

MONTHLY REPORT CENTRAL EUROPE JUNE 2023



**ST.PETE
CLEARWATER**

**KAUS
MEDIA
SERVICES**



Marketing
Communications
Consulting

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1. Current State of the Tourism Industry in Central Europe

European International Travel Trends Update

Continued positive sales development in travel agencies

The total invoiced sales of the travel agencies included in the Tats travel agency survey were up 15 percent year-on-year in May and 50 percent cumulatively since January. Tourism sales were up 17 percent in May compared to 2022, and the cruise segment included in this figure was up 41 percent. Cumulative sales also confirm this, the back-office service provider reports. The tourism sector as a whole posted a 36 percent increase, it said, while cruises were up another 94 percent over 2022, compared to April 2023.

According to Tats, the positive trend is also evident in air travel, with May 2023 sales up 15 percent and a cumulative 61 percent year-over-year increase. The number of air tickets in May is seven percent more than in May 2022 and also in the cumulative values plus 40 percent lower than in April 2023.

Higher tourism sales than 2019

Settled tourism sales in May are seven percent higher than May four years ago. Cruises show an 18 percent increase month-over-month compared to 2019, and air travel is also up five percent over 2019 - as is other sales, up 26 percent.

At plus six percent, total cumulative travel agency sales in May are similar to April's figures, with cumulative tourism sales still six percent below 2019, while cruises are eight percent above. Cumulative air travel sales, at plus ten percent, are in line with April 2023. The number of tickets also remained similar in May: minus 18 percent compared to 2019 and also minus 18 percent cumulatively.

Cruises continue with strong development

May tourism order backlog continues to show a 24 percent month-over-month decline compared to 2022. In tourism order backlog for travel through October 2023, May figures are 21 percent above April 2023 and down slightly from the previous month, but remain above 2022. The cruises tourism subdivision continues to show a very positive trend in order backlog by travel date, up 49 percent. Month-over-month, tourism order backlog is nine percent above 2019, and month-over-month, cruise subdivision order backlog also remains positive at plus 44 percent. May tourism backlog for travel through October 2023 is 14 percent below 2019 sales levels, while cruise orders are 20 percent above 2019 sales levels.

Tats is a back-office service provider to the tourism industry. It collects booking and accounting data from about 2,500 affiliated travel agencies for its monthly travel agency report.

(Source: www.reisevor9.de)

Sales climate remains positive, but without euphoria

The tourism sales climate index of the management consultancy Dr. Fried & Partner has also slightly decreased in June. There is a slight restraint in expectations for the future. With regard to the distribution of travel services, more travel agencies than in the previous month assess the situation as merely satisfactory.

The current situation continues to be rated as good by more than half of all participating travel agencies (52%; previous month: 56%). Forty-three percent of the participants describe the current situation in the distribution of travel services as satisfactory, which is 6.5 percentage points more than in May. The proportion of those noting a deterioration in the situation falls to 5 percent (previous month: 8%).

The picture is similar for the sale of travel services. The proportion of travel agencies with no change in the last two to three months compared with the previous year rises from 25.5 in May to 33 percent. Conversely, the percentage of participants for whom travel sales have grown drops to 54 percent (-10%). Thirteen percent say sales have declined.

Fewer travel agents expect demand to increase

Whereas in May just under half of the participating travel agencies expected demand to remain stable over the next six months, this figure has now risen to 66 percent (previous month: 51%). The proportion of those expecting an increase or decrease in demand for travel services is falling accordingly. Twenty-five percent expect an increase, which is 9 percentage points less than in May. Only 9% of respondents now expect demand to fall, which is 5 percentage points less than in May. With regard to the future earnings situation, the picture is similar to the previous month. There is a slight increase among those who expect no change. The proportion rises from 46 percent in May to 51.5 percent in June. Thirty-six percent expect an improvement (previous month: 41%) and, as in the previous month, 13 percent expect a deterioration.

Summary

Despite the further decline in the tourism sales climate index, there is only a slight weakening of the curve in June. In both the assessment of the current and future situation, the mood is generally subdued but still positive.

(Source: www.reisevor9.de)

High inflation, expensive travel: A quarter of Germans cannot afford a vacation

Rising prices continue to cause problems for many consumers. This does not only affect the lower income classes. Even the middle class is cutting back on travel. Many consumers are still very worried: In view of high inflation and the sharp rise in prices for air travel and accommodation, a large proportion of Germans cannot afford a vacation.

This is the result of a representative survey of more than 10,000 people conducted by the opinion research institute Civey on behalf of "Der Spiegel". According to the survey, 25 percent of respondents do not have the financial means to go on vacation this year.

The Tagesspiegel app Current news, background information and analyses directly to your smartphone. Plus the digital newspaper. Download it here for free. The lower income brackets are particularly hard hit: 65 percent of people in households with a net income of less than 1,500 euros a month lack the money for a trip. In the 1,500 to 2,499 euro salary bracket, the figure is 39 percent.

Consumer report also shows reluctance to travel

But even among members of the solid middle class with a net monthly income of 2,500 to 3,499 euros, 20 percent say a vacation is too expensive for them. According to the survey, 24 percent of respondents also have to save on the vacation itself, for example by shortening their trip or looking for a less expensive vacation destination.

"Financial worries are forcing people to save in all areas of everyday life," Ramona Pop, chairwoman of the Federation of German Consumer Organizations (vzbv), also said in mid-June on the occasion of the publication of this year's Consumer Report. The report shows that the consumer crisis is "far from over. Here, 56 percent said they would go on vacation less. A clear majority (76 percent) of the people surveyed for the report said they were consciously consuming less energy. In addition, many (61 percent) go to restaurants or bars less often. "Forty-four percent are cutting back on food purchases - I find that worrisome," Pop explained.

And consumers may face further price increases, as the lower seven percent VAT rate for restaurants may be on the verge of expiring. According to the newspapers of the Bavarian media group, none of the parties in the traffic light coalition is unreservedly in favor of an extension; on the contrary, skepticism prevails. The reduced VAT rate had been introduced during the coronavirus pandemic and, following an extension, will remain in force until the end of the year. Beverages are excluded from this.

(Source: www.tagesspiegel.de)

2. Overview of Regional Activities

Germany

- After we attended the travel trade show ipw 2023 in San Antonio, TX from May 20-24, 2023, we started following up on all Central European travel trade and media contacts that we met at the show. We offered our assistance with the tourism development of all tour operators and discussed potential sales activities in order to increase the number of Central European visitors to St. Pete / Clearwater.
- KMS continued contacting a large number of tour operators offering the U.S. and Florida in Germany and we discussed potential co-op activities. In this context, we were in contact with target tour operators and other industry partners to promote our destination and to request marketing proposals for potential marketing co-ops with them. In this context, we received the following proposals that we will comprehensively evaluate and submit to VSPC for discussion:
 - *America Unlimited* was able to become the partner country at the travel consumer show *ABF Hannover 2024*, which will take place between January 31 to February 04, 2024. More than 100,000 consumers will be expected to visit the show. *ABF Hannover* is a show for leisure travel, camping, caravanning, sports, outdoor activities and other travel related activities. The show attracts both trade visitors and consumers, providing a platform for exchanging information, discovering new products, and planning leisure activities and travels. *America Unlimited* offered us a booth participation to promote St. Pete / Clearwater.
 - The Hamburg based tour operator *CRD International* will organize its consumer event "*Nordamerikatage*". When the show was introduced in 2015, it counted 6,000 visitors that were looking for information about travel destination in the U.S. for their next vacation. The *promotional event* will take place from November 10-11, 2023 and it will be planned as a platform for DMOs and other travel related partners to promote their destinations and services to potential travelers to the U.S. and Canada, travel agencies and the media. For this year's event, CRD plans destination presentations and workshops, show cooking and culinary delights, networking opportunities and more. Due to comprehensive advertising and positive feedback from their last event, the operator expects about 8,000 visitors to attend this year.
 - *DERTOUR* offered social media activities, e-marketing, and SEA promotions. The company is the largest tour operator in Germany for travels to the U.S. and the company belongs to the *DER Touristik Group*, which is part of the retail chain *REWE Group*. *DER Touristik Group* is one of the leading travel companies in Europe and owns a wide portfolio of tour operators, hotels, travel agencies, and other tourism services.

- *Die Reisebotschafter* recommends promoting a designated travel agent training for 30 to 40 agents including 20 minutes presentation time for each destination. Due to the workforce shortage, the training should be organized as an evening event with dinner. The company is a midsize operator specializing in long-haul travels with its headquarters in Hannover, Germany.
- *FTI* is one of the largest tour operators for trips to the U.S. in the German speaking countries. The company offered us various social media activities, own channel B2C advertising as well as external bought media channels. As a *tour operator*, the company offers a wide range of travel products, including but not limited to packaged holidays, last-minute offers, city trips, hotel bookings and flights to global destinations.
- The sports retailer *Sportscheck* contacted us for a joint campaign after our intended joint promotion with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers' first NFL game in Germany could not be realized. *Sportscheck* is a leading German retail company specializing in sportswear, sports shoes, outdoor equipment and sports accessories. It offers a wide range of products for various sports such as running, fitness, football, tennis, hiking, cycling among other sports activities. The company operates physical stores as well as an online shop and is a popular brand for sports enthusiasts in Germany.
- The new German tour operator *TRUE America* sent us a proposal for digital marketing, print advertising and out-of-home promotions at a *sports arena*.
- *TUI Deutschland* sent us with a comprehensive proposal for many partner marketing activities. These include but are not limited to teaser marketing, a designated St. Pete / Clearwater landing page, a social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram, a display advertising campaign on highly frequented websites (i.e., welt.de, Bild.de), advertisements in the TUI magazine that will be sent to TUI clients, newspaper ads, postcard mailings and other joint promotional opportunities.
- The *Visit USA Committee Deutschland* offers a participation in a Halloween event in Frankfurt. Between 100 to 130 travel agents from all over Germany are expected. VUSA offers a 15-minutes workshop package and a plenary presentation package followed by a Halloween party.
- *Expipoint* is an online travel marketing portal and road show organizer. The company offers us the participation in several themed road shows throughout Germany.

- We coordinated the warehouse that we have subcontracted on behalf of VSPC, proofread their inventory report for June 2023 and forwarded it to VSPC.
- We drafted the newsletter „Spectacular beaches, waves, and fireworks“ and submitted it to VSPC for approval. After we received approval, we distributed it to more than 3,600 travel agencies and tour operators in Germany.
- The Visit USA Committee Germany will distribute a newsletter in June 2023, in which U.S. travel news and highlights will be presented. We supported the Visit USA Committee with content and photos of St. Pete/Clearwater (theme: „A Dream in Pink: St. Pete/Clearwater is the perfect destination for the Barbiecore trend“). The newsletter will be distributed to more than 23,000 travel agents and media professionals. We also uploaded the same content to the Visit St. Pete/Clearwater section of the Visit USA Committee Germany’s website.
- After approval from VSPC, we registered Visit St. Pete / Clearwater for the Visit USA Cinema Roadshow, which is scheduled for September 11-14, 2023 and which will make stops in the cities of Cologne, Stuttgart, Nuremberg and Munich. Each member of the Visit USA Committee Germany will be limited to participate in a maximum of two cities. Unfortunately, since more VUSA members registered than seats were available, registrations of those members were given priority that did participate in the USA workshops in May and June 2023. Since we participated in the USA workshops before, our registration could unfortunately not be considered.
- For future promotions, we had area maps of Visit St. Pete/Clearwater copied and laminated. These maps will be used for future presentations and trainings to better showcase the location of our destination, distance between areas, beaches, museums and activities.
- KMS scheduled sales calls with airlines serving the Tampa Bay Airport from Germany in July 2023. The meetings will include but not be limited to Discover (formerly “Eurowings Discover”), United and British Airways.
- In May 2023, we participated in a five days long Discover road show to Germany and trained travel agents in the cities of Münster, Dortmund, Bonn, Baden-Baden and Nuremberg. We now followed up on all travel agents, provided additional information on our destination and offered further support with their futures sales efforts for our destination.

Discover (formerly “Eurowings Discover”) is the subsidiary airline of Germany’s national carrier Lufthansa. EWD serves the Tampa Bay Airport (TPA), Orlando International (MCO), and Fort Myers International (RSW) from Frankfurt (FRA), accounting for over 15 flights a week in the high season. It is an important route for the German speaking market, making the region one of their top three ports of entry. Eurowings Discover is the only airline offering non-stop service from Germany to Tampa Bay.

- For the Visit Florida promotion with America Journal we received the final draft of the magazine insert as well as the 2-page advertorial for review. In coordination with VSPC, we decided to provide the Visit USA team with new texts that better represent St. Pete/Clearwater's attractions. The promotion was concluded in June 2023.
- We sent promotional materials from Visit St. Pete/Clearwater to travel agents who are interested in further information. Inquiries have also reached us via the website of the Visit USA Committee Germany.
- VSPC and KMS discussed dates for a potential sales mission to Central Europe. We agreed that we may consider a mission in the next fiscal year.
- KMS completed several conference calls with Visit Tampa's representative in Germany in order to discuss joint opportunities for non-competing promotional activities.
- In cooperation with VSPC and Brand USA, we continued running a multiple months long advertising campaign with the travel consumer magazine Connoisseur Circle. In April, we forwarded the first invoice from the publishing house to Brand USA and requested additional information and back-up documents from the publishing house for Brand USA. The promotion includes media coverage provided by the magazine, as well as advertorials and digital marketing opportunities. It includes multi-level promotions and will run until fall 2023. Brand USA will support the promotion.
- We attended the monthly conference call with Brand USA in June in order to discuss upcoming promotions and promotional opportunities.
- We alerted VSPC about the spreading news coverage about a malaria outbreak in Florida. Since outbreak was reported by some of the largest media outlets in Central Europe – including nationwide TV stations and newspapers as well as leading travel trade media – we closely monitored the media and sent reports to VSPC. We also contacted Visit Florida in Germany to find out if they were planning to issue any statements.
- We attended the bi-weekly coordination calls with VSPC in June in order to synchronize our activities and to discuss upcoming promotions.

Austria

- After our meetings with Reise Aktuell, Eurotours International and TIP/Profi Reisen Verlagsgesellschaft at ipw 2023 in San Antonio, TX, we started following up with all companies, discussed their tourism development opportunities for St. Pete / Clearwater as well as media opportunities to promote our destination in the Austrian market.
- We drafted the newsletter „Spectacular beaches, waves, and fireworks” and submitted it to VSPC for approval. After we received approval, we distributed it to approximately 800 travel agencies and tour operators in Austria.
- KMS received and reviewed the following marketing proposals from various Austrian tour operators and travel related companies and started evaluating them:
 - Profi Reisen Verlagsgesellschaft offers Visit St. Pete/Clearwater an advertorial for a USA magazine in 2024, scheduled to be published in November 2023.
 - Travelbuzz offers to include Visit St. Pete/Clearwater in its digital travel guide.

Switzerland

- In coordination with FTI Touristik we conducted a travel agent fam trip to our destination from June 14-16, 2023. The fam trip was attended by eight top selling Swiss travel agents and two FTI escorts. VSPC drafted a very attractive program to highlight our destination during the fam trip and we assisted the tour operator with all their specific requests. We also collected all waivers from the participants and forwarded them to VSPC and we communicated with the host hotel for the fam and prepaid all rooms for the group. FTI Touristik is one of the largest tour operators for travels to the U.S. and to Florida and the fam trip is a very valuable opportunity for us to highlight our destination to top-selling agents in the lucrative Swiss travel market and to strengthen our relationship with FTI Touristik.
- KMS received and reviewed the following marketing proposals from various Swiss tour operators and travel related companies and started evaluating them:
 - *FTI Switzerland* will organize an exclusive travel agent training event close to the Zurich Airport on November 28, 2024. About 40 top agencies from Switzerland are expected to participate. Partners will receive an own stand.

- *Knecht Reisen*: As one of its highlights in their marketing calendar, Knecht Reisen offered a participation in their popular 'Reisewelten' 2023 event at their headquarters in Windisch, Switzerland. The show includes two full consumer days and a travel trade promotion from November 02-04, 2023.
- After our meetings with go2travel, Knecht Reisen, the Visit USA Committee Switzerland and Hotelplan Suisse at ipw 2023 in San Antonio, TX, we started following up with all companies, discussed their tourism development opportunities for St. Pete / Clearwater as well as media opportunities to promote our destination in the Swiss market.
- We drafted the newsletter „Spectacular beaches, waves, and fireworks“ and submitted it to VSPC for approval. After we received approval, we distributed it to approximately 400 travel agencies and tour operators in Switzerland.
- We conducted a conference call with Knecht Reisen regarding our joint marketing campaign. Since the tour operator was not able to fulfill its obligations in regard to our attendance at a travel consumer show as well as a double page in their brochure for 2023, they offered us the complimentary participation in their Reisewelten B2C and B2B event in November 2023 as well as the complimentary inclusion in a designated Florida supplement with a circulation of 10,000 copies.

The Netherlands

- On the occasion of meetings held by the Tampa Bay Airport with airlines in Amsterdam as well as Amsterdam Schiphol Airport in June 2023, KMS drafted a detailed market overview of the Dutch and Benelux travel markets. We submitted the report to VSPC and the TPA Airport.
- In coordination with VSPC and the Dutch tour operator ustravel.nl, we organized an individual fam trip to our destination from June 23-24, 2023. The fam trip was attended by team members of the operator. VSPC drafted a very attractive program to highlight our destination during the fam trip and we assisted the tour operator with all their specific requests. We have scheduled a follow-up call at the beginning of July 2023 to discuss a potential marketing cooperation with the operator.
- After our meetings with Verkeersbureaus.info, ustravel.nl, Aeroglobe International, America Magazine, AmerikaNu.nl, Travel Time and Doets Reizen at ipw 2023 in San Antonio, TX, we started following up with all companies, discussed their tourism development opportunities for St. Pete / Clearwater as well as media opportunities to promote our destination in the Dutch market.

- We drafted the newsletter „Spectacular beaches, waves, and fireworks“ and submitted it to VSPC for approval. After we received approval, we distributed it to approximately 750 travel agencies and tour operators in the Netherlands.
- KMS received and reviewed the following marketing proposals from various Dutch tour operators and travel related companies and started evaluating them:
 - *USA/Canada Experience* takes place in Zeist, Netherlands on November 02-03, 2023. At the travel trade event sellers meet with buyers to provide workshops and trainings for travel agents.
 - *Reisbeurs* takes also place in Zeist, Netherlands on November 04-05, 2023. The event is the largest consumer travel show focusing on the U.S. and Canada in the Netherlands.
 - *Ustravel.nl* offers social media activities, email marketing and google advertising. The Dutch tour operator specializes in trips to the U.S. The company offers various types of travel, including packaged tours, round trips, city tours, and customized FIT travels. Themed trips range from music, culture, or nature travels.
 - The Dutch company *Target Travel Marketing* send a proposal for attending the largest Dutch travel show *Vakantiebeurs* from January 11-14, 2024. At *Vakantiebeurs*, visitors can explore a wide range of travel destinations, tour operators, travel agencies, accommodation providers and other travel related services. The event offers an opportunity for travelers to gather information, seek inspiration and book their vacations.
 - *Verkeehrsbureau.info*. offers social media activities, email marketing and SEA promotion. The company is an online platform that connects destinations with travelers. Their channels reach Dutch speaking travelers by inspiring them with engaging content about worldwide destinations.
- We were in contact with several additional tour operators and other industry partners in the Netherlands to promote our destination and to request marketing proposals for potential marketing co-ops with them.

Belgium

- After our meetings with USA Travel Consultants and Joker Reizen at ipw 2023 in San Antonio, TX, we started following up with all companies and discussed their tourism development opportunities for St. Pete / Clearwater to promote our destination in the Belgian market.
- We received and reviewed a proposal from the Visit USA Committee Belgium for a travel trade workshop in Wearbom, Belgium on October 12, 2023.
- We received and reviewed a proposal for the *Brussels Holiday Fair*.
- We drafted the newsletter „Spectacular beaches, waves, and fireworks” and submitted it to VSPC for approval. After we received approval, we distributed it to large number of travel agencies and tour operators in Belgium and Luxembourg.

Poland

- After our meeting with U.S. Commercial Service office in Poland at ipw 2023 in San Antonio, TX, we requested joint travel trade, consumer and media promotional opportunities to promote our destination in the Polish market.
- We drafted the newsletter „Spectacular beaches, waves, and fireworks” and submitted it to VSPC for approval. After we received approval, we distributed it to large number of travel agencies and tour operators in Poland.

Czech Republic

- After our meeting with Profi Tips at ipw 2023 in San Antonio, TX, we started following up with the company and discussed their tourism development opportunities for St. Pete / Clearwater to promote our destination in the Czech market.
- We drafted the newsletter „Spectacular beaches, waves, and fireworks” and submitted it to VSPC for approval. After we received approval, we distributed it approximately 800 travel agencies and tour operators in the Czech Republic.

Hungary

- We drafted the newsletter „Spectacular beaches, waves, and fireworks“ and submitted it to VSPC for approval. After we received approval, we distributed it to large number of travel agencies and tour operators in Hungary.
- After our meetings with Proko Travel, Haris Travel Club, the Discover America Committee and Mauri Travel Services at ipw 2023 in San Antonio, TX, we started following up with all companies and discussed their tourism development opportunities for St. Pete / Clearwater to promote our destination in the Hungarian market.

3. Status of Sales Activities and Promotions

Advertising Promotion with Connoisseur Circle (until October 2023)

- In cooperation with VSPC and Brand USA, we started a multiple months long advertising campaign with the travel consumer magazine Connoisseur Circle. The promotion includes media coverage provided by the magazine, as well as advertorials and digital marketing opportunities. It started in January 2023 and will be concluded in fall 2023. Brand USA will support the promotion.

Brand USA's Fourth of July presentation in Frankfurt (July 04, 2023)

- On the occasion of the celebration of the Independence Day, we received an invitation of Brand USA's office in Germany. We will represent Visit St. Pete/Clearwater at the event.

Airline Meetings and Sales Calls in Frankfurt, Germany (July 04-05, 2023)

- In order to discuss joint promotional activities as well as other business opportunities, we will conduct meetings with airlines serving the Tampa Bay Airport in Frankfurt, Germany.

Visit USA Switzerland Road Show 2023, Switzerland (September 19-21, 2023)

- We will promote St. Pete / Clearwater at the Visit USA Switzerland road show from September 19-21, 2023.

Visit USA Belgium Workshop, Belgium (October 12, 2023)

- We promote St. Pete / Clearwater at the Visit USA Committee Belgium's travel trade workshop in Wearbom, Belgium in order to train Belgium travel agents about our destination.

Visit USA Halloween Event (October 31, 2023)

- We will promote St. Pete / Clearwater at the Visit USA Committee (VUSA) Germany's Halloween event in Frankfurt. Between 100 to 130 travel agents from all over Germany are expected. VUSA offers a 15-minutes workshop package and a plenary presentation package followed by a Halloween party.

USA-Canada Experience, The Netherlands (November 02-03, 2023)

- A B2B event is a combined two days long workshop for media, tour operators and travel agents. During the two days there will be a marketplace where the American and Canadian suppliers meet the Dutch tour operators, media, travel agents and reservation staff operating in the Dutch market.
- Planned to occur immediately prior to World Travel Market in London, this program provides American and Canadian PMO's, DMO's, Airline partners and supplier partners with an opportunity to inform and educate the Dutch travel trade as well as meeting directly with product managers and media.

USA & Canada Reisbeurs, The Netherlands (November 04-05, 2023)

- For the 11th time this largest North America travel fair will be organized for consumers as a dedicated travel show for North American suppliers.
- Location the USA & Canada travel show will take place at a central location in the middle of the country to allow easy accessible by car and train.
- Detailed information can be found at www.usacanadareisbeurs.nl.
- There will be product presentations of 20 minutes so that we can present our destination to potential travelers in the Netherlands.

Reisewelten (November 02-04, 2023)

- As part of our multi-channel co-operation with the Swiss tour operator Knecht Reisen, we will participate in the tour operators day-long shows designated to consumers (November 02-03, 2023) and travel trade professionals (November 04, 2023).

The tour operator welcomes over 50 partners and specialists from all over the world to its travel center in Windisch, Switzerland. In over 35 travel presentations on a wide variety of destinations, interested parties will learn news about the exhibiting destinations.

Visit USA Event in Vienna, Austria (November 08, 2023)

- We will promote St. Pete / Clearwater to approximately 100-120 travel agents through individual training sessions, a marketplace as well as a networking dinner will help Austrian travel agents to sell our destination to potential travelers.

Nordamerikatage in Hamburg, Germany (November 10-11, 2023)

- We will promote St. Pete / Clearwater at consumer event “*Nordamerikatage*” in *Hamburg, Germany*. The event will be organized by the Hamburg based tour operator *CRD International* and it will be planned as a platform for DMOs and other travel related partners to promote their destinations and services to potential travelers to the U.S. and Canada, travel agencies and the media. For this year’s event, CRD plans destination presentations and workshops, show cooking and culinary delights, networking opportunities and more. The operator expects about 8,000 visitors to attend the event.

Vakantiebeurs, The Netherlands (January 11-14, 2024)

- We will promote our destination at the Netherlands’ largest consumer shows for tourism and leisure. At *Vakantiebeurs*, visitors can explore a wide range of travel destinations, tour operators, travel agencies, accommodation providers and other travel related services. The event offers an opportunity for travelers to gather information, seek inspiration and book their vacations.

Travel consumer show ABF in Hannover, Germany (January 31-February 04, 2024)

- In cooperation with the tour operator *America Unlimited* we will attend the travel consumer show *ABF Hannover 2024*. More than 100,000 consumers will be expected to visit the show. *ABF Hannover* is a show for leisure travel, camping, caravanning, sports, outdoor activities and other travel related activities. The show attracts both trade visitors and consumers, providing a platform for exchanging information, discovering new products, and planning leisure activities and travels. *America Unlimited* offered us a booth participation to promote St. Pete / Clearwater.

Further sales activities and promotions will be added after approval.

4. Public Relations Activities

Please see our separate PR Activity Plan for an overview of all our public relations and media relations activities in June 2023.

5. Market Updates

Travel and Economic News

This is what makes spontaneous vacationers tick

According to a Yougov survey, 22 percent of German consumers are planning a summer vacation but have not yet booked it. Among the late bookers are mainly middle-income people from urban environments with higher educational qualifications.

77 percent of spontaneous vacationers said they had a passion for travel, according to the survey of nearly 19,000 consumers. At 47 percent, a German-originally higher proportion of them than in the general population (34%) are influenced by newspaper and magazine articles in their choice of travel. Also disproportionately represented are intensive users of social media channels, at 37 percent (total: 26%).

The destinations considered by late bookers include France (25% vs. 19%), Sweden (21% vs. 15%) and Turkey (17% vs. 12%) with disproportionate frequency; and thus two classic individual travel destinations and one predominantly package tourism destination.

(Source: www.reisevor9.de)

German economy to shrink by 0.4 percent in 2023 according to Ifo

German economic output will shrink by 0.4 percent this year, according to the Ifo Institute's forecast. In spring, a decline of 0.1 percent had been expected. Next year, the researchers see an increase of 1.5 percent, previously they had expected plus 1.7 percent. Inflation is expected to fall from 6.9 percent in 2022 to 5.8 percent this year and then to 2.1 percent in 2024. "The German economy is only very slowly working its way out of recession," Ifo's head of economic forecasting Timo Wollmershäuser said. Due to high inflation, Ifo expects private consumption to fall by 1.7 percent this year. It is not expected to increase again by 2.2 percent until 2024.

(Source: www.reisevor9.de)

Iata: Air traffic continues to grow in April

According to the International Air Transport Association (Iata), passenger traffic demand continued to develop strongly in April. According to the report, total traffic increased by 45.8 percent year-on-year. Globally, traffic reached 90.5 percent of pre-Covid levels.

According to the data, aircraft utilization was 81.3 percent, just 1.8 percentage points below pre-pandemic levels. With a 2.9 percent increase over April 2019 results, current levels show continued growth, Iata added.

International traffic increased 48.0 percent compared to April of last year. In terms of growth in international markets, airlines in the Asia-Pacific region are leading the recovery. Global domestic traffic increased 42.6 percent in April compared to a year ago, fully recovering from the global average.

(Source: www.airliners.de)

No problems in air traffic at the start of the NATO exercise

The NATO air exercise Air Defender 23 did not cause any major delays at Frankfurt and Berlin airports when it started on Monday. The Brandenburg Ministry of Transport, the airport association ADV and the air traffic controllers' union GdF had previously warned of massive effects of the NATO exercise, which involves some 10,000 soldiers and 250 aircraft.

(Source: www.reisevor9)

Influencers s. advertiserts – why travel marketing is transforming

Forget the glossy brochures with their stock images of paradise – today's travelers want a glimpse of the real deal to inspire their next trip. That's why they so often turn to the forum that can truly offer the authenticity they seek – social media.

When seeking inspiration, most travelers (52%) tend to default to their friends and family. After all, it's hard not to be enchanted by the pictures in a friend's slideshow when they are accompanied by stories of travel adventures, success and mysteries. Afterwards, many of these snapshots get posted to social media with the hope that they elicit similar feelings among others in their network. It makes sense then that social media is the next best source of travel inspiration (35%), already overtaking traditional channels including travel agents (29%), travel media publications (26%) and TV and film entertainment (25%). And who spends the most time on social media? Gen Z. Roughly 90% of Gen Z adults spend at least one hour on social media platforms every day, and close to half spend more than three – far more than older generations. With purchasing demographics getting progressively younger, marketers within the travel sector will need to switch up their tactics to meet younger classes of travel enthusiasts on their digital turf.

Organic content

A travel ad on a pamphlet or a billboard can never offer the same interpersonal, trustworthy insight that a friend, or even a well-liked influencer can. Indeed, the value of user-generated content (UGC) – text-based posts, pictures and videos – lies in its ability to convey experiences that feel truthful and authentic to the target audience.

A recent marketing analytics study found that browsing through travel-related UGC significantly influences potential tourists' desire to visit those same destinations. The results align with advertising research from 2018 that revealed 84% of Gen Z travelers find someone else's vacation photos and video posts to be particularly influential.

UGC, unlike traditional marketing campaigns, can portray the lesser-known areas and hidden gems of any destination through a perspective that resonates with viewers – one that enables them to envision what visiting these places would really feel like. And as the data suggests, travel-related UGC is increasingly a deciding factor. Accordingly, marketers would do well to invest in pushing organic, user-generated promotional materials when possible.

For travel marketers to expand their customer base – particularly into younger demographics – they should consider fostering UGC on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, the latter of which has become the most used platform among Gen Z. Securing their attention can be accomplished, for example, by forging partnerships with influencers so they can generate additional value for businesses as brand ambassadors.

Value matchup

Not only does travel-based content need to hit that sweet spot between authenticity and eye candy, it also needs to cater to the progressive values younger generations overwhelmingly embrace. In part due to Gen Z's general tendency to support businesses that fall into the category of ethical and sustainable tourism – those that openly support equality, diversity, or climate-friendly causes, among others – the sustainable tourism market is projected to grow by \$335 billion throughout the next four years.

It is a marketing gold mine – in order to make their trips even more impactful and fulfilling, today's consumers increasingly want to make educated purchasing decisions with businesses they feel share their values. As such, companies in tourism areas should provide information beyond basic perks and amenities and strive to include details marketers can highlight in their digital content to appeal to specific traveler sensibilities. For instance, a bus or rail company could emphasize their lines' safety rating for solo female travelers. In that same vein, businesses could divulge any charitable efforts or disclose any initiatives they may support for struggling local communities, to name a few.

Creating UGC that highlights these various ethical values will not only ensure steady satisfaction among consumers, but marketers will also likely see greater returns over time – especially as Gen Z and subsequent tech-savvy generations dominate more and more of the consumer market.

What's your story?

Organic UGC that spotlights lesser-known areas and humanizes various cultural activities paints a picture of international and domestic travel in a way that younger viewers find more relatable and accessible than standard ads.

Investing in value-oriented influencers who back sustainable-minded brands will go a long way towards reaching this demographic. Ultimately, marketers who leverage major social media platforms will be able to tell these compelling stories so that travelers will want to be a part of them. Riding a chicken bus instead of a taxi or taking up accommodations in a tricked out treehouse rather than a five-star hotel may not be the "standard" option when planning a trip, but it can make for an even more thrilling story.

(Source: www.phocuswire.com)

America Unlimited expects prices for USA travel to fall

Timo Kohlenberg, managing director of America Unlimited, assumes that the last clearly risen prices for vacation in the USA will fall at the latest to the year end again. The boss of the North America specialist counts on price declines of up to 15%. First indications of it, would give it already today, say Kohlenberg. Thus the zenith with the rented car prices risen recently around the two and a half-fold is already exceeded. The prices for cars and campers are already now again slightly declining.

The bottom line is that the cost of vacation travel in the U.S. has risen by about one-third in the last year and a half since the borders were reopened, according to estimates by America Unlimited. "Price drivers, in addition to rental cars and RVs, are primarily regions with high recreational value such as national parks and coastal areas, says Kohlenberg, "while prices for city vacations have remained stable due to a lack of business travelers."

USA boom despite high prices

The fact that business with travel to North America is booming despite the significant increase in costs is surprising even to the experts. Kohlenberg: "We are currently experiencing a bit of a topsy-turvy world. Prices have reached an all-time high, while at the same time the high quality standard of service is declining as a result of the shortage of skilled workers, which is also noticeable in the U.S., and yet people are still running us ragged."

Even the rather strong dollar exchange rate, always a brake on demand in past years, no longer seems to play a role. "The desire to travel to the States is clearly greater than the frustration with the price. Those who can afford it will travel, no matter what the cost," Kohlenberg notes. But falling prices would also make U.S. travel affordable again for the broad middle class and further boost demand, he believes.

After America Unlimited had already exceeded the pre-Corona year 2019 by 30% in 2022, the sales curve continues to point steeply upwards. Currently, the specialist from Hanover is recording sales growth of around 40% again.

(Source: www.tip-online.at)

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