

Tourism Industry Conference Raises Important Issues



Tourism is the world's fastest growing industry and it is estimated that its financial input reaches around \$7.2 billion annually. It is clearly of utmost importance to everybody involved in the tourism industry to follow certain trends and changes in the market in order to succeed in the future. There were 350 participants at a recent tourism industry conference held in Wellington, New Zealand, designed to analyse new tendencies and set priorities for the future.

It was stressed that tour operators must comply with changing market trends and developments. The main influences for change were said to be increased usage of the internet, a decline in package holiday demand, the tendency to combine business travel with travel for pleasure and the popularity of low-cost airlines. Internet sales have so far this year reached \$31.5 billion, with the British and the Germans being the main users. On the basis of this information, emphasis was placed on the significance of technology.

A further issue raised was of changing geographical priorities, with China having been singled out as a hugely significant country in the tourism industry. China is now the number 1 country in Asia for tourism, number 4 in the world for outbound tourism and number 5 in the world in terms of revenue. It was therefore emphasised that destinations which Chinese people travel to must make special efforts to accommodate for their Asian visitors.

The conference predicted surprisingly that low-cost airlines are unlikely to be sustainable. Whilst their popularity was recognised, attention was simultaneously drawn towards the so-called "real" costs, for example carbon emissions and decline in the level of service.

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