Trekabilly Customer and Market Research

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our goal with Trekabilly is to create a community website where individuals post tips about their own city and cities they've visited. Anyone looking to plan a trip will be able to search for posts by category, keyword, or location and receive results that talk about the whole city. We will begin by curating posts to ensure fair representation and, as Trekabilly grows, create a weighting system to ensure continual fairness. We'll also integrate voting on posts to engage the community further and do an even better job of giving the most interesting results.

We have examined the habits and desires of our target customers and have found that they are interested in both types of information. We've also looked at the competition and seen that, though none of these features is unique, our blend of them will be which can give us strong competitive status.

We'll start Trekabilly in New York City, which is the largest tourist destination in the United States. This will allow us to grow our product and create the community before expanding elsewhere.

CUSTOMER SEGMENTS

Our customer market will be primarily users in the 20-40 age group.These are people that are used to reading reviews online to help make their decisions. They are also still mobile and, as a group, have minimal physical limitations. Instead they have budgetary restrictions which will make them more likely to pick their activities for the most enjoyment.

CUSTOMER VALIDATION

Though our customer validation efforts, we showed that people would be interested in a travel site that listed both tourist hot spots and places that only locals go. We also validated that people use reviews for their travel decisions with 89% of respondents saying they use reviews at least sometimes. Furthermore, it reinforced that a sense of community is necessary since one of the most used sources of travel advice is from friends. It also pointed out an important limitation of our user-post structure since only about 35% of respondents said that the even sometimes posted a review.

Interviews

We did two different types of interviews. Interviews of those that are traveling to New York City and interviews of those that have traveled in general, though not to NYC in specific. Both sets of interviews reported similar findings, though. All either explicitly or implicitly stated that they had a desire to have experiences that are more "local" or unique to where they are going. Almost all interviewees also wanted to spend some part of their trip seeing sights. Both the NYC tourist interviewees explicitly stated that they are seeing sights, so this may indicate that people who choose to come to NYC are more interested in sights, but more interviews need to be done to confirm this conclusion.

Survey

One item we looked to check with our survey is how people are currently getting travel information. From this data we ascertained that the most common way to get travel data for all our respondent is through recommendations from friends. This helped confirm that creating a community feeling may help our website grow. Websites were commonly used, though, so we decided to proceed with the website approach. We ran this information twice, once with all respondent and once with just those reporting in the 20-40 age range and found the data is similar, indicating we can consider expanding our customer segments later in the product life cycle.

All Respondents

Respondents Ages 20-40
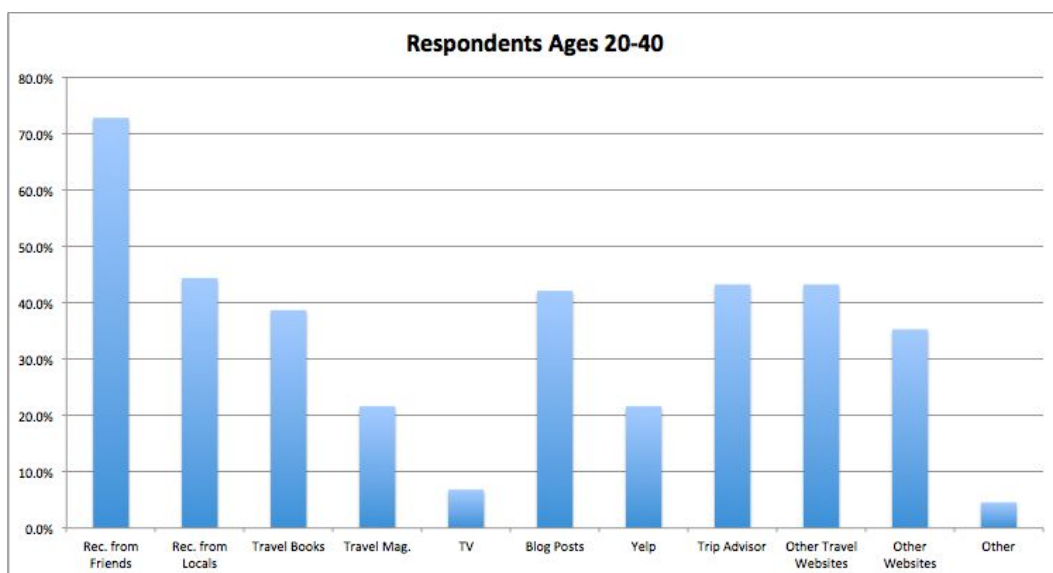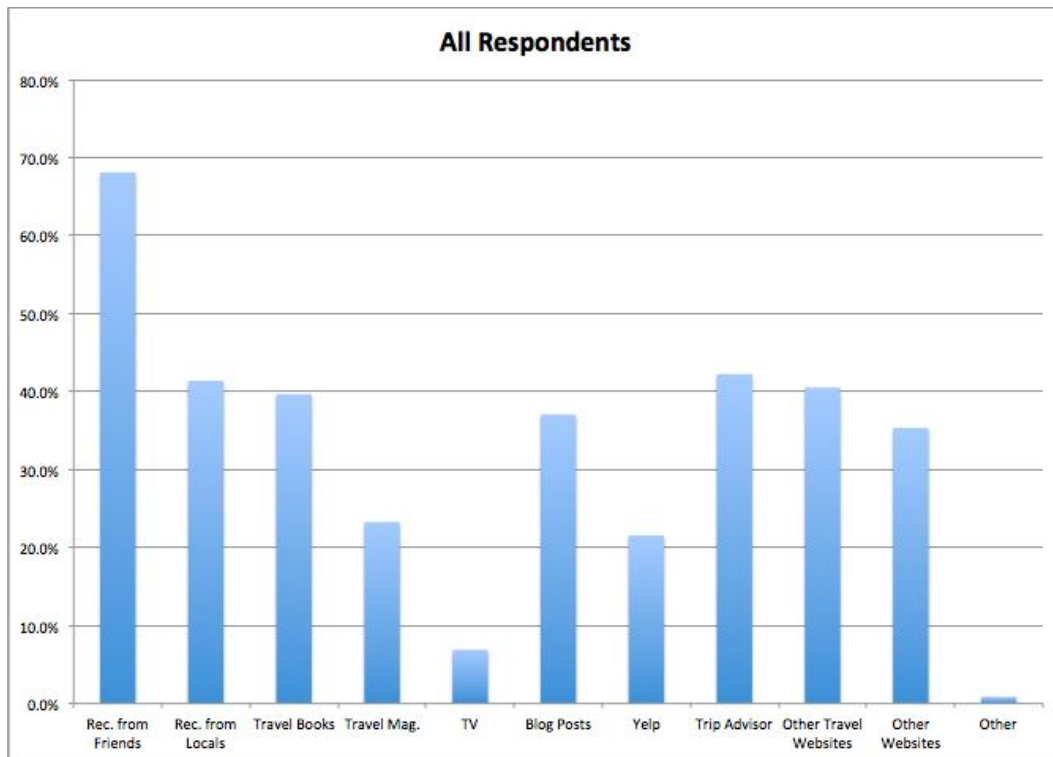
We also inquired about what types of things people like to do on their trips to see what kind of data we should populate our website with. As the chart below indicates, the highest ranked items were about eating in local restaurants, going to unique places, trying new things, and relaxing. Not far behind though were going to famous places and seeing sights that they'd heard of. GIven that unique is an ambiguous quantity that could mean unique but still tourist-y or truly unique, it is clear that both tourist spots and non-tourist spots mattered. This indicated to us that we clearly needed to integrate both into TrekaBilly.
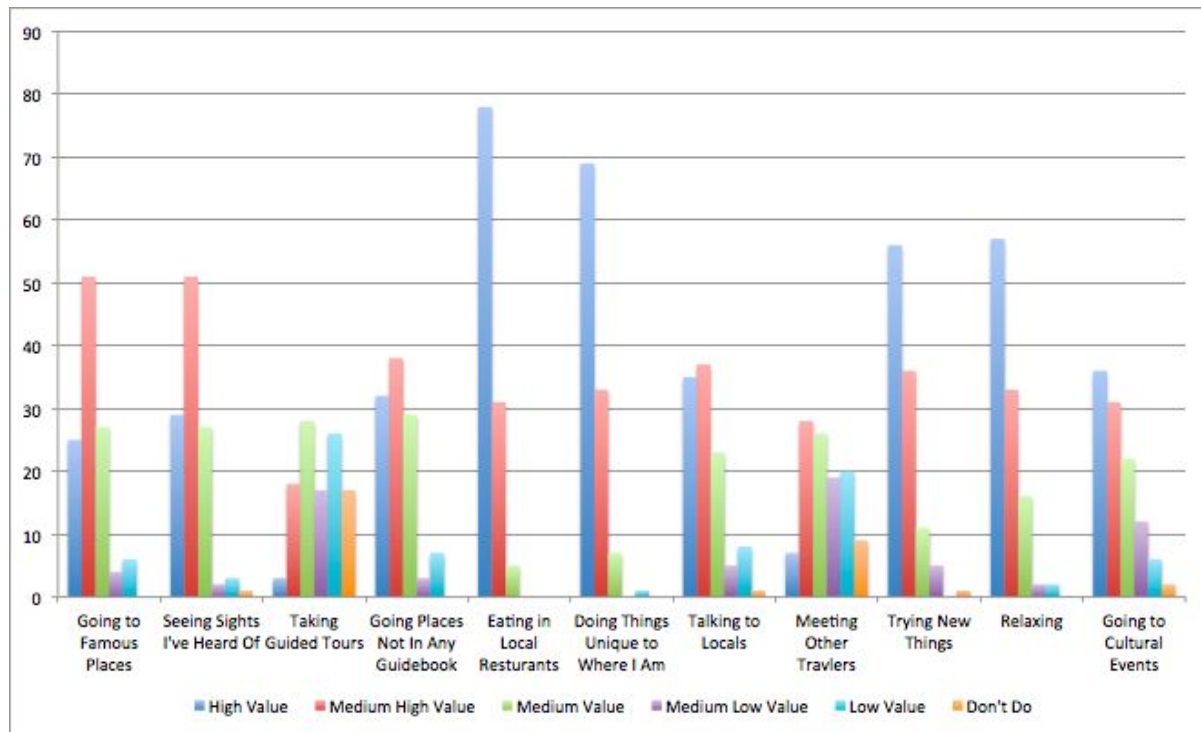
MARKET SUMMARY

For our initial launch, we have decided to focus on the New York City travel market. NYC is the most visited city in the US[1] so it has a large base for us to experiment, iterate, and grow. We have local knowledge so that we will be able to populate the original database instead of waiting for others to do so. About 4/5th of New York City visitors are domestic travellers. Of the international travellers, the top two are from English speaking countries. This allows us to reasonably conclude that we can only function in English for now and have language support come upon growth.

Market Sizing

Number of tourists to NYC in 2014
- 44.2m domestic tourists[2]
- 12.2m international tourists[3]
  - Top international markets in 2013[4]:
    1. United Kingdom 1,108,000
    2. Canada 1,100,000
    3. Brazil 895,000

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[1]

http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/new-york-set-record-tourism-numbers-in-2014-10019295.html

[2] ibid

[3] ibid

[4] http://www.nycgo.com/articles/nyc-statistics-page

4. France 697,000
5. China (PRC) - excluding HK 646,000
6. Australia 619,000
7. Germany 608,000
8. Italy 464,000
9. Spain 383,000
10. Japan 337,000

We will get our revenue from advertising. There are various companies that will provide ads for you and none of them are particularly upfront about their pricing. The best data we could find for Google Adsense is that for a product-based site like our, we can expect to make around $10 for every thousand views[5] Trip Advisor gets 340m unique visitors a month[6] so it seems reasonable to think we could get 1.5m unique visitors - 2.5% of the NYC visitors. If they each view five ads, the site could make $75,000 in the first year.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

List of Competitors

Spotted by Locals - $3.99 download in app store, functions offline - blog posts online. Mostly focuses on Europe.
Localuer - Website of lists created by locals using Facebook to validate that people are locals.
http://www.localeur.com/recommendations/new-york-city
FOFTravel, Vayable, WithLocals, etc. - Let locals take visitors on experiences

Competitive Matrix

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[5] http://webgilde.com/en/how-much-does-adsense-pay/
[6] http://www.tripadvisor.com/PressCenter-c4-Fact_Sheet.html

Feature Analysis

	Localur	Trip Advisor	Spotted by Locals	Yelp	Travel Guides	Our Product
Search by location	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Search by Keyword	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
See Results by Category	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Curated lists	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Up/Down votes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Locals can add content	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Travelers can add content	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Free to use	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Curated experiences/tours	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
App	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Some	No
Website	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Some	Yes
Focused on…	US	World	Europe	World	NYC	NYC
Content Mostly Activities from…	Local	Tourist	Local	Local	Tourist	Both
Works offline	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Save items for later	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Book from site	No	Yes	No	Some	Some	No

FINANCIAL MODEL

The financial modeling we have done encoumpasses a fast, moderate, and slow rate of growth. Our fast rate of growth will have us reach profitability at the end of our first year. For moderate growth, it will take until the middle of the second year to reach profitability, but we still will be able to build a great community and have ad revenue begin early on. The slow growth model wouldn't have us reach profitability until the very end of the second year.

Our full financial model is available here:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1eA6E16cvNceD20pIwjTU2C7fIunUN38Dg2EAh7TMap0/edit?usp=sharing

APPENDIX

Survey Questions and Results

Full Survey

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1nRxt_Zi8TwsnxAQmA2MSL7gyyezzulivpSqrq8--6sE/edit

Full Results

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Ktb0ErZaBHt1pwVZCsIEUtfeOm1p-BaHDquIYcG3NqI/edit?usp=sharing

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Interview Questions and Results

New York Tourist

Questions:
1. Where are you from?
2. How long are you in NYC?
3. What made you decide to go to NYC?
4. What your favorite thing you've done so far here?
5. What are you looking forward to most?
   a. How did you hear about them?
6. How did you decide what to do in NYC?

Respondent #1
1. From Portugal
2. Spending summer
3. Improve English, take classes (study abroad) see sights
4. Found a pick-up soccer game near where staying. Missed playing soccer at home with friends
5. Going with classmates to the beach in Brooklyn (wasn't sure which)
6. Had looked online, found out about the sights. Talked to people once here to get more idea of things to do
7. [what are you doing today?] Walking around this area. Meeting friend for lunch but early. Thought would see flatiron building since nearby. Been doing tourist things in small bits as convenient since doing all tourist is boring.

Respondent #2
1. Ohio
2. A week
3. On bucket list.
4. Visited Ellis Island, it is a great piece of history. It's the exit point of an old life and for most the entrance point of a new life which is kind of what this country is founded on.
5. Visiting intrepid and visiting an aircraft carrier. And seeing all the planes, I want to see a concord

      a. [Why?]My little brother and father went there as a boy scout event when I was a kid.

6. Do research, look for bargains since I have low budget. See the history because I love history and want to see those things. I start internet, google search, but if it's a longer trip I look through travel books.

General Traveler

Questions:

1. What kind of trips do you find yourself drawn to?
2. If time or money wasn't a factor, what would cause you to move on to your next destination when travelling?
3. What do you seek out on any trip you take?
4. Have you ever specifically searched out an area or experience that you considered "non-touristy"? If so, please tell me about what you did to find that experience?
5. What is something you've done or found on a trip that you wish other tourists knew about? Did you take any steps to tell other people about it?
6. How do you look for things to do when you're traveling? What makes those your preferred method?

Respondent #1: Jeannie

1. I love cities, and I also love nature and hiking. So that's most places! I'm most excited about trips to places I've never been before. I usually plan trips around opportunities to meet up with friends who are living somewhere other than NYC.
2. Time is always a factor! A huge motivator for me to travel is trying to see and understand as much of this crazy diverse planet as I can during my lifetime. I guess if I could spend my whole life traveling, though, I'd move to my next destination after a week or after I felt like I'd gotten the gist of a place. Longer than a week and it starts to feel like I'm living there, not visiting.
3. I seek out experiences unique to that place: food, views, historical sites, museums, and activities that I can do nowhere else.
4. Yes, I used Yelp or tagged along with friends who lived there.
5. I've never felt that way.
6. Depending on where I'm going, I might use guide books or Google "things to do in _____." I always ask friends/family who've been there before me what they recommend. I try hard to get a sense of the big things I'd like to do before embarking, then I go with the flow based on local recommendations, time constraints, how I'm feeling once there, things I stumble upon, etc.

Respondent #2: Evan

1. I don't travel that often, but i like going to places with either exciting activities such as surfing/mountain biking/etc (not resorts), or big cities to explore like berlin, instanbul etc.
2. If I was bored somewhere, or if there was something in the next place that I was excited about.
3. Nice spots that locals like... coffee shops, parks, small restaurants.

4. I always search for non-touristy stuff... I often ask locals for tips, or look for nice restaurants or just wander around to find things. Sometimes you can find stuff on blogs etc.
5. Found restaurants I really liked and told my friends, but that's about it.
6. Ask people or blogs or web searches for specific activities ie kitesurfing.

Respondent #3: Alyona
1. i prefer (maybe because of my not that old age) active trips, preferably taken half plain and half car , but i definitely like to discover new places , meet new people and basically i enjoy any kind of travel when i have time for that =)
2. Probably lack of new experience, not friendly people around, bad living conditions , bad weather
3. I like to get accentuated and meet up new cultures, people and interaction with new surrounding as a process , makes me feel satisfied with the trip itself and feeling achieved
4. Not really, as i mentioned in my previous survey submission, i took a guide tour with the local sales man to jungles in Sri Lanka and it was on one side very scary, because of not knowing where you are , basically who is this man and what he can do to us, and from another side - too exciting to give up that idea to see all of those stuffs i would never see in regular tours or by myself)
5. Yes, i try to leave comments on each place i visit (when i simple do not forget to do that =)) , whether its a hotel (service, food, conditions, people , etc.) , i do share the info among my friends and recommend some places or do not
6. I search forums, ask people who`ve been there before if i know those, read articles in internet, read travelers blogs on specific areas , do all possible researches i can =)

Respondent #4: Angelique
1. I like trips with my friends or with my boyfriend. I'm from France so I like to go there to visit my friends.
2. If I got bored or ran out of things to see while traveling. If I don't like the country, it would cause me to move on to the next stop.
3. Adventure, fun, relaxing, new things to discover and experience.
4. I guess so. I tend to avoid touristy things when I travel in general but I don't search specifically for non-touristy things, I just go with the flow. I live my life in another country and cool shit happens.
5. I can't remember. I usually travel with friends or boyfriend and we go to bars and drink. So I feel like anyone can do that if they want to.
6. Google search/maps. It works well, it's efficient and reliable for the most part.

Respondent #5: Erica
1. Trips that can be both relaxing and show me different things. I no longer want a trip where I'm running around like a mad person trying to see every site in the world. I am drawn to a trip where I can see one or two famous things, then relax on a beach somewhere, eat lazy meals at great restaurants, or see a good jazz show at night. Traveling is as much relaxing as it is experiences for me.
2. Somewhere that is beautiful, relaxing, offers a wide variety of services and I can easily get to somewhere famous or historical to do a bit of site seeing.
3. The best bars and restaurants around. A good pub.

4. As mentioned before, I always want to find that local pub or bar which is a "dive" in whatever culture might be around. I found the one Steelers Bar in Hong Kong (it was run by Australians) and spent many a Tuesday morning in their watching Monday Night Football. I want what the locals do to relax and eat well.
5. Facebook and Livejournal is generally how I describe my trips, short or long. I think something I wish people knew about was savouring every old fashioned cocktail at the Carousel Bar in the Walford Astoria in New Orleans. The best bars aren't all on Bourbon Street.
6. Yelp has helped a lot these years. But talking to locals is ALWAYS my best resource.

Respondent #6: Abner
1. Places I haven't been before.
2. I think it mostly would just have to do with interest level in the current place. If I were enjoying myself a lot, I might not move on for a while.
3. Great food, interesting quiet spots, less touristy areas. Anywhere that's a walkable area.
4. I think often times looking in areas that are less commercial and more residential can turn up plenty of gems. These are the places that you would think locals would go to, if nothing else, then just by sheer convenience. Obviously, that can be a hit or miss, but it's still a good place to start.
5. I feel like if for example on Yelp a place has a bad review or a misunderstood one, I'll try my best to rectify it through commenting and offer a more length, essay-style argument in telling people why they should reconsider.
6. I think we all tend to implement similar research strategies. It's an aggregate of many things. There's some combo of word-of-mouth from friends and families, experts (people who have some sort of experience base that connects with you and offers authenticity in some manner - maybe they eat all the weird things you love eating), travel guides, and crowd-sourced reviews more and more.

Customer Personas
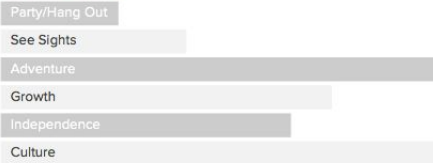
Jaime Wilkins - Experienced Solo Traveller

AGE 32
OCCUPATION Graduate Student
STATUS Single
LOCATION San Francisco

Adventurous   Independent
Curious

"I did the 'get all the passport stamps' thing. Now I want to get to know places for what they really are."

Motivations
Party/Hang Out
See Sights
Adventure
Growth
Independence
Culture

Goals
- Have unique experiences one her trip
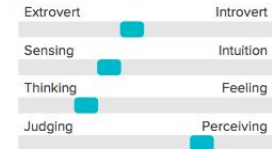- Understand how locals live
- Avoid being a 'tourist'

Frustrations
- On a limited budget
- Wants to find things nearby to put a day together

Bio
Jamie spent the summer after her undergrad backpacking Europe and was hooked on travel. After that big trip, she realized she wanted to get to know places better, not just do the same things everyone else is doing. She doesn't care about spending a lot of money to go over to the Statue of Liberty, but she'd love to know the best parts of New York City

Personality
Extrovert — Introvert
Sensing — Intuition
Thinking — Feeling
Judging — Perceiving

Planning
Day of
Day before
Week Before
Month Before

Travel History
Has gone to most countries in Europe during her one big trip. Tries to travel at least twice a year, but can only afford international travel one of those two times, so she's been exploring the US and Canada.
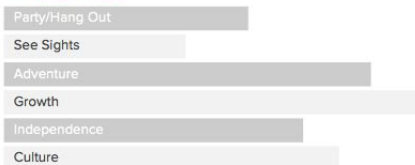
Justin Steele - Long Term Traveler

AGE 20
OCCUPATION College Student
STATUS Has a Girl Friend
LOCATION Barcelona Spain
BUDGET $5,000

Free-spirited   Learner
Self Assured

"There's only so much looking at sights you can do."

Motivations
Party/Hang Out
See Sights
Adventure
Growth
Independence
Culture

Goals
- Have fun
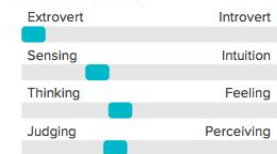- Improve English and knowledge of America
- Explore

Frustrations
- Guide books are insufficient for the long time he'll be here
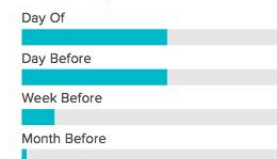- Wants to get out and doesn't know that man people locally

Bio
Justin is studying abroad for the summer in order to improve his English and get to know America. He's enjoying seeing the sights, but he's in New York for three months, so he wants to do a lot more than just that.

Personality
Extrovert — Introvert
Sensing — Intuition
Thinking — Feeling
Judging — Perceiving

Planning
Day Of
Day Before
Week Before
Month Before

Travel History
This is Justin's first time traveling without his family. He's done lots of short trips, but never anything this long.