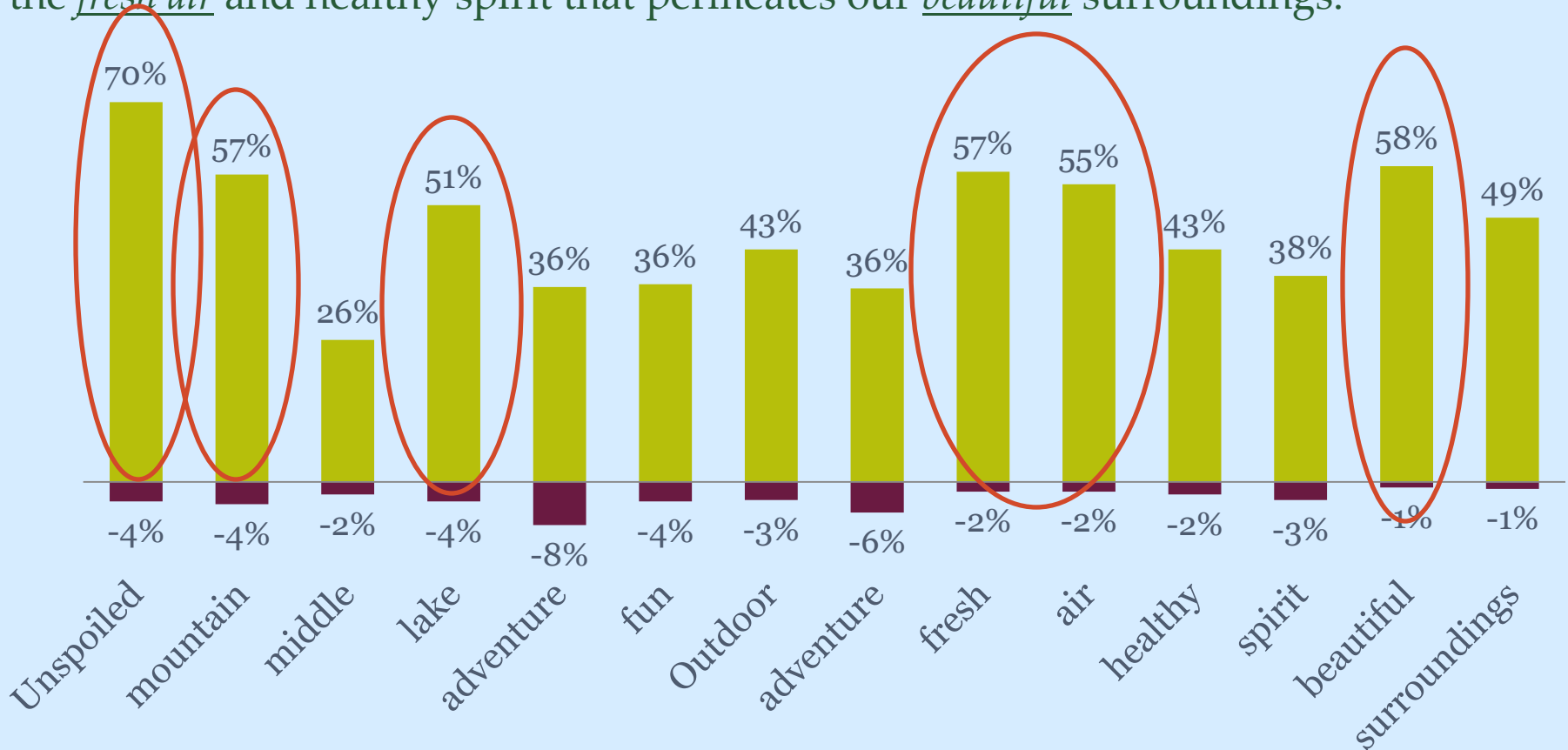
% of respondents who felt the word was relevant / not relevant to Vermont

# Summer positioning: Connecting with words

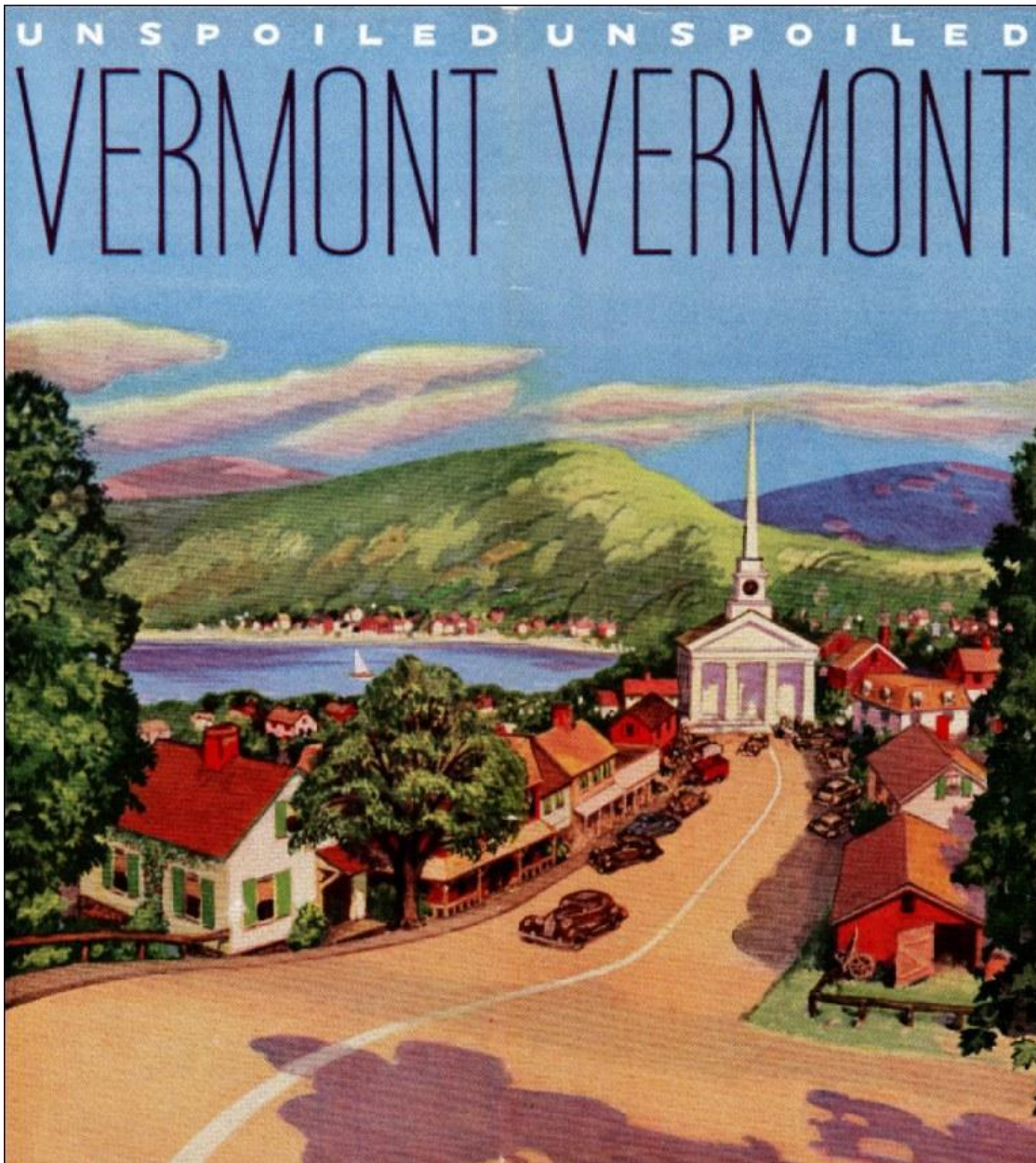


## Vermont. Unspoiled.

On top of a mountain or in the middle of a lake, you can find adventure and fun. Outdoor adventure never gets old here. You can play every day and never tire of the fresh air and healthy spirit that permeates our beautiful surroundings.

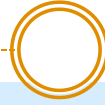


% of respondents who felt the word was relevant / not relevant to Vermont



**Unspoiled Vermont** was used as the campaign theme for promoting Vermont for nearly 20 years, beginning in the early 1930s and continuing into the 1950s.

# Make a connection



- Show relevance to Vermont culture, history, and people
- Partner with neighboring regions and other properties
- Some good examples –
  - Billing Farm & Museum
  - Walking tours of Woodstock



*Paulfromjersey, Bloomfield, NJ*

*Aug 2, 2010*

*“ On a recent family vacation to southern Vermont, we decided to go out of our way on the last day and head north instead of south... It was well worth the distance. ... After the exhibits we hiked one of the center’s three nature trails, which was absolutely beautiful.*

*We are hard to please when it comes to animal exhibits given that our children have very strong interests in animals and we have been to many zoos and science centers with these kinds of attractions. However, VINS is the real deal -- science, exhibition, and wildlife rehabilitation. “*



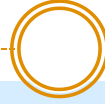
LILYTHECAT

Jul 28, 2010

*“ Have stayed here every year for past 4 years -- rooms are comfortable; Amy is a delight. She wants to help make your stay terrific ... Love the area*

*Delicious breakfast and dinner was fantastic; They offer a dinner value - four courses that are unique and offer a great deal of variety, We have loved them all.”*

# Key Takeaways



- Maximize your marketing investments through targeted marketing
  - Focus on markets that are seeking the experience you offer
- Highlight valued features and attributes in your marketing
  - Be specific – *show* and tell how you deliver good value, a friendly welcome, and diverse experiences
- Leverage the affinity visitors have for Vermont
  - Use images that convey a strong sense of place
    - Balance with images and content that show activity
  - Build a list of keywords that trigger an association with Vermont

# Thank You



Find more information at:

[www.cmo.vermont.gov](http://www.cmo.vermont.gov)