

if you're reading this, chances are you're already a fan of or involved in the snowsports industry.

THE SNOWSPORTS INDUSTRY – IT JUST KEEPS ON GETTING BIGGER AND BETTER

Whether you're working in Morzine, have just tried out The Slopes at London's O2, or are taking a breather after your first lesson at a SNO!zone, we're all part of the white coalition, devoted to snow.

But just who are we, and how many of us are there in the snowsports tribe? We took a look at some of the surveys that are published in the UK to find out.

Two annual surveys report on the number of holidaymakers each winter. These are published by Crystal Holidays (the UK's largest ski tour operator) and by Ski Club of Great Britain.

Both use similar sources, such as the Civil Aviation Authority stats and tourist office figures, but the Ski Club report includes a substantial survey of 150 smaller tour ops – companies who are unlikely to want to share their sales figures with the market leader. This is probably why the Ski Club report consistently puts the size of the UK market 10 to 20 per cent greater than the Crystal Holidays figure.

For the winter season 2007/08, the Ski Club reported that over 1.3m people travelled to the snow – an increase of three per cent on the previous year. According to Crystal Holidays the number of skiers and snowboarders has grown by 700,000 since 1991. Both surveys agree that since 2001 the total number of passengers has increased by over 20 per cent – the


clear message is snowsports is more popular than ever.

While the numbers have the hint of the A level results to them, annually improving for the past seven years, bear in mind that this figure doesn't include the many youngsters who only ever hit the growing number of

indoor slopes around the UK. It's clear there's plenty more to add to the tribe as more snowdomes are built and bring more fans into the sport.

But these reports came out before the credit crunch fully took hold, and it's unknown yet how it will affect our

favourite sport. One theory is that the annual trip to the slopes is the last expense aficionados will drop, foregoing other pleasures first. I'm sure we can all agree that once you've started your skiing or snowboarding life, there's no going back.

Hopefully with a great snow season, and positivity from UK retailers and tour operators, 2008/09 will see another year of record numbers on the slopes. 



Figures from 2008 Snowsports Analysis by Ski Club of Great Britain

