

# **UK OFFICE**

## **NOVEMBER 2009 REPORT**

**Prepared by: Venessa Alexander**  
**UK Director**

### **TOUR OPERATORS**

Meeting held with the following tour operators at World Travel Market:

#### **Stella Travel**

Meeting held with Paul Celaschi, Product Manager. Overall their business to the US is 5% down but Florida is level and VSPC is showing a slight increase. They are maintaining their current product and will be participating on the pre-Huddle fam.

#### **Miki Travel**

Meeting held with Alex Law, Contractor. Miki Travel are a Japanese owned wholesaler who have recently branched in to the US. Alex is just starting to contract beach destinations in Florida and was asking for assistance in setting up site visits. Alex will be attending Florida Huddle.

#### **Thomas Cook Signature**

Meeting with Jill Townsin, Senior Product Manager. Thomas Cook are showing a 15% decrease to Florida overall and have reduced their VSPC product to 2 properties, one of which is the new Hyatt. They are stepping up their Florida marketing activity for 2010. Jill will be attending the pre-Huddle fam.

#### **Bon Voyage**

Meeting held with Karen Niven, Product Manager. Bon Voyage are 30% up overall to the US in terms of passenger numbers, having been 12% down in May. Their yield is level. VSPC is showing a 9% increase in terms of room nights.

#### **Funway Holidays**

Meeting with Lee Burns, Product Manager. Funway are showing an overall decline of 35% in room nights to Florida with a 10% decline to VSPC so we are gaining market share against other destinations. Product will remain the same and we will work with Funway on co-op marketing in 2010. We are currently awaiting a proposal from them. Lee will attend the pre-Huddle fam.

#### **Premier Holidays**

Meeting with Heidi Blades, Product Manager. VSPC is showing a 12% increase in room nights over the same period last year and Premier overall are doing well to the US with a 7% increase. Currently awaiting a marketing proposal from them for 2010 co-op. Heidi will attend the pre-Huddle fam.

#### **Virgin Holidays**

Meeting with Gill Standeven, Alison Leslie and Andy Reekie to discuss product and marketing. Virgin Holidays are having a mixed year after a strong start are finding the Fall

and Winter very tough. Business to Florida overall is flat including business to VSPC. To the end of October 2009, they had booked 17685 room nights to the area overall. 2010 will once again see a major marketing co-op initiative with Virgin Holidays and we are currently awaiting a proposal.

### **American Holidays**

Meeting with Dee Burdock, Product Manager. They are 40% down to Florida and 20% down to VSPC. Dee feels that the beaches are not aggressive enough in their pricing. They continue to receive a huge number of special offers from Orlando hotels but are not receiving the same from beach destinations. Dee will be attending the pre-Huddle fam trip.

### **Tour America**

Meeting with Mary McKenna, Managing Director. VSPC is substantially up for them in 2009 and they are seeing an overall increase in business to Florida and key US destinations. Mary is very keen to work on co-op in 2010 and negotiations are ongoing.

### **Expedia**

Meeting held with Vicki Wickens, Head of Media Solutions. She presented the results of the campaign that we ran from June – September. Results showed that room night stats were up 1% during the campaign period but room nights were down 10% before the campaign was launched. Currently awaiting a proposal for 2010 co-op.

### **TUI**

Meeting with Suzanne Harvey, Product Manager. Suzanne is very new to the job and did not have much information with her. We have requested and currently awaiting room night stats but she advised that Hayes and Jarvis and Jetsave are doing particularly well to VSPC. Suzanne will be attending the pre-Huddle fam.

### **Cosmos Holidays**

Meeting held with Mike Tyerman, Product & Marketing Manager Florida at Cosmos Holidays. Mike provided us with a list of marketing opportunities for 2010 but a decision was made at WTM to not commit to any activity at this stage due to low booking numbers and room night numbers.

### **Trailfinders**

Meeting held with Jane Poyser, Contractor North America at Trailfinders. A marketing proposal was presented to us including various advertising packages covering e-newsletters, TV Plasma screens in store etc.

Total room night stats to end of October 2009 = 1085

Total room night stats to end of October 2008 = 1480

### **Sunway Holidays**

A meeting took place with Tara Flanagan, Product Manager USA at Sunway Holidays. Tara presented us with a marketing plan of activity for February/March 2010 which included information on an outdoor campaign (DART Transportation advertisements and Street Posters, Press Releases etc) as well as details of a print campaign in the Irish press and e-newsletters. We were also advised that our brochure coverage will be expanded to two pages dedicated to St. Petersburg and two pages dedicated to Clearwater.

### **Shortbreaks**

A meeting was held with Noula Agapiou, Florida Product Manager at Short Breaks Ltd. Short Breaks are an online travel agent specialising in short European breaks, Eurostar etc and are launching a new online programme called 'Best of Florida' in the New Year selling Orlando, Miami and the Gulf Coast. We provided Noula with images, copy, key selling points, literature etc to assist in the production of their web pages as well as offering training for their call centre staff. Discussions are taking place to schedule a date in the near future.

### **Unbeatable Florida**

Meeting held with Ian Moore and Phil Evans (ex- Travel City Direct) of Unbeatable Florida, a new tour operation being launched in the UK in the New Year. Unbeatable Florida will be based primarily in Swansea with a team of 10 reservations staff in the call centre at launch. They will be based on-line to start, with a view to producing a brochure in the future. Provided Ian and Phil with images, copy, key selling points, literature etc to assist in the production of their web pages as well as offering training for their call centre staff in the future.

### **Destinations Of The World**

Met with Jonathan Couch, Contracts Manager USA, Canada & The Caribbean at Destinations of the World, a worldwide travel wholesaler/receptive, working on a purely business-to-business basis with travel agents and tour operators around the world. Jonathan is keen to get very competitive rates with our hoteliers and a sales lead will be sent shortly.

### **BA Holidays and BA**

Meeting with Anthony Potts and Sarah Boyett. Meeting focussed on BA's need for financial support for their Florida gateways. We advised that we had money set aside the past two years that was not used and that we could assign co-op money to them but on the basis that other Florida destinations also participated. Currently awaiting a proposal.

### **Chase Travel**

Meeting with Colleen Butler, Product Manager. Chase Travel are an Irish wholesaler who sell to the Irish travel trade and are online only. They claim to have 35,000 room nights to Orlando this year and are looking to expand to beach destinations. They contract through Hotelbeds but are interested in working with us on co-op. Currently awaiting a proposal.

### **TRADE LIAISON**

- Premier Holidays Shop Window Winners Dinner – We hosted the Managing Directors and sales staff from Spear Travel as well as Victoria Culling, Regional Sales Manager from Premier Holidays to their winners' dinner from the recent in-store promotion with Premier Holidays. Spear Travel in York won the prize of a meal for their branch after entering the 'Best Dressed Shop Window' competition.
- Travel Uni – Provided Travel Uni with 5 goody bags as prizes for their forthcoming competition campaign for travel agents titled 'Santa's Sack Giveaway Competition'. Every few days in the run up to Christmas Travel Uni will be e-mailing their trade database with offers of competitions. VSPC will have access to the database of agents that participate to utilise in the future.

- Latest figures to the end of August show the following with regards UK visitation:
  - UK visitation to the US was down 16.9% to the end of July.
  - UK visitation to Orlando was down 16.3% to the end of August.
  - However UK visitation to Pinellas was only down 2.1% to the end of August.

Pinellas County is gaining substantial market share of UK visitors to Florida and there remains huge potential for this to continue. By working closely with tour operators and direct with the consumer, we are raising the profile and visitation to the area.

- TUI/Thomson Florida – Discussions are taking place with TUI UK and Orlando Tourism to participate in a joint co-op in-store travel agent promotion during the month of February 2010 in 517 Thomson Retail Outlets. Discussions on-going.
- Discussions taking place with Orlando Tourism regarding a Thomas Cook co-op. Awaiting budget approval from Orlando.
- The Vacations Group e-newsletter Results – We have been advised that our recent destination focused e-newsletter with The Vacations group went to a total of 9,327 consumers on their database. Of those, 1,759 opened the newsletter with 469 consumers continuing onto the website. 77 brochure requests were also made but as yet no bookings have been tracked. The new Florida Vacations brochure will increase the number of properties on offer to our area from three to six in 2010.
- Visit USA Association UK Brochure Request Direct Mail Activity – Confirmed VSPC participation in the VUSA brochure request directory. Our brochures will reach 25,000 very targeted consumers in the key booking period of January 2010. The brochure request spaces include our Visitor's Guide front cover and up to 50 words of copy with the option to request our brochures directly.
- Sunway Promotion Results – Following on from our recent joint co-op marketing campaign, please find to follow the Sunway Holidays results:
  - The campaign included us appearing on the home page as a featured resort from 31<sup>st</sup> Aug – 13<sup>th</sup> Sep as well as a dedicated landing page advertising the area and special offers, colour advertisements with offers to our area in the Sunday Tribune and the Irish Mail on Sunday, faxes to the trade database as well as coverage in the monthly consumer e-newsletter.
  - Sunday Times ad appeared on Sept 6<sup>th</sup> and generated 10 calls
  - The Irish Mail on Sunday ad appeared on Sept 13<sup>th</sup> and generated 20 calls
  - The Irish Daily Star with featured article generated 30 calls - Article and print ad appeared on Sept 16<sup>th</sup>.
  - The newsletter was distributed to a database of over 35,000 subscribers and in response to this we received over 300 clicks with the Barefoot Madeira Beach receiving the most clicks which we feel was due to this being the most competitively priced package listed.
  - Total room night stats to beginning of November 2009 are 450 which is an increase on last year by over 80%.
  - Please note the Sunway Holidays USA product has only been on sale for the past three years and is still growing on an annual basis

- THG Holidays – A meeting has been scheduled with John Bowden at THG Holidays in Swansea during the month of January as they had to cancel our scheduled meeting at World Travel Market. Training sessions for their call centre staff has also been scheduled for the same day.
- Expedia Training – A ‘Train the Trainers’ training session was held via a conference call utilising our Power Point presentation with Expedia trainers based around the world. We presented to the trainers for a total of 30 minutes which also included a Q & A session at the end of the presentation. Details of numbers of staff trained and subsequent numbers to be trained is to be confirmed and will be reported once we have the information.
- Visit USA Committee Ireland – Provided the VUSA committee in Ireland information on weddings in the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area to include in their monthly e-newsletter (December edition) which is sent to both trade partners and consumers.
- Travel Counsellors Conference 2009 Manchester – Final preparations have been made and confirmed for the forthcoming Travel Counsellors Conference sponsorship. The conference takes place from 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> December at the Manchester Central where we will have the opportunity to meet and network with over 100 Travel Counsellors. The event includes a welcome reception, conference sessions, gala dinner & a trade show booth for us to promote the area of VSPC.
- Thomas Cook Signature Fam – The Thomas Cook Signature Familiarisation trip took place last month with 20 travel agents visiting and staying in the area as part of their annual Florida trip. The group also visited and stayed in Orlando and Tampa.
- The Irish Visit USA fam took place 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> November. Attendees included key Irish tour operator staff. Feedback has been excellent, the fam was extremely successful.
- Preparations for Holiday & Travel Show Manchester – Final preparations are being made for participation at the annual trade and consumer holiday show at the Manchester central in January. The Holiday Show lasts for a period of 3 days (Fri/Sat/Sun) and has an annual attendance of over 50,000 visitors.
- Florida’s Beaches Travel Shows – Preparations are being made for the forthcoming Scandinavian Travel Shows as part of the Florida’s Beaches Consortia. Travel shows we will be attending with our partners are Reisleiv in Norway, Matka in Finland, Ferie in Denmark, Swanson’s Tours Consumer day and TUR, both in Sweden.
- Results from the recent consumer promotion with Prezybox are as follows:
  - Total consumer impressions for the promotion was 560,000
  - Total click throughs to the VSPC landing page were just over 18,000
  - Total competition entrants were 11,5000 all of which opted in to receive more information

## **ENQUIRIES:**

Telephone/website enquiries for information and/or literature

82

## **MARKET INTELLIGENCE:**

29 October 2009 – Source Travel Weekly

### **Industry leaders threaten vocal campaign against APD**

Industry leaders are threatening an increasingly vocal campaign against Air Passenger Duty (APD) amid rising anger at the government. British Airways (BA) chief executive Willie Walsh warned the tax rises could cost the economy "billions", while travel management company Carlson Wagonlit Travel (CWT) forecast the extra APD would cost its clients £9 million a year. UK Board of Airline Representatives (BAR UK) chief executive Mike Carrivick summed up the industry-wide frustration, saying: "The government has made very clear it has no intention of changing." APD will increase from November 1 and switch to a four-band system based roughly on the distance from London to a destination's capital. The £40 duty on long-haul economy fares rises to £45 to the US, £50 to the Caribbean and £55 to Singapore. APD on short-haul flights will increase by £1 to £11. However, it is the further increases planned next November - to £60 to the US, £75 to the Caribbean and £85 beyond - that has united the industry in opposition. There is fury at a banding system that imposes more tax on a flight to the Caribbean than to the US West Coast or Hawaii, and at the double rate of tax on premium economy seats - the same as on business and first class. Walsh said: "There is no justification for the rises next year. We will be increasing our campaign. We have been campaigning quietly with the Treasury. The next stage will be much more vocal." He declined to give details of an impact assessment BA has passed to the Treasury, but said: "There will be billions lost to the UK economy. An increase of up to 112% in APD will have a negative impact on our business and on doing business in the UK." ABTA warned the increases will force airlines to pull out of regional airports, and repeated its call for a government rethink. The association has been co-ordinating the industry's anti-APD campaign since the summer.

02 November 2009 – Source Travelmole

### **Rising APD will cut number of foreign holidays – poll**

More than half of UK holidaymakers will cut the number of overseas holidays they take due to the rise in Air Passenger Duty. 13% said they would stop overseas holidaying all together due to the APD increase, which will see the tax increase by a minimum 10% this year before a further increase next November. A poll for World Travel Market shows that 52% of the 1,030 people asked, all of whom took a holiday this summer, would reduce their overseas breaks due to yesterday's increase in APD. Younger holidaymakers are most likely to reduce their holiday plans, with 60% and 53% of 16-24 and 25-40 year olds respectively stating the APD increase will have a negative impact on their flying habits. In a separate poll of 459 senior travel industry professionals, almost two-thirds (65%) said they would also reduce their holidaying due to the increase in APD. APD is being recalculated with the introduction of four bands, with passengers being charged according to how far they fly. For example, a family of four flying economy class to Egypt - a popular year round destination for UK travellers - will see their APD increase by £20 to £100, rising to £120 next November. Premium economy, business and first class holidaymakers to Australia will see APD increase by £30 to £110, rising to £170 in November 2010 - more than double the current £80 tax.

03 November 2009 – Source Travel Daily

### **Late beach sales surge**

Online travel agent On The Beach has reported a 40% year on year rise on sales of last minute flight and hotel deals to winter sun destinations during Oct. The strongest growth was for the Canary Islands, up 19%, just ahead of the Caribbean at 16% and the USA, which grew 11%. The company said holidaymakers were reacting to record low hotel occupancies and prices, with holidays also longer with an average stay of nine nights, compared to seven in 2008. Forward sales are also looking stronger, with summer 2010 up 20% year on year amid strong demand for Turkey and Spain as the UK economy slowly starts to emerge from recession. CEO Simon Cooper said he also expected Euro destinations to “fare much better next year.”

05 November 2009 – Source Travel Weekly

### **Cosmos Holidays to ask customers for early payment**

Cosmos Holidays will be asking direct customers to pay the balance of their holidays four weeks earlier than their standard eight weeks before departure. Cosmos mainstream managing director Stuart Jackson said the terms and conditions are being changed for the operator's summer 2010 second-edition brochures released at Christmas, requiring customers to settle the balance 12 weeks before departure. While he added agents have different periods of grace for making payments according to their commercial terms, he would not rule out asking agents to pay up earlier when their commercial deals are renegotiated. Nor does Jackson believe the move will deter customers from making early bookings thanks to the change in rules. He said: "I think most people booking online or through a travel agent on the high street are paying 12 weeks in advance anyway." Meanwhile, a TUI UK spokeswoman said the operator is still considering changing its own final balance collection from eight weeks before departure to 12 weeks. If the change is implemented, it would be undertaken before Christmas and wheeled out across all of the vertically integrated operator's brands. The spokeswoman said: "Our partners have been supportive of this move and we will advise them as soon as any decision is made so that they have enough time to make any necessary changes to their systems."

06 November 2009 – Source Travel Daily

### **Counsellors set to soar**

Travel Counsellors has announced further international expansion plans, after experiencing significant growth in its overseas operations over the last financial year. The company has seen sales from its offices in Ireland, the Netherlands, the US, South Africa, Australia and Canada soar 64%, with the overseas operations now accounting for about 35% of its Travel Counsellors. MD Steve Byrne confirmed that the group is “now looking at master franchise partners in countries such as India, China and Scandinavia,” and will be attending World Travel Market to discuss potential joint venture opportunities.

“Taking the Travel Counsellors’ concept overseas has without doubt been a great success and we are now in a position with our Phoenix dynamic packaging system to offer a global booking system in each market we operate in. “Currently our overseas expansion should add a further £100m plus in sales over the next 2-3 years and represent around 30% plus of business,” he said. During Oct Travel Counsellors saw UK sales up 16%, while worldwide figures rose 25% with 152 of the company’s agents experiencing their best ever month. 2010 summer holiday bookings are also strong, with Oct sales up 30% for bookings to travel between May and Aug next year.

06 November 2009 – Source Travelmole

### **BA faces further ‘essential’ cost cuts**

British Airways' boss Willie Walsh says further cost reduction is “essential” at the airline as it revealed record half year losses of almost £300 million. The pre-tax loss of £292 million for the six months to September 30 included an operating loss of £111 million against a profit of £140 million in the same period last year. Total revenue in six months was down 13.7%. BA recorded a loss of £401 million the previous year. The carrier is responding by cutting winter capacity by six per cent, reducing staff numbers by a further 3,000 by March 2010 and making “permanent changes” to the way the business is run. BA’s summer capacity was trimmed by 3.5 per cent and manpower was reduced by 1,900 through reduced overtime, increased part time working and targeted voluntary redundancy in order to trim costs by £400 million.

06 November 2009 – Source Travolution

### **Ebookers recovery gathers pace**

Ebookers has recorded “double-digit increases” in its hotel room nights booked and dynamic packaging transactions during the third quarter of 2009. The increase in hotel room nights was 43% year-on-year, according to Barney Harford, chief executive of ebookers’ parent company Orbitz Worldwide. The increase in dynamic packaging transactions was not quantified. Talking to analysts on Orbitz’ Q3 earnings call this week, Harford explained that ebookers was seeing the benefits of its migration onto Orbitz’ global platform. “We’re reducing our dependency on third parties to supply the inventory,” he said, “which was a relic of our relationship with GTA and Travelport. We’re now starting to optimise the relationship we have with the new hotels.” Another benefit from having ebookers on the same platform as Orbitz is that conversion rates have started to improve. Harford talked about the overall business being “better able to concentrate on the retail experience our customers have” now that the technical efforts of the company have moved away from working on the migration. Improving conversion rates is also part of another of Harford’s aims for the business, which is moving away from loss-making paid search initiatives and ramping up its SEO and CRM efforts. It dropped its spend marketing spend in the quarter by 44%. Another focus for Harford and Orbitz is hotels, although he insisted that ebookers will remain a full-service online travel agency. When asked how ebookers was doing compared with booking.com, Harford said that the two brands were different because “dynamic packaging and airline seats are a key part of what ebookers offers the market.” On these terms, he insisted that ebookers’ “competitive position has significantly improved”.

11 November 2009 – Source Travel Daily

### **Travel Republic not guilty**

Company did not breach ATOL regulations...

The Civil Aviation Authority’s (CAA) case against Travel Republic has failed, with the judge yesterday ruling that the travel company did not breach ATOL regulations. The test case was brought by the CAA after Travel Republic refused to take out an ATOL license, claiming it was selling flights and accommodation separately. ABTA issued a statement saying the failure of the CAA case “marks a low point in the administration of the travel industry’s system of financial protection”. “The uncertainty that surrounds this area has led to the initiation of expensive and ultimately futile proceedings against a prominent ABTA member,” said ABTA CEO, Mark Tanzer. “The case for reform of the ATOL scheme and the Package Travel Regulations is now irrefutable,” he added. Thomson and First Choice Holidays said they were “incredibly disappointed” at the outcome of the case. “Travel

Republic insist they don't sell packages, but if something looks like a duck, waddles like a duck and quacks like a duck, then it's a duck," said Thomson/First Choice Communications Director, Christian Cull. "The ATOL system is confusing enough for customers and we hope that those who book with Travel Republic will be made aware that their money is not financially protected in the way it is when they book with other businesses such as ourselves." He added that the judgment emphasises the need for governments to act both in the UK and Europe and provide the new regulatory framework the industry "so desperately needs".

11 November 2009 – Source Travel Daily

### **Global tourism slides 5.5% - WTTC**

The global travel industry will decline by 5.5% this year, according to the CEO of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), Jean-Claude Baumgarten. Speaking at WTM in London yesterday, he said

this year has seen the worst global downturn since the 1930s and that while there are early signs of recovery "activity in 2010 is likely to be flat at best". However updated WTTC forecasts continue to predict a long-term trend of 4% annual growth in the travel and tourism sector over the next decade, making the industry a "key engine of expansion in the longer term".

12 November 2009 – Source Travel Daily

### **Online spend set to sour**

A survey released yesterday at World Travel Market has shown that almost 90% of travel companies are planning to increase or maintain their online marketing spend. The study was produced by digital online content specialist Frommer's Unlimited, which surveyed 225 travel companies. More than half of those surveyed said they planned to increase budgets, while just over a third said they would maintain their current spending. Frommer's Unlimited General Manager, Joel Brandon Bravo, said the trends in this year's report were similar to those seen last year. "But we were particularly interested to see the changes in which people were planning to increase their spend and the increased focus on content such as multilingual, destination and unique content as well as social media marketing," Bravo commented. 22% of respondents said budgets for "traditional online advertising" would decrease next year, while search engine optimisation continues to be the top priority for web content budgets. The burgeoning social media area was set to see increased spending by more than 60% of the participants in the survey, while more companies were also looking to invest in multi-lingual content in the coming year.

13 November 2009 – Source Travel Daily

### **BA – Iberia agree merger**

British Airways (BA) and Iberia Airlines have reached a preliminary agreement for a merger, expected to be completed in late 2010. According to a BBC report, the merger, which must be approved by the European Commission, would see the Spanish carrier take a 45% stake and BA hold a 55% stake in the company. BA Chief Executive, Willie Walsh, will remain as the new company's CEO, while Iberia's Chairman Antonio Vazquez will also retain his position. "The merger will create a strong European airline well able to compete in the 21st Century," Walsh, was quoted saying. "Both airlines will retain their brands and heritage while achieving significant synergies as a combined force." The merged entity would create an airline with 419 aircraft flying to 205 separate destinations. It also has the potential to save the two airlines €400 million (US\$594 million) per year in costs, the report stated.

13 November 2009 – Source Travel Daily

### **Tongue-tied brits stick to English on holiday**

Over half of holidaymakers only speak English when abroad, according to a new survey by TravelSupermarket.com. Despite our love of travel, over half (59%) of Brits refuse to embrace local languages when on holiday, with over one in ten (12%) holidaymakers claiming there is no point making an effort to speak the local lingo as everyone speaks English. The survey also found that although 16% of consumers are still happy to holiday in foreign speaking destinations, nearly two thirds (62%) are embarrassed by their inability to speak another language. According to the research, almost half (45%) of those who holiday abroad said that locals have acted negatively towards them because they don't communicate in the local language. Despite this negative attitude towards Brits, a mere 4% of those surveyed said their ideal holiday would be in an English speaking country. French was revealed to be the most widely spoken language with over a quarter of respondents (27%) saying they could speak enough to order a meal or hire a car. Furthermore, one in three over 60s proved that they are more inclined than their younger counterparts to speak French, while tourists from Northern Ireland (36%) top the UK league table as the most linguistically savvy.

17 November 2009 – Source Travel Daily

### **Global airline capacity rises in November – OAG**

Global airline capacity for November 2009 shows positive growth compared to November 2008, according to OAG's monthly report on trends in the supply of airline flights and seats. The world's airlines have 285.4 million seats available this month, a rise of 3% over November 2008 levels. Global frequencies are up 1% year-on-year, with a total of 2.3 million flights for November 2009, despite an average North American frequency decline of 2%. The transatlantic market between North America and Western Europe shows an 8% decrease in capacity year on year, representing 434,467 fewer seats. Frequencies are down 10%, representing 2,144 fewer transatlantic flights for the month. Within Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East there have been a strong increase in frequencies. David Beckerman, Vice President of OAG Market Intelligence, said; "We continue to see growth in global capacity, even with major increases and decreases in hub frequency and capacity compared to a year ago, which would tend to indicate a shift in how travellers are being routed around the globe."

19 November 2009 – Source Travel Daily

### **Allbury secures TTA/Worldchoice deal**

Allbury Travel Group has announced that it has secured a commercial agreement with TTA and Worldchoice for departures up to and including 1 November 2009 until 30 April 2011. The new commercial agreement covers a range of travel brands within the Allbury Travel Group's portfolio, including specialist tour operators Libra Holidays, Argo Holidays and Jetlife.

24 November 2009 – Source Travelmole

### **'Mini recovery' in package holiday sales**

A 'mini recovery' in package holiday sales is being claimed by one of the UK's largest travel agency chains. Research by The Co-operative Travel, based on more than 180,000 winter holiday bookings, suggests that the market is starting to take off despite the recession. But the recovery is patchy with a clear north-south divide emerging. The company reported an increase in bookings of up to 46% at northern airports compared to last year. Scotland, the North West and Yorkshire are leading the way with Edinburgh (up

27%), Leeds/Bradford (28%), Robin Hood Doncaster (46%) and Liverpool (41%) airports all showing increases. The only southern airports to show a rise in the sample are Heathrow and Luton, with a more modest 11% and 5% respectively. Popular winter sun destinations are showing increases in bookings compared to last year with Turkey (up 31%), Egypt (19%) and Tunisia (16%) leading the way. The agency chain's retail distribution director Trevor Davis said: "The increases shown by our figures are positive news for the travel sector. However, the pattern of the recovery is by no means consistent. "Comparing our figures with the overall travel market, which is virtually flat, it seems that we are seeing a mini-recovery just for package holidays and only within pockets of the UK. "However, the signs of growth are there and hopefully bode well for a strong summer 2010 market when the main booking period begins in the new year." ABTA also predicts a busy period for the travel sector, with as many as 2.8 million people expected to go away over Christmas and new year. Chief executive Mark Tanzer said: "There is a lot of pent up demand for holidays, but we are still seeing customers booking late and looking for good value for money, so there are no surprises that the winter winners at this stage are those outside of the euro zone, with package holidays and all-inclusive still proving particularly popular ways of keeping budgets in check."

24 November 2009 – Source Travelmole

#### **N. America 'to lead hotels recovery'**

Hotel bookings and net revenue figures started climbing back to 2008 levels in October, with positive movement in North America, new data shows. The region's corporate bookings rose by 3.5% in volume in the month compared to October 2008, with a 21% rise in leisure bookings for the same period, according to hotel bookings processor Pegasus Solutions. As the first region to deal with the impact of the downturn in 2008, this renewed growth for North America signifies the expectation of similar recoveries in the coming months for the rest of the world, according to company CEO Mike Kistner. Unveiling the findings of booking data from 90,000 hotels worldwide, he said: "While there are many factors involved in these trends, the Pegasus data globally and more specifically for North America indicates that we're seeing a classic case where the first countries to bear the brunt of the downturn are the first to see signs of recovery, therefore we could expect to see other global regions producing similar encouraging results in early 2010."