

The Travel Tech Show at WTM and Amadeus Round Table Talks Launched with Successful Focus on the Luxury Sector



The luxury travel sector is failing to make use of the opportunities the internet offers, reveals a new series of round table talks involving the best and brightest minds in travel.

The comments were made at the first of four round table conversations focusing on travel technology and which have been organised following a new partnership The Travel Tech Show at WTM and Amadeus.

While the first round table discussion allowed for a frank exchange of opinions, those attending agreed that the internet provides a wealth of opportunities for the luxury sector, which sometimes falls short in using them.

On Holiday Group Chief Executive Steve Endacott, who chaired the discussion, pointed out that 50% of all consumers in the developed world have no idea where they want to go on holiday when they start researching online.

He added: "You go to any luxury website in the UK and you have to say what dates you want to go on and where you want to go."

However, African Safari Specialist CEO Julian Asher argues at the top end of the market this remained unnecessary as luxury consumers are influenced by different factors to ordinary travellers. He added: "We do have a website like everybody else but at our end of the market what people care about most is a personal recommendation from someone they know."

SpaFinder Europe Managing Director John Bevan added the luxury market remains price sensitive, meaning while travellers may not know where they want to go on holiday, deals that offer good value and are easily booked can be the most effective way of converting consumers into customers.

Meanwhile Amadeus Director of Marketing Rob Sinclair-Barnes said only through understanding a consumer's past could you meet their demands for luxury products effectively now. He added: "If luxury is in the eye of the beholder then you need to understand the previous booking history of that person and see what they've done before."

However, Perfect Weddings Abroad Director Danny Waine, said thanks to a strong focus on the medium, 95% of his company's leads come from the internet.

Giles Parnwell, Director of Distribute Travel claimed the biggest problem with luxury operators is there is a dearth of data.

"We distribute data and we have not got any luxury operators," he said. "At the moment you type in luxury holidays [into Google] and you have to go one by one through each branded site. There's no

portal.”

Andrew Pozniak, Vice President Sales and Marketing for luxury operator Kuoni, said the firm has sought to redefine what success looked like online.

He said until recently the key metric was how many bookings came from online but that conversion rates were very low at around 5%.

“On the back of that, because we know booking online was never going to happen in big numbers we have gone through a process of stripping out access to our booking engine and being explicit with customers that we want them to call or visit a shop or fill out a form.”

The Travel Tech Show at WTM Head of Marketing and Communications Micaela Juarez said: “By teaming up The Travel Tech Show at WTM with Amadeus to host these events we have created a powerful brand which will inevitably attract industry leaders from many of the different fields in travel.”

Further topics to be covered in the months leading up to World Travel Market 2013 include Family and Cruise; City Breaks and Business Travel; and Responsible, Adventure and Disabled Travel. The conversation at each will also be distilled into white papers which will be made available to members of the travel industry.

About World Travel Market

World Travel Market, the leading global event for the travel industry, is the must-attend four-day business-to-business exhibition for the worldwide travel and tourism industry.

Almost 48,000 senior travel industry professionals, government ministers and international press, embark on ExCeL - London every November to network, negotiate and discover the latest industry opinion and trends at WTM.

WTM, now in its 34th year, is the event where the travel industry conducts and concludes its deals.

WTM 2012 generated £1,860 million of travel industry contracts, revealed independent research by Fusion Communications.

WTM is owned by the world’s leading events organiser Reed Exhibitions (RE), which organises a portfolio of other travel industry events including Arabian Travel Market and International Luxury Travel Market.

In 2012, RE held more than 460 events in 36 countries bringing together more than seven million people from around the world generating billions of dollars in business.

Reed Travel Exhibitions

Reed Travel Exhibitions (RTE) is the world’s leading provider of exhibitions in the travel and tourism industry. Its wide-ranging portfolio of events around the globe covers leisure travel, luxury travel, meetings, incentives and business travel, as well as golf, ski and spa travel.

The 19 events are; World Travel Market (WTM), World Travel Market Latin America (WTM Latin America), Arabian Travel Market (ATM), International French Travel Market Top Resa (IFTM),

International Golf Travel Market (IGTM), International Ski Travel Market (ISTM), International Luxury Travel Market (ILTM), International Luxury Travel Market Asia (ILTM Asia), International Luxury Travel Market Americas (ILTM Americas), International Luxury Travel Market Africa (ILTM Africa), International Luxury Travel Market Japan (ILTM Japan), International Luxury Travel Market Spa (ILTM Spa), Asia-Pacific Incentives & Meetings Expo (AIME) (owned by Melbourne Convention + Visitors Bureau), Global Exhibition for Incentive, Business Travel, and Meetings (EIBTM), Gulf Incentive, Business Travel and Meetings (GIBTM), Americas Incentive, Business Travel and Meetings (AIBTM), China Incentive, Business Travel and Meetings (CIBTM), India Incentive, Business Travel and Meetings (IBTM India) and Business Travel Market.

September 2013 will see the launch of IBTM India in Mumbai, India, and another exciting launch in the ski travel sector, with International Ski Travel Market in March 2014.

RTE is a business unit of Reed Exhibitions.

About Reed Exhibitions

Reed Exhibitions is the world's leading events organizer, with over 500 events in 39 countries. In 2011 Reed brought together six million active event participants from around the world, generating billions of dollars in business. Today Reed events are held throughout the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, Asia Pacific and Africa and organized by 33 fully staffed offices. Reed Exhibitions serves 44 industry sectors with trade and consumer events and is part of the Reed Elsevier Group plc, a world-leading publisher and information provider and a FTSE 100 company.

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