

# Market Profile of M.V. Coho Ferry Passengers

by Joseph Riden, Strategic Consultant, for Kim Jons Marketing | January 5, 2009



**This profile helps business owners, managers, and marketers understand the value of advertising in the new *M.V. Coho Magazine*—the most direct and effective method of reaching the M.V. Coho Ferry market niche.**

**T**he ferry passengers between Victoria, BC and Port Angeles, WA comprise a significant market niche. Over 205,000 travelers take the M.V. Coho on this route annually. For each 1% of these travelers who would spend only \$10 during a visit to a business, that business would realize \$20,500 in sales.

The Black Ball Ferry Line operates the M.V. Coho. The Line retained a highly qualified consultant to research and discover the market characteristics of their passengers in summer, 2008. The consultant's team conducted a passenger survey in mid-July.

- A representative sampling of vehicle passengers was polled on board the M.V. Coho Ferry.
- The Ferry was traveling from Victoria, BC to Port Angeles, WA.
- Results are compiled from 445 valid survey responses from vehicle passengers only.
- The data provide valuable insight into the habits, preferences, and buying patterns of the polled group.

A distinct profile of attributes, reported below, summarizes selected survey findings. The original survey can be made available. Please call or email Kim Jons to request it—(360) 460-7833, or [kimjons@kimjons.com](mailto:kimjons@kimjons.com).

## **Passenger Group Composition**

Half the M.V. Coho vehicle passengers are from Washington State (21%) or British Columbia (29%), with some (13%) from Oregon and California. Almost 18% of July vehicle passengers reside in Victoria. The next highest city of residence is Portland (6%.) About 4% of passengers live outside of Canada or the USA.

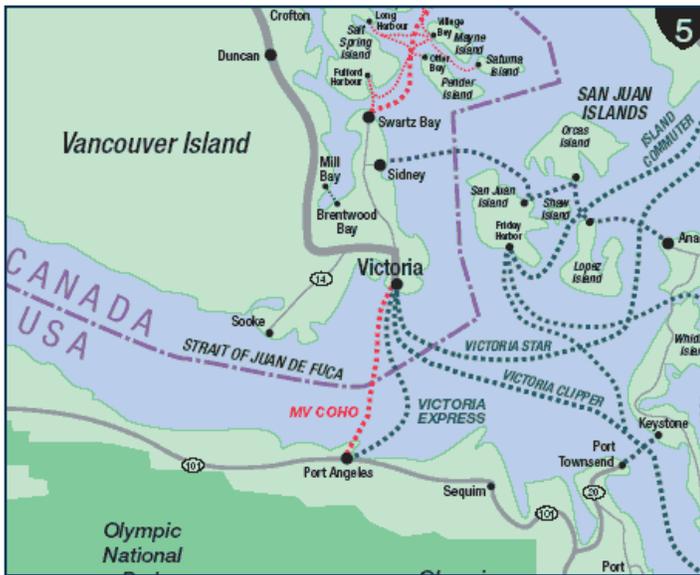
## Typical Travel Expenditures

M.V. Coho vehicle passengers report they spend an average of \$6234 per year on pleasure travel. Almost a quarter of them reported they spend more than \$10,000 on pleasure travel annually.

Most vehicle passengers expected to spend over \$2248 during the trip they were taking on the day of the survey. A few vehicle passengers would spend considerably more. Less than 10% of passengers were budget travelers who expected to spend less than \$500 on their trip.

## Travel Objectives

Around 1/3 of the passengers were outbound Canadians. Almost half were Americans returning home from a trip. The rest were enroute and continuing a trip.



## Travel Purpose

The majority, over 80% of the passengers, were traveling on holiday or vacation. Most of the remaining 20% were either traveling for business, a mix of business and pleasure, a convention or the like, or visiting friends or family. A small fraction were traveling for other reasons, which included weddings and funerals.

## Travel Planning

About 40% of the travelers were longer-term planners. These planners may be less susceptible to weather, fuel prices, and currency fluctuations. The remainder may be more influenced by such factors.

## Need for Accommodations

Passengers were on trips of various lengths, with the most common trip being a three or four night getaway (23%.) However, almost 13% of vehicle passengers are engaged in trips of more than two weeks. The rest needed accommodations for other various trips—less than two nights (13%), five or six nights (16%), seven or eight nights (14%), nine or ten nights (11%), or eleven to fourteen nights (about 12%.)

## Overnight Location (Night Before the Survey)

Most vehicle passengers stayed in Greater Victoria the night before boarding (79%.) About 10% started from mid-Vancouver Island locations. About 3% came from the North Vancouver Island region.

## Accommodations (Night Before the Survey)

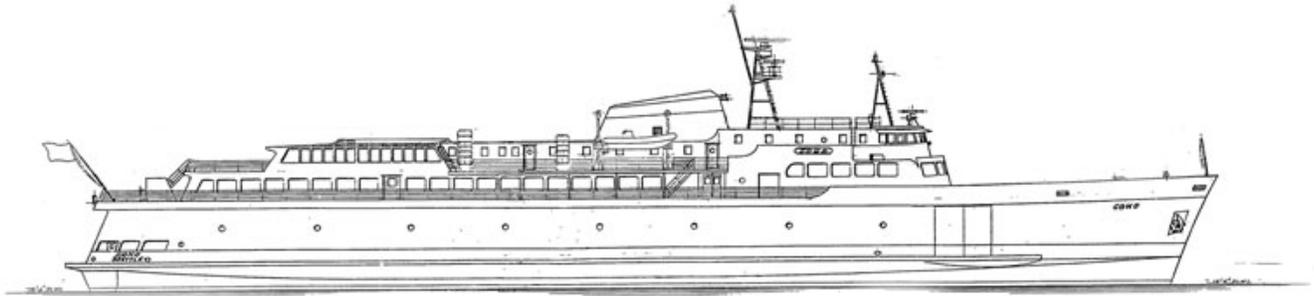
A substantial portion of the group stayed in hotels, motels, and B&B Inns before departing. Over 60% of the travelers spent their previous night in such commercial accommodations. The remainder started their days from home (26%), a friend or family member's home (7%), from camping, trailer, or RV (7.8%), or other accommodations (about 6%) which includes timeshares and boats.

### **Overnight Location (Night After the Survey)**

The night of their ferry trip, more than 30% of vehicle passengers stayed on the Olympic Peninsula and more than 72% of vehicle passengers stayed in Washington State. More than 22% of vehicle passengers expected to spend the night in Oregon.

### **Accommodations (Night After the Survey)**

A substantial portion of the group stayed in hotels, motels, and B&B Inns after arrival. Over 42% of the travelers stayed in this type of commercial accommodation. The remainder started their day from their home (30%), a friend or family member's home (13%), from camping, trailer, or RV (11%), or other accommodation (about 3%) which includes timeshares and boats.



### **Frequency of Travel on the M.V. Coho**

More than 12% of vehicle passengers reported they take annual trips on the Ferry. Almost 20% make multiple trips per year. Most vehicle passengers reported taking less than one trip a year on the M.V. Coho.

### **Additional Facts Discovered In the Survey**

- M.V. Coho vehicle passengers like travel, though almost half (47%) find traveling stressful.
- Travel patterns suggest the passenger group contains a large component of retired people.
- About 75% of vehicle passengers took a pleasure trip out of their country of residence last year and 23% took 3 or more pleasure trips out of their country of residence.
- A large portion (42%) of vehicle passengers like to be pampered when leisure traveling while almost 20% do not.
- Almost 38% of them are willing to pay more to get somewhere faster, and 19% are willing to pay more for “green” products.
- About 26% of vehicle passengers prefer ‘antiques and nostalgia’ to ‘new or modern’ but 36% do not.
- Most of them consider themselves outdoorsy, with 22% strongly agreeing with that statement.

- More than 29% of vehicle passenger respondents like to shop but 41% do not.
- Many vehicle passengers generally stay in three star or Comfort accommodations and more than 30% of them stay in four or five star accommodations.

### Summary Conclusions

The ridership of the M.V. Coho tends to comprise affluent and experienced pleasure travelers who spend substantially on travel each year. Many take annual, or multiple trips each year, on the M.V. Coho. Most are on a shorter getaway, though many are on extended trips.

This group is a mix of mostly Canadians and Americans who often stay in upscale commercial accommodations, frequently on the Olympic Peninsula or within Washington or Oregon. Accommodation choices suggest they may also choose better restaurants and luxury shopping some of the time and they have ready cash to spend on diversions all along the way.

A substantial portion of these seasoned travelers plan trips, so they tend to be less affected by variations in weather, gas prices, currency variation, and perhaps even general economic conditions.

Many of these travelers may be attracted to special interests such as eco-tourism, environmental, historical, or natural features, antiques and nostalgia, historic architecture, festivals, outdoorsy activities, or shopping—especially for unique items not available at home.

The M.V. Coho Ferry is a major conduit for travel that acts like a two-way funnel, concentrating a bidirectional stream of travelers who share a specific demographic profile. This group is a significant niche marketing opportunity for many businesses on the Olympic Peninsula, on Vancouver Island, and within the surrounding regions.

The best and most effective way for American businesses to present a marketing message to this niche is to advertise in the new annual *M.V. Coho Magazine* through Kim Jons Marketing. KJM is the exclusive U S agency for American Visitor Publications, the Canadian Publisher of the new M.V. Coho magazine.

A copy of the *Magazine* is handed to each passenger when they purchase their tickets.

 **Kim Jons Marketing**  
Extreme Value Strategic Advertising

Reach Kim Jons at (360) 460-7833, email [kimjons@kimjons.com](mailto:kimjons@kimjons.com), or visit [www.kimjons.com](http://www.kimjons.com).