

(RE)CONNECTING: STORIES OF TRAVEL



**share
more
stories**

SHARE MORE STORIES PRESENTS
SEQ
A STORYTELLING EXPERIENCE

**MAY 2019
FULL REPORT**

OVERVIEW

We wanted to explore the topic of travel for so many reasons. Technology has both expanded our world, and reduced its size. We can more and more easily engage with cultures both digitally and in person. How does our experience effect theirs? Do smart phones enrich or rob us of experience, as we seek to connect to where we are and possibly disconnect from the jobs, pressures and responsibilities of our everyday lives? What about the demand on some to travel for work? How does the mobility of and migration of people away from where they grew up impact how they might think about traveling to where their families have historically been from?

In May 2019 we gathered and heard stories about travel to see what we could learn. Our goal was to expand our understanding of what travel is about for people. Our approach to insights has been iterative: listening to people, reading their stories, looking at data, re-reading stories, looking back at the data, finding meaning in all of it.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

We have come to see these sessions as a series that is helping us create a tapestry of the human experience. This report is built like a weaver's loom. In the first section, we explore the warp...the structure we set up in the beginning. We will share what we learned about why people travel; what they need and what they value in the travel experience; as well as the elements that seem to impact their travel experiences. In the second section, we explore the weft...

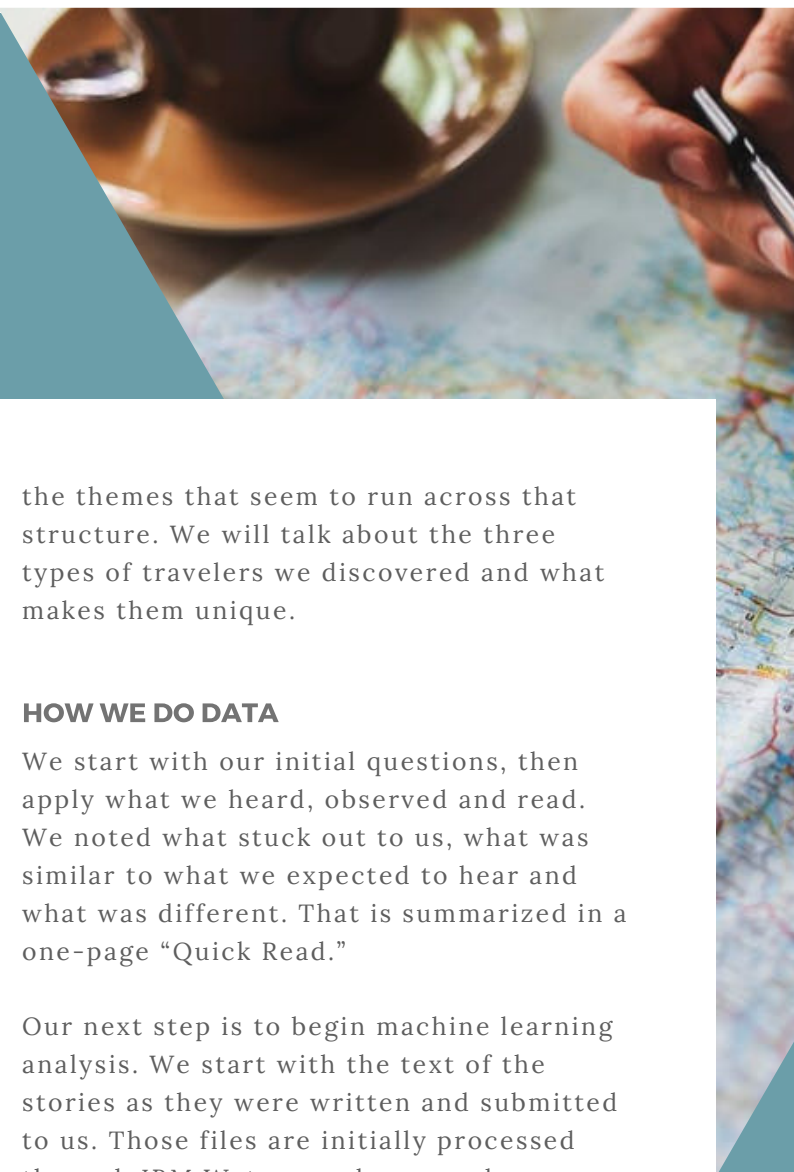
the themes that seem to run across that structure. We will talk about the three types of travelers we discovered and what makes them unique.

HOW WE DO DATA

We start with our initial questions, then apply what we heard, observed and read. We noted what stuck out to us, what was similar to what we expected to hear and what was different. That is summarized in a one-page "Quick Read."

Our next step is to begin machine learning analysis. We start with the text of the stories as they were written and submitted to us. Those files are initially processed through IBM Watson and assessed across a standard set of heuristics. We get a read on sentiment, emotions, needs, values and personality traits of the authors. We then iteratively use algorithms and observation to look for patterns. Further analysis helps us uncover relationships across the initial data set.

This analysis, alongside re-reading the stories, helps us think more deeply about the possible meanings of what has been shared with us and helps us ask more interesting questions. Our goal with SEEQ is to discover, question and build new understandings. It is open-ended, identifying further opportunities for exploration.



WHAT WE HEARD

Over 90% of the stories we collected were about personal travel. They ranged from cross-country trips, to a long drive to night school, to trips overseas. In some cases the travel may have started for work or school, but the story that was being told focused on personal moments and discovery. The stories were also overwhelmingly positive, with 76% of them scoring over the mean for positive sentiment.

THEMES

Connecting. When we planned this session, we thought we might hear about the importance of disconnecting through travel. We did not. These stories were much more about connecting, even re-connecting, with oneself, one's history, friends and family, or new cultures and places.

Planning & Plans Gone Wrong. More than half of these stories described the work that went into planning travel. One-third described what happened when reality didn't follow the plan. For this group, travel is a deeply considered activity.

Changes in plans, while initially stressful, often were reported as opportunities for new discoveries and personal growth. That said, expectations are a critical part of travel and often set before the trip.

Sharing Among Strangers. A majority of stories described the comfort, delight and joy that came from welcoming strangers or the opportunity to share one's culture and perspective with new people. It was also interesting that often all that was shared was a smile, and that was enough. This sharing impacted the traveler's perspective, both of the world, other cultures and oneself.

"Magic". We don't mean tricks, we mean the wonder of encountering new things; the power of being present for them. Twenty percent of the stories used either this word, specifically, or expressed a similar feeling.

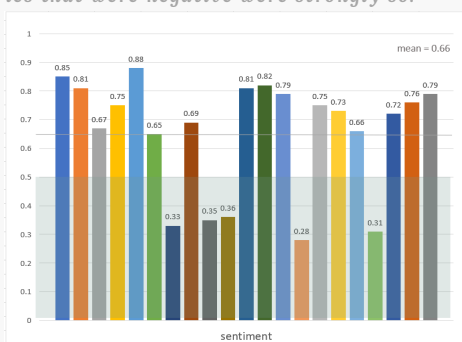
IMPLICATIONS

These storytellers indicated that they travel to connect and gain new perspectives. Given that:

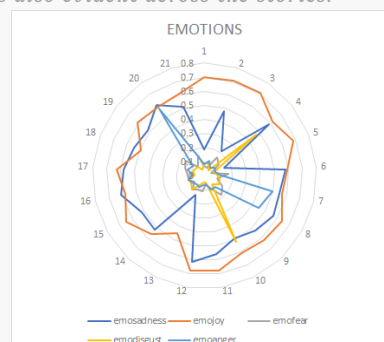
- How might companies help travelers connect to new things? to discover new things?
- Could companies do a better job of creating small changes in plans that result in moments of "magic"?
- How might we in our communities encourage more sharing among strangers?

SUPPORTING DATA

This was a first for us. We rarely see a mean sentiment score so high (0.66), nor do we see such a high percentage of stories scoring positively. We also observed that those stories that were negative were strongly so.



Joy was the most consistently high emotion expressed in these stories, which is something we often see, followed by sadness. What was interesting were the range of other emotions also evident across the stories.



TRAVEL NEEDS

THE DATA

The most significant need expressed through these stories was the need for structure. This makes sense to us as we heard so much about the time most people spent planning their travel.

Needs	mean
Structure	0.57
Curiosity	0.45
Stability	0.39
Closeness	0.38
Love	0.27
Harmony	0.20

We have begun to experiment with relational analytics to better understand how multiple factors may correlate to one another. When we dig under "Structure," our research suggests that Structure scores can be explained by the features listed below it and that the need for Stability and the personality trait of Conscientiousness are strongly positively correlated.

STRUCTURE	corr
Disgust	0.37
Anger	-0.20
Conscientious	0.52
Challenge	0.34
Stability	0.72

INSIGHTS

While significant data points to the needs of travelers to take travel seriously and with care, we heard more in our stories.

"A journey is a person in itself; no two are alike. And all plans, safeguards, policing, and coercion are fruitless. We find that after years of struggle that we do not take a trip; a trip takes us."

JOHN STEINBECK

The other top needs expressed included curiosity, and closeness. While statistically none of these expressions are particularly significant for the group as a whole, they fill in to create a dynamic picture for us, that aligns more to what we heard. We begin to see people who travel needing to feel safe and being thoughtful, but also embracing and valuing moments that present them with something new, and connectedness to the people and places that they encounter on their journeys.

IMPLICATIONS

- Brands in the travel vertical certainly are focused on making it easier to plan travel. How could they employ attributes of "stability" and "conscientiousness" to convey structure? Or perhaps when plans become unstable, they are reframed as opportunities to feed one's curiosity, or desire for closeness? For example, could there be more museums or novel spaces and installations in airports?
- How could structure serve as a point of leverage for communities who want to increase tourism? Do they have adequate restaurants, parking, access to points of interest, bathrooms and places to stay?

TRAVEL VALUES

THE DATA

The most significant value expressed through these stories was Openness to Change, which means that these individuals have a high level of acceptance of the possibility that change may be needed, along with the appetite to drive or enact that change.

Openness to Change	0.55
Self Transcendence	0.48
Conservation	0.16
Hedonism	0.12
Self Enhancement	0.10

While there is a low level of expression of the value of self-enhancement, when we look at the correlations to Openness to Change, we see that Liberty, Curiosity, Self-Enhancement and Excitement as a group actually describe a story's "Openness to Change" score. This is also represented in the the positive correlations correlate strongly to this value.

OPEN TO CHANGE	corr
Self Enhancement	0.57
Curiosity	0.58
Excitement	0.53
Ideal	0.06
Liberty	0.61

INSIGHTS

This combined look suggests that these stories indicate that individuals often interpret travel experiences through the ways they were personally impacted. As we saw in the Needs assessment, curiosity is an important element of travel. Reading the stories that were submitted illustrated that many people saw travel as a tool for personal discovery and growth. We also saw a difference between the idea of "visiting" a place vs. "traveling to" a place. Visiting is more shallow and real travel is much deeper and more about taking time to sink in and freely explore. "Visiting" can give one selfies, but "traveling" gives us meaning.

IMPLICATIONS

- How might companies do a better job of distinguishing between "visiting" and "traveling"? Might there be ways to transform a visit into a trip? For example, could companies supporting the business traveler provide them with moments of liberty or wonder that can make required travel feel more meaningful and less like a drag?
- How might companies do a better job of supporting an individual's appetite for change when they travel? What might the unseen, longer-term economic benefits to companies be from forgoing steep change fees?

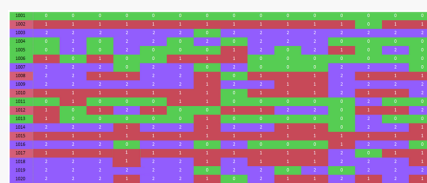
THE STORY OF PERSONALITY & TRAVEL

ISTJ Responsible Executive	ISFJ Dedicated Steadfast	INFJ Insightful Motivator	INTJ Visionary Strategist
ISTP Versatile Pragmatic	ISFP Practical Creative	INFP Imaginative Creative	INTP Rational Analytical
ESTP Dynamic Energetic	ESFP Enthusiastic Impulsive	ENFP Inspirational Creative	ENTP Innovative Exploratory
ESTJ Efficient Direct	ESFJ Compassionate Builder	ENFJ Inspiring Motivator	ENTJ Strategic Director

We have also come across some interesting studies in this space. Heidi Priebe puts forth how your Meyers-Briggs personality type may impact the preferences and motivations one has when they travel. To read more, search for her article from 2019 published in the Observer.

Another interesting article we came across was a study by Franz J. Neve et. al for the German Research Foundation and published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. They found that extended travel impacted individual's personality traits.

Our own data suggests that the top personality traits of travelers include Openness, Emotional Range (sensitivity to one's environment) and Conscientiousness. Our own analysis has identified three different types of travelers. Some people purely define one group, while other shared characteristics of multiple groups. More on this later.



LOOKING AT NEEDS AND VALUES

THE DATA

The chart below is certainly an eye-strainer, but fear not. We will explain it. As we were investigating correlations between the data that these stories generated, we mapped all of the correlations across sentiment, personality traits, needs and values. The darker the green the stronger the positive correlation between features, the darker the red the stronger the negative correlation. Any color is considered statistically significant for our sample size.

What we noticed was all of the green in the bottom right area of this map. What this told us is that needs and values are highly correlated. The darkest greens are representing a positive correlation at a confidence of 99.9995%. So of course, we dug in.

We focused on the needs and values that we were already thinking about based on

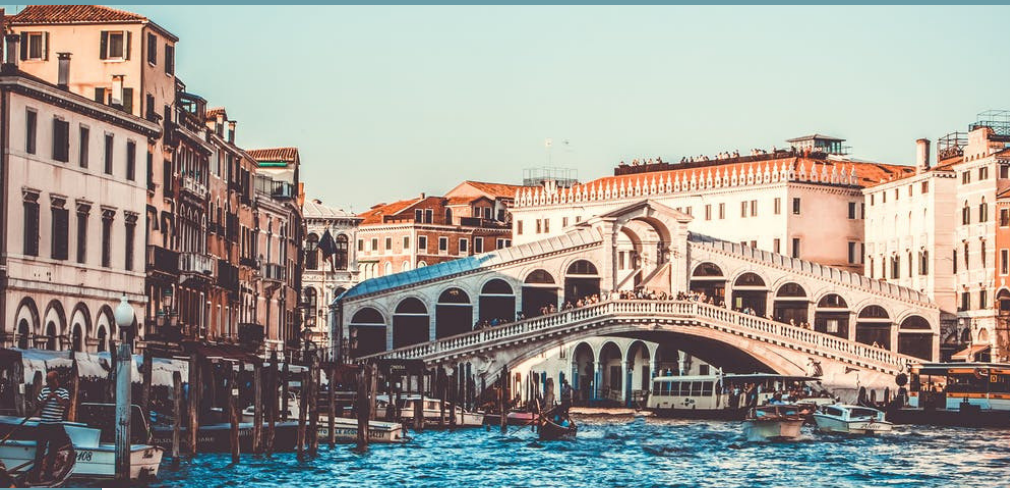
our analysis: Structure, Stability, Liberty, Excitement, Openness to Change and Curiosity. Based on past work we expect to see correlations in these areas. For example Structure, and Curiosity tend to have relationships, which vary by topic of stories. Travel stories brought a deepening of significance to our other work, and we documented a broader crossover between values and needs. We also found some new needs and values come into play.

Self-Enhancement is an important value. There are several other important needs within these stories of travel: Love, Hedonism, Idealism, Practicality, Excitement, Challenge and Self-Expression. This puts much more energy into our view of travel than we previously had.

IMPLICATIONS

- Travel is a mosaic for most people. Their reaction, comfort, and sentiment is effected by a collective set of needs, values, and other attitudinal factors that can be mapped to improve experience. So for example, if your company is going to "own liberty", an authentic expression of that idea needs to include elements of openness to change, self-enhancement, challenge, curiosity, excitement, love, idealism and self-expression.

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liberty	-0.187295795	-0.129623795	-0.109411471	-0.08181788	-0.06143273	-0.04381788	-0.03042325	-0.02042325	-0.01242325	-0.00742325	-0.00423225	-0.00242325	-0.00124232	-0.00074232	-0.00042325	-0.00024232	-0.00012423	-0.00007423	-0.00004232	-0.00002423	-0.00001242	-0.00000742	-0.00000423	-0.00000242	-0.00000124	-0.00000074	-0.00000042
excitement	-0.187295795	-0.129623795	-0.109411471	-0.08181788	-0.06143273	-0.04381788	-0.03042325	-0.02042325	-0.01242325	-0.00742325	-0.00423225	-0.00242325	-0.00124232	-0.00074232	-0.00042325	-0.00024232	-0.00012423	-0.00007423	-0.00004232	-0.00002423	-0.00001242	-0.00000742	-0.00000423	-0.00000242	-0.00000124	-0.00000074	-0.00000042
structure	-0.187295795	-0.129623795	-0.109411471	-0.08181788	-0.06143273	-0.04381788	-0.03042325	-0.02042325	-0.01242325	-0.00742325	-0.00423225	-0.00															



The real voyage of
discovery consists not
in seeking new
landscapes, but in
having new eyes.

THREE TYPES OF TRAVELERS

So we have just taken you through the aggregate data from all of our stories. That was the "warp" that we referenced in our report overview. Our hope was to answer some of the questions that we had when we first started thinking about this topic. What could the "weft" teach us about the tapestry of human experience that we had before us? If we looked for patterns differently, what might we find?

UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

We were so glad we asked this question. We started by deriving raw attitudinal scores (e.g. self expression, anger, agreeableness) generated through Natural Language Processing techniques. Through our work with tools like feature analysis, we have identified that there are natural groupings of the scores of emotions, personalities, values and needs that are determinant of each other. These interrelationships we call “emotional bundles”. We talked a bit about this in the first section, when we shared the correlations we found between different needs and values. Using these emotional bundles we then went through a series of machine learning

algorithms to determine a matrix of results that define how the stories cluster within the distribution. Using that data frame of n-defined clusters we determine one to many grouped anonymous personas that are explained through the data. In short-hand, we discovered that the stories we collected revealed three distinct types of travelers: those who travel to Experience, Connect or Learn.

TRAVEL TO EXPERIENCE



These travelers are idealistic, positive, curiosity-seekers. In fact, these stories expressed lots of curiosity. They were also highly positive. While traveling to experience, they also want to express themselves, and have moderately agreeable personalities with little to no expressions of anger. They have the ability to be sad spanning the range of high to low, but that doesn't limit their optimism. Perhaps they are realizing that the American experience might not be so exceptional, or sharing a story of California fires, or talking about a trip

The cool thing about being famous is traveling. I have always wanted to travel across seas, like to Canada and stuff.



that tested friendships. These sobering moments did not crush their hope for better future outcomes. Similar to what we saw in the data overall, while they are highly curious, the data also showed that they expressed a high need for structure. These travelers are planners. When they plan travel, they are influenced by both online resources and family recommendations. On the next page, you will see the word cloud that was generated from these stories.

TRAVEL TO CONNECT



These travelers are passionate about closeness. They also have a high need for structure. Good plans allow for the time and space they want that for connection. All of these stories emphasized how their travels allowed them to connect with new people: at an authentic dinner in Switzerland, with a families in Spain and Bosnia, or traveling as family on the cape of Virginia and on a cruise down the Danube. Not focused on a need for excitement, liberty or curiosity, their passion comes from the shared experience. They are also not quick to



anger, nor bothered by concepts of self-enhancement or self-transcendence, their stories expressed slightly more sadness than the average story. They are interested in stable, agreeable and conscientious relational experiences. Attuned to what is around them, these travelers are influenced by brands, along with online resources and family considerations.

TRAVEL TO LEARN



These travelers are independent thinkers, who find travel eye-opening. Their travel helps them find new ways of thinking. The stories in this group shared lessons learned from hot air balloon rides, to road warrior horror stories to revisiting London, the home of the empire that colonized a homeland. These learners do not need a lot of structure or anything else, and they accept travel as it comes. They appear to be somewhat more introspective. Some shared stories indicating they have experienced both the bad and good of travel, but are eternally most open to new experiences. This group is the most difficult to influence through traditional mechanisms, so for brands that want to connect with them, they will need to tune into their values and needs.

IMPACTING THE TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

One of our big observations of these data that we want to highlight is what we learned about what influences travelers. Overall, our data indicate that brands are not influential in this space. The exception, of course, are those who travel to connect. However, in general, travelers are planners and they are relying on online resources and word of mouth to direct their purchase decisions.

Experience is king. Staying relevant in the travel industry requires memorable experiences, which starts with understanding travelers. We aren't talking about good customer service...anything less than great customer service is only a detractor. Great customer service is as fundamentally critical as structure and stability. Of course you need to make it easy for travelers to make plans and reliably deliver on those plans.

Mastering the experience requires the following:

- Help quench the traveler's curiosity. Help them connect to new ideas, and experiences. Help them discover new places and things.
- Help them meet strangers. This could be your staff, or the other travelers that you are taking care of.
- Help travelers insert adventure, risk and a challenge into their trips in trustworthy ways. Perhaps that is injecting some happy novelty into the regular traveler's experience. Or maybe you can support their desire to change plans by not penalizing them with prohibitive cancellation or change fees.
- Blend your strategic understanding with your tactical analysis. So many data analytics programs have become strictly

operational, leaving little room for understanding the people and personas behind the stats to be relevant and to grow share.

In addition to mastering experience for the traveler, we have a few additional ideas for what might make the difference for your business and improve your competitive advantage:

KNOW YOUR TRAVELER

While these stories of travel illustrated several shared needs and values across travelers, we also saw that there are at least three different types of travelers, each of which have discreet needs. Thinking about who your core audience really is will be critical creating competitive advantage.

MAKE TRIPS, NOT VISITS

Trips are experiences that emphasize liberty and create meaning. Visits retrace paths of others and create selfies. Trips are stickier. Give travelers room to explore and satisfy their curiosity. Help give them the room and tools to connect those experiences in a way that cements memories and creates meaning.

AUTHENTIC CONNECTIONS

What needs are you trying to meet? Which value are you trying to "own" in the marketplace? Whatever your answer, it is critical to understand that to authentically connect what you represent to travelers, you must also understand that those needs and values are complex correlations of several needs and values.

ABOUT US

ABOUT SHARE MORE STORIES

We are a team of seekers. Of dreamers. Of believers. Of game-changers. Yeah.

We believe that good is profitable -- and critical to company growth in the future. We are creating tools that help companies put humanity back in their businesses, by guiding them to develop more mutually beneficial relationships with people. These relationships are developed through genuine connections with customers, employees and society, through and across values-based communities.

We use stories to help brands and organizations grow through human-led experiences, insights and ideas. SMS' proprietary methodology combines the authentic, human connection of shared storytelling, the power of machine learning, to deliver culture growth and brand relevance.

We have also probably been where you are. If you work for a big company and are trying to solve for what's next, we have done a lot of that. In fact, we have a very interesting team of professionals with a wide variety of experiences and expertise. That, combined with interesting applications of digital tools is our magic sauce.

If you would like to learn more about us and our process, drop us a line at info@sharemorestories.com.

ABOUT SEEQ: STORIES TO ENGAGE, EXPLORE, QUESTION

SEEQ is a storytelling experience presented by Share More Stories.

SEEQ is focused on exploring topics that are relevant today, in an effort to more deeply understand human experiences and ultimately develop ideas for companies, brands and communities to grow.

Our next SEEQ Session is scheduled for July 31, 2019 at The Dark Room in Richmond, VA. We will be exploring "Best Foot Forward or B.S.? Stories of How We Show Up." As we do this, we will be curious about exploring the choices we make to be our authentic selves vs. faking it 'til we make it and all the choices in between. And yes, we see this topic as connected to and building from our last SEEQ Session. If you are curious, check out Simon Frith's article about Music and Identity, posted on georgetown.edu.

We plan to host six sessions in Richmond, VA in 2019. You can view the current plan for dates and topics at www.seeqrva.com. We will keep it fresh as the year unfolds.

If you would like to stay informed about upcoming events, receive our insights reports from our SEEQ sessions, or are interested in bringing a SEEQ session to your area, you can email us at info@sharemorestories.com.

