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**Ontario Occupancy Monitor - Evaluation  
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HIGHLIGHTS

11-14-1  
DUBAIB OCCUPANCY MONITOR EVALUATION  
1985

- The main type of property operated **by** the monitor participants are hotels and motels (both 28%) . Just under a third of all the establishments have 1 to 25 units available. A large majority (79%) have been operating for more than 10 years and most of the establishments (81%) operate year round.
- Room rates vary by type of establishment and by facilities and services offered. Hotels appear to charge the highest rates followed by motor hotels and motels. Resorts/lodges or cabins/cottages have various rates which can range from \$10.00 to over \$100.00 per night, depending on the facilities and the number of people in the travel party.
- The large majority of establishments employ less than 10 full-time and part-time workers.
- The large majority of establishments (47%) allocate 1% to less than 5% of their annual budget to advertising and promotion.
- The most frequently offered facilities are convention/conference rooms (50%) and meeting rooms (48%) , while the most prevalent services offered are **colour** television (81%) and air conditioning (77%) .
- The vast majority of respondents (88%) thought that the occupancy monitor operator's report was useful, while 70% thought that the monthly newsletter was somewhat useful.
- More than half (53%) of those surveyed circulate the monitor to approximately 2.5 people.
- Slightly more than half of the respondents (52%) claim to call in their occupancy figures.
- The most popular areas of interest for future newsletters include services offered by the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation to establishments (71%) , while "government funding" was also a popular choice (67%) .

- . The "average room rate" was **the** most popular item chosen (80% were very or somewhat interested) to be added to the monthly report.
- . Over half (55%) of the respondents did not want to reveal monthly revenue pertaining to their establishments, while 52% did not want to release their individual occupancy.
- . Sixty-five percent of the respondents expressed an interest in receiving the attractions monitor quarterly report.

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## 1.0 Background, Objectives and Methodology

The Ontario Occupancy Monitor, published by the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation provides its users with a timely, consistent means of monitoring Ontario's tourism performance in terms of commercial accommodations. The data is available by region as well as type and size of accommodation. The monthly statistical report provides good indications of industry trends over time, and at any specific time on a regional basis.

In an effort to obtain relevant information concerning the usefulness of the Occupancy Monitor, the newsletter and operator report, and to update classification data, Tourism Research undertook a consumer research study.

Specifically, the objectives of this research were to examine:

- 1) Current monitor participants"
- 2) The present newsletter format and the reporting system
- 3) Areas of interest for future newsletters
- 4) Utilization of the report by recipients

An eight page mail-back questionnaire (see Appendix A) was sent out to 380 monitor participants during June, 1985. In an effort to encourage response, a covering letter (see Appendix A) explaining the purpose of the study and a pre-addressed postage paid return envelope accompanied the questionnaire.

A 58% response rate was achieved as 221 of the 380 questionnaires were returned for analysis.

Completed questionnaires were hand tabulated and the detailed results appear in this report.

## 2.0 Research Results

The research results presented in the following report are based on a sample of two hundred and twenty-one respondents who are currently monitor participants.

The report includes the relevant research findings along with referenced statistical tables. In reading tables, it should be noted that percentages- read down where percentage signs appear at the top of a column. Where percentages add to more than 100%, it is because of multiple mentions.

## 2.1 Profile of Monitor Participants

Respondents were asked a series of questions that helped to describe their establishment in terms of type of property, number of units, number of years in operation, seasonality, room rates, number of employees, budget allocation for advertising and promotion, facilities and services available.

Examining each of the parameters reveals the following:

- The main type of property operated by the monitor participants are hotels (28%) and motels (28%). Other participants operate motor hotels (20%) , cottages/cabins (11%), resort/lodges (11%) and resort hotels (1%).
- Over half (60%) of all establishments surveyed have 75 units or less, while only 11% have 200 units or more.
- The large majority (79%) of establishments have been in operation for at least ten years. Only 6% have been in operation for less than 5 years.
- The vast majority of establishments (81%) are open year round, while less than a quarter (17%) are open seasonally. In terms of seasonal operations, the majority (46%) operate from May to October and the majority of these are located in Northern Ontario.

(Reference: Table 1)

- In terms of average room rates during peak season, hotels charge the highest rates with over half (69%) of the hotels charging between \$40.00 and \$89.00 per night for a single room. Almost an equal number of hotels (62%) charge between \$40.00 and \$89.00 for a double room. Motor hotels appear to be the next most expensive with over half (59%) charging \$30.00 to \$49.00 per night for a single room, while almost half of the motor hotels (47%) charge between \$40.00 and \$59.00 for a double room. Motels offer the cheapest rates with the majority (77%) charging between \$20.00 and \$49.00 for a single room and over half of the motels (69%) charge between \$30.00 and \$49.00 for a double room.

(Reference: Table 2)

- Examining the rates charged by resort/lodges and cottage/cabins reveals several different rates which are dependent on the facilities, the "day of the week, and number of people in the party. The rates charged per day range between \$10.00 and over \$100.00 .

(No direct tabular reference)



- . As one might expect, more full-time employees are reported during the peak season than during the off-season. Thus , 25% of properties reported having >50 employees during the peak season compared with only 17% who had more than 50 during the off-season. By the same token, more properties fell into the mid-range of 10 - 50 employees in the peak (35%) than in the off-season (26%). At the lower end of the staffing scale however (<10 employees) , season does not appear to influence number of full-time employees. This may be a function of the fact that these smaller properties operate at their optimum staffing level throughout the year or that the selected range (i.e. 1 - 9 employees) is large enough to include any increases which must be made to allow for the peak season (eg. staff increases from 5 to 9 people during the peak season) .

Almost one-half of properties have less than ten part-time employees during either season.

(Reference: Table 3)

- Surprisingly, 14% of respondents reported that they allocated less than 1% of their budget to advertising and promotion. An additional 47% do not spend over 4% of their budget in this area. In total, then, this means that six out of ten properties spend less than 4% of their budgets on advertising and promotion. An additional 22% of establishments spend 5 to 9 percent of the budget on this area. Only 9 per cent of properties spend 10 per cent or more on marketing.

(.Reference: Table 4)

- Respondents were asked to indicate what facilities and services were available at their establishments. Tables 5 and 6 illustrate the range of facilities and services available at establishments throughout Ontario. The most frequently offered facilities appear to be:

- **convention/conference** rooms (50%)  
meeting rooms (48%)  
fireplace in the room (42%)  
sauna (34%)

The most frequently offered services appear to be:

- **colour** television (81%)  
air conditioning (77%)  
dining room (63%)

(Reference: Tables 5 & 6)

Table 6

Services Available  
At Establishments

|                              | <u>Total</u> |    |
|------------------------------|--------------|----|
|                              | #            | %  |
| Base: Total respondents      | 221          |    |
| Air conditioning             | 171          | 77 |
| Babysitting                  | 123          | 56 |
| Boat rental                  | 51           | 23 |
| Coffee shop                  | 117          | 53 |
| Dining room                  | 140          | 63 |
| Housekeeping units           | 75           | 34 |
| Laundry service              | 83           | 38 |
| Liquor licensed              | 121          | 55 |
| Movies                       | 82           | 37 |
| Nightly entertainment        | 68           | 31 |
| <b>Colour</b> T.V.           | 178          | 81 |
| Black & white T.V.           | 21           | 10 |
| Wheelchair access            | 99           | 45 |
| Other - Cable/satellite T.V. | 8            | 4  |
| Not stated                   | 2            | 1  |

## 2.2 Evaluation of Occupancy Monitor Operators Report

In order to measure the usefulness of the occupancy monitor operator's report, the respondents were asked to indicate how useful they thought the report was in its present form.

The vast majority of respondents (88%) thought that the occupancy monitor operator's report was useful. Over half (63%) indicated it was "somewhat useful", while 24% indicated it was "very useful". Only 10% of those surveyed felt it was not of any use to them.

Using a similar rating, respondents were asked to indicate how interesting the report was. An overwhelming majority of the respondents (91%) indicated that the report was interesting. Over half (62%) felt it was "somewhat interesting", while 29% indicated it was "very interesting". Only 7% said it was "not at all interesting".

After rating the occupancy monitor operator's report in terms of usefulness and interest, respondents were given the opportunity to make comments about the report. Only 17% of those surveyed gave comments. Of the 37 respondents who commented on the report, 30% indicated that they thought that the regions used in the report are too big and that they should be broken down into smaller areas. Some suggested the breakdown should be by areas such as Haliburton and Muskoka, while some suggested it should be by cities and towns.

One in seven (14%) of the comments questioned the accuracy of the report, while another 14% thought that the results should be broken down by property type and size. A positive comment that was mentioned (8%) was that the report includes trends in the marketplace.

### 2.3 Graphical Format in Reports

Presently, the monthly results are summarized in a graph indicating change on a regional basis. In order to determine whether the number of graphs being used in the monthly report is sufficient, respondents were asked to indicate whether they would like to see more or less graphs. Results reveal the following:

The majority (64%) of the respondents claimed that the number of **graphs** in the monthly report is "about right now-".

Only 7% thought there should be fewer graphs, while 18% thought there should be more graphs in the monthly report.

(Reference: Table 8)

#### 2.4 Evaluation of the Monthly Newsletter

Evaluations obtained for the monthly newsletter are similar to the results obtained for the evaluation of the occupancy monitor operator's report. The majority of the respondents found the monthly newsletter useful (88%) and interesting (88%).

Only 7% of those surveyed responded with any additional comments concerning the monthly newsletter. Some comments suggested that the monthly newsletter should include more statistics which could be compared to previous years (3 mentions) , **while** others suggested that the newsletters have more detailed information about attractions within **Ontario**, and not have statistics from other countries (4 mentions) . Other respondents said they liked to read about market trends (2 mentions) .

(Reference: Table 9)

### 2.5 Utilization of the Occupancy Monitor

To determine the level of utilization of this report, participants were asked if they circulate the monitor report to other people in their organization. In half of the organizations (46%), only one person reviews the monitor. However, in almost an equal number of organizations (53%), the monitor is circulated. On average, 2.5 people see the monitor per organization.

(Reference: Table 10)



## 2.6 Method of Data Collection

Presently, monitor participants call in their occupancy figures using a toll free line. If they do not call in their figures within the first four days of the next month, they are contacted by consultants for the data.

Survey results reveal that slightly more than half of the respondents (52%) call in their occupancy figures, while one-third (32%) are contacted by a consultant and 8% use both methods. When the survey results were compared to the consultants records, a difference was found. The consultants' records show that on average 29% of the participants call-in their data. The difference may be a result of call-ins being made by operators not consistently every month.

In addition, comments and suggestions were obtained. The majority of the comments were positive (61%) . Of this 61%, 11% commented on the friendly consultants, 17% commented that the method is very efficient and 33% were satisfied.

The negative comments include the following: unsure if the consultant was legitimate because two different people call them (1 mention) ; and a consultant calls when the respondent has already phoned in their figures (1 mention) .

Suggestions were: for the consultants to call in the evenings, for the consultant to tell them how other establishments are doing in their area and for the participants to have stickers for the telephone or boards with the toll free telephone number on it.

## 2.7 Areas of Interest for Future Newsletters

Respondents were presented with a list of ten areas of interest which could be included in future newsletters. They were asked which of the areas they would like to receive more information on. Respondents could choose as many areas as they wanted.

Table 11 illustrates the level of interest generated by each area. Services offered by the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation to accommodation establishments is the most often chosen category (71% of the respondents chose this area of interest). "Government Funding" was also a popular choice (67%). "Trends in Ontario's Tourism Industry" ranks third generating 136 replies (62%) and "Marketing Methods" ranks fourth with 131 replies (59%).

The area generating the lowest level of interest was "Monthly Profile on Specific Individuals" (19%).

(Reference: Table 11)

## 2.8 Items Interested in Having Included in the Monthly Report

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To determine if additional information is desired and if the monitor should be analyzed differently, respondents were asked to indicate if they were "very, somewhat, not very or not at all" interested in having a number of different items included in the monthly report.

Respondents were most interested in the "average room rate" (80% were either very or somewhat interested). The item "smaller grouping of information" achieved the next highest level of interest (69% very or somewhat interested) . Over half were interested in the actual number of guests (55%), while 52% were interested in revenue data.

(Reference: Table 12)

## 2.9 Information Areas for Special Reports

Twice a year, the Ministry provides monitor participants with special reports to expand upon the information provided on a monthly basis. Respondents were asked what they would like to see in these reports. Only 20% of the respondents responded to this question. Twelve respondents wanted information broken down into smaller groups by type, size and region. Table 13 illustrates the major areas mentioned.

(Reference: Table 13)

#### 2.10 Release of Monthly Revenue and Individual Occupancy

Respondents were asked if they were **willing** to report **their** monthly revenue pertaining to their establishment. Over half (55%) of the respondents said "no , this type of information is confidential", **while** 26% stated "Yes , if it was to be aggregated with other properties". Only 14% were willing to report their revenue unconditionally and 5% did not answer the question.

Respondents were also asked if they would mind if their individual occupancy numbers were released. The **majority (52%)** preferred that their individual occupancy not be released, while 42% did not mind. Five percent did not respond to this question.

Although some interest in these two areas by some participants originally sparked the inclusion of these questions into the survey, the large number of participants who would rather not share this information, precludes its inclusion in the monitor in the near future.

2.11 Interest in Receiving Attraction Monitor  
Quarterly Report

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The occupancy monitor participants **were** asked to indicate whether they would be interested in receiving the attraction monitor quarterly report. Sixty-five percent of the respondents expressed an interest in receiving the attractions monitor, while 29% said they did not wish to receive it. Another 6% of the respondents did not respond to the question.

APPENDIX A

Cover Letter and  
Study Questionnaire



Ontario

**ONTARIO**  
yours  
to discover!®

Ministry of  
Tourism and  
Recreation

77 Bloor St. West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 2R9

June, 1985

Dear Monitor Participant:

This month you will find a questionnaire enclosed with the monthly newsletter and report. The questionnaire has two main objectives; 1) to update the classification data on your establishment and 2) to evaluate the present newsletter and reporting system. Both of these objectives will help us to provide you, the monitor participant, with a more relevant and precise information tool.

It is most important that each user of the Monitor complete a questionnaire to provide us with his or her feedback on the program as it is presently run. The Ministry will then compile the data and use the information to guide the future direction of the Monitor.

A stamped envelope has been provided for your convenience. I would appreciate receiving your responses by June 28th, 1985. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Judy Langer  
Manager  
Tourism Research Section

Encls.



ONTARIO OCCUPANCY MONITOR QUESTIONNAIRE

DESCRIPTION OF YOUR ESTABLISHMENT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number  
(    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Manager/Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact  
Person: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Type of Property: (Please check attached definitions and check one only)

- Hotel . . . . .
- Motel . . . . .
- Motor Hotel . . . . .
- Cottage/Cabin . . . . .
- Resort/Lodge . . . . .
- Other (Please specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Number of Units Available: (Please check one only)

- 1 to 25 units . . . . .
- 26 to 75units . . . . .
- 75 to 100 units . . . . .
- 101 to 200 units . . . . .
- Over 200 units . . . . .

3. Number of Years in Operation: (Please check one only)

- 5 years or less . . . . .
- Over 5 years but less  
than 10 years . . . . .
- 10 years or longer . . . . .

7. Please indicate what facilities are available at your establishment. (Please check as many as apply) .

- Beach . . . . .
- Convention/Conference Rooms. . . . .
- Cross-Country Ski Trails . . . . .
- Downhill Skiing. . . . .
- Exercise Room. . . . .
- Fireplaces in Room. . . . .
- Golf Course. . . . .
- Indoor Swimming Pool. . . . .
- Laundry Room. . . . .
- Marina. . . . .
- Outdoor Swimming Pool.....
- Playground/Swings & Slide. . . . .
- Meeting rooms . . . . .
- Sauna . . . . .
- Tennis Court . . . . .
- Whirlpool . . . . .
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Please indicate what services are available at your establishment. (Please check as many as apply) .

- Air Conditioning . . . . .
- Babysitting. . . . .
- Boat Rental. . . . .
- Coffee Shop. . . . .
- Dining Room. . . . .
- Housekeeping Units . . . . .
- Laundry Service . . . . .
- Liquor Licensed . . . . .
- Movies. . . . .

13. Now thinking about the monthly Newsletter in its present format, how useful is it to you? (Read List and check one answer only)

Very useful. . . . .

Somewhat useful. . .

or Not at all useful.

14. And how interesting is the monthly Newsletter in its present format to you? (Read List and check one answer only)

Very interesting. . .

Somewhat interesting.

or Not Very Interesting -

15. Any additional comments regarding the monthly Newsletter would be appreciated.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. Please indicate which of the following areas of interest which you would like to receive more information about in the Monthly -- Occupancy Newsletter. (Please check as many as apply).

Marketing Methods. . . . .

Trends in Ontario's Tourism Industry . . . . .

Upcoming Conferences. . . . .

Reviews of Toursim publications . . . . .

Services offered by the Ministry of  
Tourism and Recreation to establishments . . . . .

Government Funding Programs . . . . .

Tourism Related Training Courses Available . . . . .

A monthly profile on participating establishments . . . . . 0

A monthly profile on a specific Individual  
in the Accommodations Industry . . . . .

Computer systems for establishments . . . . .

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

20. Would you be willing to report monthly revenue information as pertains to your establishment?

- Yes; unconditionally . . . . .  D
- Yes; to be aggregated with other properties . . . . .  U
- No; this type of information is confidential . . . . .  O

21. Some properties have indicated they do not mind if their individual occupancy numbers are released. Others prefer that this information remain confidential. What is your position on this matter?


- Don't mind if individual occupancy released . . . . .  O
- Don't want individual occupancy released . . . . .  O

22. Attendance at Ontario's attractions is presently monitored similar to occupancy. Would you be interested in receiving the Attractions Monitor Quarterly Report?

- Yes . . . . .
- No . . . . .

23. Do you circulate the Monitor Report to other people in your organization?

- Yes . . . . .  No . . . . .

  
 About how many people including yourself see the Monitor Report? \_\_\_\_\_

24. Are there any other establishments in your area that you think should be included in the Monitor which are not presently included?

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