



## **UK OFFICE 2007/08 SALES PLAN**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Based on provisional figures for 2006 released by Visit Florida it seems overall visitor numbers to Florida are up by 1.2% compared to 2005. However UK visitor numbers to Florida are down by nearly 5%. It is estimated that a total of 1,416,000 UK travellers visited Florida in 2006 and of these nearly 600,000 overnight guests visited the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area.

The UK economy continues to perform reasonably well and the British pound appreciated sharply against the U.S. dollar in 2006, gaining a full 12.5 percent to reach a value of £1.00 = \$1.96 USD in December, its highest level in 14 years.

Despite high oil prices, which had made almost all forms of transportation more expensive in 2006, transportation overall has become much more affordable, most notably due to the advent of low-cost airlines and increased internet usage, both of which have encouraged competition and made booking travel more convenient and efficient. These factors will almost certainly continue to spur demand for international travel and tourism both in the short- and long-term. A recent in-depth study by the Office of Travel & Tourism in the US Department of Commerce predicts the UK will retain its position as the largest overseas market to the USA, as well as being (by far) the UK's favourite long haul holiday destination. UK Visitors to the USA are forecast to grow by 25% over the next four years, rising from 4.34 million in 2007 to 5.41 million in 2010.

The UK office's 2007/08 Sales Plan is designed to maintain St. Petersburg/Clearwater's identity and grow its market share in increasingly difficult and competitive market conditions. It aims to do this in two ways. Firstly by focusing on the area's appeal as a family destination. Secondly the plan also focuses on the need to highlight the more upmarket side to St Petersburg/Clearwater and its extensive activities, to broaden its appeal to couples who might currently be drawn to other areas of Florida.

## **UNITED KINGDOM:**

### **GOAL:**

**To maintain the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area's position as the second most popular Florida destination for the UK holidaymaker**

### **TRAVEL TRADE:**

#### **STRATEGIES:**

Exhibit at World Travel Market and attend Pow Wow and Florida Huddle

Ongoing tour operator sales in the UK to develop and enhance existing business, educate these operators and their reservations' staff and to identify new sales opportunities

Work with the tour operators to ensure that the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area has a strong, high and up-to-date profile within their brochures

Conduct personal sales calls to targeted tour operators not currently working with the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area with the purpose of obtaining inclusion in future programmes

Provide assistance and information to special interest tour operators, incentive/conference organisers and retail travel agencies, including advice on itineraries, receptives, specific product and niche activities within the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area.

Follow-up calls and correspondence to be made on all new leads in order to secure new business.

Extend invitations to qualified companies/individuals to participate in site visits at any time of year in order to familiarize existing accounts with the tourism infrastructure or develop new business.

Source and initiate co-op advertising campaigns with tour operators, targeting trade and consumer.

Regular presentations will be made to tour operator product teams and reservations staff to update them on the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area and the ways to sell the destination.

Work diligently with the receptive operators to maximise their product offering.

Work with the tour operators and their on-the-road sales staff to train their retail travel agents. We would also work with the Regional Managers at the multiple travel agencies such as Thomson, MyTravel, Thomas Cook, ATRAC and Co-op Travelcare again to filter training through to counter-staff levels.

Initiate a series of retail agency merchandising calls to 600 independent retail travel agencies in January 2008, including placement of window displays.

Produce a quarterly newsletter sent to all tour operators and 7,000+ retail travel agents (using the services of BP Travel Services or Selling Long Haul), to reach UK travel agents and further distributed with Scottish Travel and Irish Travel Agent News

Participate in tour operator organized training seminars where appropriate.

Seek out opportunities for in-store promotions with certain multiples and miniple travel agencies such as Thomas Cook.

Run a series of trade promotions/competitions within the travel trade publications in conjunction with an airline or tour operator partner to create further awareness of the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area

Co-ordination of an annual Sales Mission targeting tour operators and media in key cities. The Mission would be organised in conjunction with an airline, and would be dependent on support from Pinellas County industry partners.

Maintain membership and co-ordinate promotional activity with the UK Visit USA Committee.

Maximise the opportunities available via Visit Florida such as their advisory lunches, sales missions, training sessions and fam trips.

Work closely with British Airways to promote its Tampa service.

Oversee the fulfilment contract

Operate a dedicated telephone line during office hours available to the trade and consumer and answered by a "live" person.

Work with the St. Petersburg/Clearwater International Airport to continue the process of persuading selected UK tour operators to operate charters into the airport.

## **CONSUMER:**

### **STRATEGIES:**

Exhibit at the 2 largest consumer holiday shows in the UK – Manchester and Glasgow. Communicate details of the destination to 120,000 consumers.

Provide supplies of the 2008 Visitor Guides for distribution to the public via all travel agencies who respond to the sales calls and all agencies who accept a window display.

Advise on ad placement and secure calls to action for any adverts placed to ensure tracking of responses and maximise return on investment.

Develop an ongoing strategy of meetings with tourism partners such as tour operators, airlines, attractions (eg Busch Gardens and Walt Disney World), partner destinations (eg Visit Florida) and travel trade publications to proactively seek co-op advertising opportunities.

Initiate promotions which can create awareness by targeting consumer affinity magazines, national restaurants and retailers with the correct brand values

Work with any tour operators involved in co-op marketing schemes to gain access to their databases for distribution of destination information.

Work with the UK PR representative to co-ordinate responses generated by articles placed in consumer publications.

## **IRELAND:**

### **GOAL:**

**Maintain the market share of the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area in the Irish Florida market.**

### **STRATEGIES:**

Attend the American Holidays Show in Dublin as part of the Florida's Beaches consortium

Include Dublin in the proposed sales mission.

Ensure that the Irish tour operators featuring Florida receive regular visits, updates and training for their reservations staff including fam trips to ensure comprehensive exposure of the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area in their 2008 brochures.

Participate in activities organised for the Irish Travel Trade by Visit Florida and the Irish Visit USA Committee.

Renew membership of the Irish Visit USA Committee in order to work with the entire membership in enhancing travel to the USA.

## **SCANDINAVIA:**

### **GOAL:**

**Continue to use the Florida's Beaches co-op marketing platform to develop trade and consumer awareness of the St Petersburg/Clearwater Area and thus enhance visitor numbers to the county.**

### **STRATEGIES:**

Exhibit at Reiseliv, Oslo, Norway; Matka, Helsinki, Finland; Ferie, Copenhagen, Denmark and TUR, Gothenburg, Sweden. Expose the destination to the 200,000 attendees at the shows.

Co-host senior tour operators at the annual TUR dinner. Anticipated attendance – 20 tour operator staff from Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

Provide in-house training for Scandinavian tour operator reservations staff.

Participate in travel agent training days, or consumer shows in Scandinavia mounted by tour operators and the Visit USA Committees.

Encourage tour operators/Visit USA Committees to initiate familiarisation tours from Scandinavia to the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area.

Renew membership of the Norwegian Visit USA Committee in the name of The St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area CVB.

Renew membership of the Denmark See America Committee in the name of Florida's Beaches.