

## EQ<sup>®</sup> Up Close: Case Study Series

Travel Manitoba:

An EQ<sup>®</sup> Journey Begins

*A lightning rod, a Sherpa, and leadership*



Churchill, Manitoba

# Travel Manitoba: An EQ® Journey Begins *A lightning rod, a Sherpa, and leadership*

## Case Summary

*As a new licensee, in 2012 Travel Manitoba took its first steps on the path towards selecting its target EQ types, aligning the organization and industry stakeholders behind their investment in EQ, and planning the development of a refreshed, awe-inspiring brand with a view to creating new tourism experiences and marketing strategies that will drive future economic benefits for the province.*

Travel Manitoba (TM) invested in an Explorer Quotient® (“EQ®”) license in April 2012 with the intention of using it as its primary market segmentation tool. The organization has moved quickly to introduce EQ to industry partners at their annual industry conference (September 2012), and through various training workshops and initiatives. It has engaged the whole organization, as well as its new social media and advertising agencies as key partners in the rollout. Colin Ferguson, President and CEO, has become a vocal advocate and champion for EQ.

TM staff have expressed different ways that EQ has becoming a guiding light - *as a Sherpa, as a lightning rod, and as a leadership approach*. The initial response from industry and partners has been positive, expressing a willingness to learn more. Travel Manitoba has seen five major results to date:

1. Positive impacts on organizational alignment.
2. Richer customer insights that inform the development of marketing strategy and a new brand
3. Strengthened partnerships around a common platform.
4. Increased efficiency and focus.
5. EQ brings experiences and stories to life

*“This is not a short term decision. We have made this decision to ride with EQ because not only do we believe that it is a fundamentally sound research proposal, but we believe this is a very creative way to approach a market. **We’re not hoping EQ is going to work. We’re banking on EQ working.**”*

*Colin Ferguson, President and CEO  
Travel Manitoba*

## Introduction

Led by an industry-member Board of Directors, Travel Manitoba is responsible for tourism marketing, visitor information services, product development and tourism research in the province. Funding is received from both the Government of Manitoba and through partnership and leveraged marketing investments with its tourism industry stakeholders. Its organizational vision is to “lead the marketing and development of Manitoba’s tourism industry.”

This is an important time in the evolution of Travel Manitoba as a Crown Corporation. Tourism contributes \$1.3 billion annually to the Manitoba economy. Led by recently arrived CEO Colin Ferguson, the organization recently underwent a restructuring and downsizing of its operation in 2012 due to a reduction in funding. Moving forward, they have established a number of new priorities including the development of a refreshed, “awe inspiring” brand for launch in 2014 that uses EQ as the research platform to understand the characteristics and motivations of Manitoba’s best prospective travellers. EQ is also being used to align Travel Manitoba’s internal organizational culture, focus resources more effectively and efficiently, better align with the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) in international markets, and align the province’s tourism industry behind a common understanding of the target customer.



Churchill, Manitoba

## Reasons for investing in EQ

Travel Manitoba had several reasons behind its decision to invest in an EQ license:

**Move from two segmentation models to one:** A cautious two-year review of the EQ investment opportunity led to the decision to buy in and use EQ to help address an historical operational problem that has proven to be a barrier to growth in Manitoba’s tourism revenues. Previously, Travel Manitoba had been using two different market segmentation approaches: one for international markets to be aligned with the CTC; and one for high volume domestic and US markets. Given that the EQ license offered segmentation data on the important North American markets in addition to international markets, TM saw an

opportunity to shift to a single market segmentation model that offered focus and efficiency in the use of staff, time, and financial resources. Additionally, according to Rick Gaunt, the breadth and depth of EQ research goes beyond what Travel Manitoba does in its own research, or could afford to do on its own.

### **Leadership Opportunity**

*“To me, a leader is not someone who says, ‘I’m a leader, follow me.’ To me, a leader is someone who has a clear sense of direction, a well thought out position, and demonstrates to me through their actions, that they are pursuing a goal that I am in line with. And, I will naturally gravitate towards those kinds of people/organizations ... **Travel Manitoba in taking on EQ, has the opportunity to create that leadership space [with industry].**”*

*Rick Gaunt, Senior Manager, Research & Market Intelligence  
Travel Manitoba*

**Gain richer customer insights to inform the development of a new brand:** According to President and CEO Colin Ferguson, his principal reason for investing into EQ is:

*“... the opportunity to move forward [in creating] a comprehensive, awe-inspiring brand to launch in 2014 that is targeted at EQ audiences, that fits the bill for Manitoba and then using this [brand] as a tool to bring everybody together with an industry-wide point of view...”*

Ferguson says that the rich customer insights from EQ will help Travel Manitoba determine who represents the best potential target markets, how to effectively find the target customers, how to deliver appropriate messages to these customers, and how to most effectively position what Manitoba has to offer.

**Alignment with the CTC:** Colin Ferguson also believes in the value of aligning with the CTC...“because they have considerable research at their disposal, and [they] market Canada to the world,” implying that Manitoba can benefit from the CTC’s research-based international campaigns. He feels that the investment in EQ will strengthen the partnership between Travel Manitoba and the CTC.

**Strengthen alignment with industry partners to maximize resources:** Travel Manitoba is identifying target EQ types in their high volume domestic and US markets (in combination with Environics Analytics’ geo-location product, Prizm<sup>1</sup>), and inviting tourism industry partners throughout the province to “pull in the same direction.” As a province with a small tourism budget, these efforts to align marketing investments towards attracting the best prospective travellers are intended to maximize impact and efficiency with limited dollars.

*“We are such a small province. We really believe the only way we are going to grow is if we can all align under one strategy and agree who our best customers to target are, and in which markets those customers are. We see EQ as being a great tool to facilitate that.”*

*Brigitte Sandron, Senior VP Strategy and Market Development  
Travel Manitoba*

*“I believe that EQ is the most comprehensive psychographic tool that I have ever seen in all my years in advertising and marketing.”*

*Colin Ferguson, President and CEO  
Travel Manitoba*



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<sup>1</sup> Prizm is a segmentation system developed by Environics Analytics that classifies US and Canadian households into 66 consumer segments based on demographics and preferences for a broad range of behaviours. By cross-referencing EQ and Prizm, EQ licensees can gain geo-demographic data on where their customers live as well as other behaviours, such as media use.



## Benefits

The benefits of investing into EQ are diverse and reflect a provincial marketing organization that is just beginning the journey of using it.

**More impactful, effective, integrated provincial marketing strategy:** According to Brigitte Sandron, this research will help facilitate integrating strategy with their industry partners, including other destination marketing organizations and potential sub-licensees. With a common understanding of the target customer based on EQ, TM hopes that new leveraging opportunities will emerge both within the province and in working with the CTC. Additionally, the EQ research, combined with Prizm data, will help TM better identify key geographic markets where their target travelers reside, resulting in more effective industry collaboration, more efficient use of their leveraged marketing investment dollars and increased return on investment.

*"It [EQ] really gives you the best profile that you'll have on any potential customer...It wasn't until I sat down with Tourism New Brunswick [also an EQ licensee] when the 'A-hah!' went on and saw that Prizm can tell us where the customers are. Then, it becomes really powerful."*  
Brigitte Sandron

**Strengthened collaboration and new opportunities:** Colin Ferguson sees EQ as a tool to bring all industry partners together in a non-competitive way. EQ is helping Travel Manitoba's new advertising and social media agencies to understand potential markets from a new perspective, as they apply the extensive customer insights to new creative, content and campaigns. Using EQ facilitates decisions on marketing tactics, and may potentially support shifting some of the investment in marketing campaigns to social media, as well as help reach target markets in smart ways that specifically reflect how travellers research and purchase travel. EQ is expected to lead to new opportunities for product design, partnering, and marketing tactics resulting in new revenues, new business opportunities, and new partnerships. Further, because it is research-based and provides a defensible argument about specific marketing tactics, EQ will help Travel Manitoba to make the case for increased government investment into tourism and to invite collaboration with more private sector partners.

**Helping industry partners focus investments:** Laurenda Madill, Manager, Industry Relations has been helping industry partners to apply customer insights from EQ to modify or create new visitor experiences and to examine their markets and marketing materials to ensure relevance with their target travellers. Working with EQ assists TM staff in helping industry partners understand and apply new customer insights to the investments tourism businesses make in product development and marketing.

**EQ and the Path to Purchase:** EQ will place a stronger emphasis on moving travellers through the path to purchase. Travel Manitoba will align its investments around common EQ types, investing in the marketing channels best suited to reach its target customers. As a tool to execute more concretely on the path to purchase, Colin Ferguson says,

*"We know what we have to sell in Manitoba. We just now have to figure out who is that message best sold to, and in what style would they like that message delivered. It only seems logical to me if you can identify who that target is, you can write messages in a style that they would be more comfortable with and that they would be more accepting of, it's likely that there would be more that would participate in coming."*

*"This is a tool that will help Manitoba to reach the right people, at the right time, in the right ways."*

*Catherine Senecal, Manager, Global Media Relations  
Travel Manitoba*



## Implementation

Travel Manitoba's approach to investing in EQ began slowly in 2010 with discovery sessions with the CTC, and then ramped up more quickly with the decision to invest in April 2012. Rick Gaunt sees this as a new strategic orientation for the organization that will roll out initially over three-years: Year 1: Learning. Year 2: Integration. Year 3: Assessment. The implementation process to date has been as follows:

- Once the decision was made to purchase EQ, a point person (Rick Gaunt, Research) was chosen inside the organization to lead the process of reviewing the research.
- Introductory EQ workshops were held for all TM staff, its creative and social media agency representatives, and other key stakeholders over the summer months. All TM staff took the EQ quiz to identify their own EQ type, which is now identified as part of each staff member's email signature in order to encourage industry stakeholders to also take the EQ quiz.
- Recognizing the knowledge network that exists among other EQ licensees, senior staff tapped into personnel in those jurisdictions to inform and guide the EQ implementation within TM. This was seen as a critical part of the learning process, leading to TM's ability to establish its priorities, determine industry roll-out tactics and decision to invest in Prizm.
- In September, TM introduced EQ to 130 attendees at its annual conference, where EQ was the overall theme and focus. The conference agenda specifically included speakers from the CTC and EQ-licensed Tourism New Brunswick, who could each provide examples of how EQ has benefitted their organizations. The conference was a timely opportunity and logical first step to provide education about EQ and advise industry why TM had invested in this tool. Using a workshop format allowed industry stakeholders to learn more about EQ and understand how the province's investment would affect them specifically. TM's agencies of record also participated fully, benefitting from the knowledge shared and facilitating future marketing planning. Finally, focusing on EQ at the industry conference was also a catalyst for the Travel Manitoba team to prepare and be knowledgeable about the research and its applications. It pushed the staff forward more quickly than they might otherwise have done.
- TM has identified that its target international EQ types will be the same as the CTC's. Selecting target types for its regional, short-haul (500 mile radius) markets was a longer process. To do this, TM spoke with other EQ licensees across Canada as well as engaged Environics Analytics and invested in Prizm. TM staff learned that target market selection is an iterative process that involves narrowing down the information through successive filters, and realized it takes creative thinking to ask the right questions to examine their customer base to get to the final selection of priority EQ markets.



© Travel Manitoba  
Little Limestone Lake Provincial Park

*"We now have the information in our hands to explain why we are going to do some things; we also have the information in our hands to explain why we are not going to do some things."*

*Rick Gaunt, Senior Manager, Research & Market Intelligence  
Travel Manitoba*

Colin Ferguson offered some of the types of questions that were asked during the target selection process, such as:

*“What products would be our lead products? Who would they be best suited to? How do we find them? If we can connect those dots, we can do better marketing.”*

As well, Travel Manitoba is conscious of how much money it has to go the marketplace with its marketing tactics. Risk is involved in making these choices and the organization wants to make sure that it has done a thorough job in analyzing the research when going out to industry.

## EQ in action

While it is still early in the implementation process, senior managers and their teams have integrated EQ into a number of marketing initiatives, training investments, and on-going operations.

*“Everyone shares a common vision about using EQ to develop a marketing strategy which will help inform marketing decisions and tailor messages based on research, rather than just on analyzing past campaigns or looking at what other DMOs are doing. We can change [marketing] messages to best resonate with those who are open to Manitoba’s call to action for specific visitor experience opportunities.”*

*Linda Whitfield, Vice President, Sales and Marketing  
Travel Manitoba*

### Starting the Engine and Moving Down the EQ Road

To date, Travel Manitoba has examined the detailed information in the EQ Market Reports in combination with Prizm to make priority decisions about its target EQ types for both international markets and high-volume markets. Marketing staff and new advertising and social media agencies have begun to use EQ when developing new marketing campaigns, creative, and briefs.

Travel Manitoba is also reviewing how to apply EQ to media relations initiatives. It is looking at targeting journalists based on their EQ type

(and the EQ types of the writers’ own audiences) to ensure their media relations efforts will hit the mark with their selected target audiences. To support EQ-focused media relations activities, TM’s media relations staff created menus of Manitoba experiences matched to EQ types for writers to consider. They have also staged events at international travel media writers’ conferences that showcase different experiences and writing opportunities by EQ type.

### From Theory to Practice: Experience Make-overs with Industry Partners

The fall conference provided a unique opportunity for Travel Manitoba’s staff to work with two industry partners to review their individual experience offerings and to improve their positioning using EQ. Using a coaching approach, Industry Relations staff Laurenda Madill and Mark Clarke reviewed experiences being offered on the partners’ websites: the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre in Morden, MB, and Fort Whyte Alive in Winnipeg (the latter is a member of the CTC’s Signature Experiences Collection). Together with these partners, they reviewed and re-designed the web content including copy, photos, headlines and layout. The redesigned offers were showcased at the conference workshops as practical examples of how EQ can be used to influence changes to product, positioning and marketing. Furthermore, going through the makeover process provided TM’s Industry Relations staff with a superb opportunity to gain more in-depth knowledge about EQ and how to apply it in a practical industry context.

*“EQ helps to prioritize media relations investments and initiatives, changes the media relations collateral materials that are produced, and helps to match writers to the experiences that they want to write about.”*

*Catherine Senecal, Manager, Global Media Relations  
Travel Manitoba*



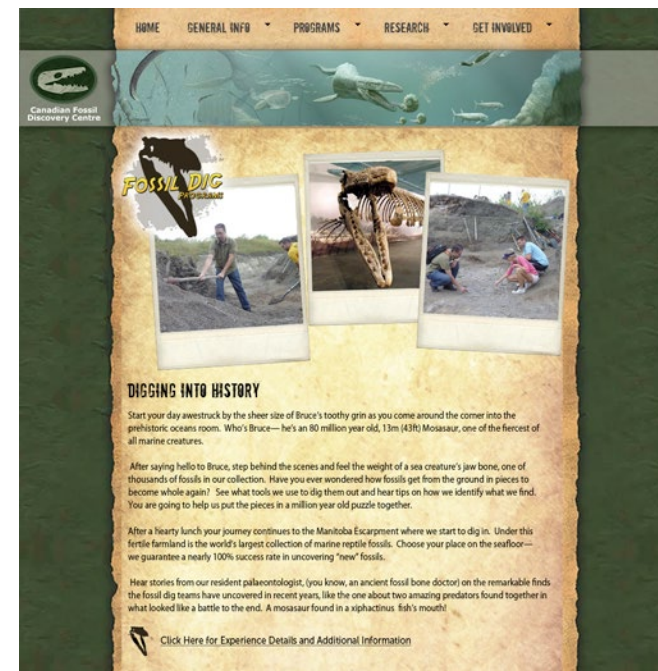
## Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre (CFDC)

"The fossil discoveries in the Morden area are a great example of a product that has been mis-represented and mis-understood. This is one of the few areas where prehistoric aquatic reptiles are being taken out of the soil, and they have 32 active dig sites. This is an incredible story that I don't think Manitobans know much about, and certainly the world doesn't know much about. I think putting it through an EQ lens will be of significant benefit." - Colin Ferguson



Webpage appearance for Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre experience before EQ exercise

The writing, imagery, experience title and page layout were updated to resonate more strongly with Authentic Experiencers.



Webpage appearance for Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre experience after EQ exercise



## Fort Whyte Alive

A Prairie Legacy: The Bison and its People (A CTC signature experience)

Similarly, the staff at Fort Whyte Alive used the EQ research to assess the relevance of its experience and marketing for Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers. While the written description stayed the same, the operator improved the webpage layout and provided more relevant images about what visitors would do, see and encounter during the experience.

September 18  
Inside Out Yoga Fitness

September 20  
Fit 4 Two: Stroller Fitness

September 22  
Wilderness Workout

September 22  
Diamond Willow Walking Stick Workshop

September 23  
Fall Family Festival

September 25  
Inside Out Yoga Fitness

PHOTO GALLERY

**A Prairie Legacy:  
The Bison and its People**

Your adventure begins as your guide leads you through the aspen forest onto the open prairie, where your heart leaps as you catch your first up-close view of 30 grunting, munching herbivores—the bison, North America's largest land animal.

Step back into the prairie life of old and experience how Aboriginals, Métis, Voyageurs and Pioneers lived side by side with the bison, Manitoba's iconic symbol. Test your skills on the paddle as you power a mighty Voyageur canoe and around the lake or hear the crunching of the snow under historic footwear, the snowshoe.

Explore a Plains Cree Tipi and marvel at its design and functionality - cool in summer and warm in winter, offering a respite from the prairie winds. Feel the smoothness of a hand crafted black spoon, fashioned from a bison horn. Step inside a one room pioneer sod house and connect with the past as you savour wild bush tea and a taste of bannock, the quintessential Canadian snack over a campfire. Cover how bison influenced the history of Manitoba and the lives of Aboriginals, Métis.

Complete your journey with Manitoba regional cuisine featuring bison and fresh produce, grown onsite from our award-winning Buffalo Stone Café, reminding visitors of a time when people gathered food solely from the land.

Duration: 3hrs  
Fee: \$40  
Min: 2 participants  
Max: 20 participants

Please dress appropriately for the weather as the tour is outside; you are welcome to bring a bottle of water with you if you like; cameras are also allowed on the tours

To participate in this experience: Please call 989-8353 or email FortWhyte Alive.

Webpage appearance for Prairie Legacy experience before EQ exercise

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**FortWhyte Alive**  
HUMAN NATURE.

**ALIVE**

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Complete your journey with Manitoba regional cuisine featuring bison and fresh produce, grown onsite from our award-winning Buffalo Stone Café, reminding visitors of a time when people gathered food solely from the land.

[Click Here for Experience Details and More Information](#)

Webpage appearance for Prairie Legacy experience after EQ exercise

## Results

Despite only recently rolling out EQ internally and externally, TM has seen a number of results to date:

- **Positive impacts on organizational alignment:** EQ provides a laser focus on the selected EQ types for all Travel Manitoba teams. Internally, all staff (and agency support) are knowledgeable about which EQ types have been selected as targets and the characteristics of those types. As such, staff can apply the information consistently to the way they write collateral materials, use imagery, and develop creative campaigns.
- **Richer customer insights that inform the development of marketing strategy and a new brand:** EQ paints a much clearer picture of the target traveller that is being used as the basis of TM's strategy and brand development.
- **Strengthened partnerships around a common platform:** EQ as a common platform is providing opportunities for Travel Manitoba to align with the CTC for international marketing activities. It is also helping TM speak a common language with its industry stakeholders, partners and agencies.
- **Increased efficiency and focus:** Shifting from two market segmentation models to one, and using EQ combined with Prizm is saving precious money, time and effort. For TM staff, EQ is a best practice example of how to use limited staff and resources to better prioritize marketing investments.
- **PRIZM clarifies EQ decisions.** EQ's impact is greatly enhanced by using PRIZM to identify target markets; thus, it is vital to integrate PRIZM formally in the overall decision to license EQ.
- **EQ brings experiences and stories to life:** Staff at the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre saw immediate value with using the EQ approach to bring its story alive, by changing the copy, visuals, title and layout of its website. Travel Manitoba staff felt they were fairly easily able to coach their industry counterparts to make these impactful changes. With very little exposure to EQ, the coaching exercise provided industry with a tactical example of how EQ can be used and its benefits.

*"EQ is kind of like our Sherpa. EQ for us will become the guide that we will follow from a marketing and creative perspective. If materials that we are producing fall outside of the research that EQ generates, then it's off target."*

*Colin Ferguson, President and CEO  
Travel Manitoba*

*"[Understanding what EQ types others are] is starting to become part of the way we do everything - personally and professionally. We are now using this information in everything we are doing - working with each other, our internal social media group, and to consumers. It's interesting to see how quickly this is becoming the new way that we work together, aligned around what this research is telling us."*

*Laurenda Madill, Manager, Industry Relations  
Travel Manitoba*



Segovia Restaurant  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

## Challenges

As with integrating any major change, a few challenges have, not unexpectedly, arisen along the way:

- There was a wide-spread feeling that EQ research delivers an overwhelming amount of information, and that it is not easy to immediately apply given other competing priorities and initiatives. It is important to recognize that EQ is more than a financial commitment – success is reliant on leadership, staff training and organizational commitment.
- EQ introduces a vocabulary that is unfamiliar to most tourism businesses and operators; careful considerations need to be made as to how to most effectively communicate and educate them about EQ and its benefits, so that they understand how it will help them to identify and reach their best customers. EQ is more comprehensive than most travel research, and does not lend itself to reactive, short-term marketing. It's not clear how widely industry will accept it or where the early adopting industry champions will be. As Brigitte Sandron explains, *"EQ is a tough concept to convey. The EQ family needs to learn to simplify the messaging around EQ and to pique operators' interest. It is too complicated in the way that it is presented currently."*
- Getting small owner-operators to understand and apply EQ requires some investment (of time) by the licensing organization. This is not an instant process.



## Advice for Others considering using EQ

Several suggestions were made about EQ that might be relevant to potential new licensees or sub-licensees:

- EQ without Prizm does not provide the same package of benefits that occurs when they are integrated – these costs need to be considered and added when purchasing the license.
- Communicate with other jurisdictions that have already invested in EQ to help make the initial investment decision. Sharing amongst licensees is more than valuable - it's a necessary pre-requisite to fully understand the investment decision.
- Industry needs to be shown examples of success. The quicker that they can see application of EQ and how it will make a difference in attracting new markets, creating better marketing copy, or moving customers along the path to purchase, the more likely it will be that industry members will use the EQ research.
- Learning and understanding EQ is an ongoing process. Each time that you see an EQ presentation you understand it better. Remember this when rolling out EQ to industry - it requires more than one opportunity for industry partners to understand it, and how to apply it.
- Exposing the entire organization to EQ, not just the marketing staff, helps everyone to understand and use it, leading to a synchronous and coordinated approach. Everyone becomes aligned around how the organization will use it.
- TM staff suggested that a philosophy of commitment is important. Some of the advice offered was: *"Believe it. Embrace the research."*; *"Take your time. You want this to succeed. Identifying who you want to reach and how you want to reach them should not be a rushed process."*

## Acknowledgments

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