

# CENTRAL EUROPEAN OFFICE

SEPTEMBER 2012

Prepared by: Marion S. Wolf  
Director Central Europe

## MARKET INTELLIGENCE / TRENDS

### Slower Growth in August

Germans booked more holidays and flights last month, but the growth rates slipped back from the high levels seen in July. Holiday sales increased by 4.1% in August compared to 12 months earlier, the latest monthly survey by market researchers GfK showed. This was well behind the strong growth of nearly 15% in July generated by poor weather and late sales.

In August, last-minute bookings for departures during the following four weeks were weaker than last year. In contrast, September and October saw higher bookings compared to the same months last year. Overall, summer 2012 sales show a 10.5% increase on a cumulative basis, according to GfK's survey of some 1,200 travel agencies.

Bookings for the forthcoming 2012-13 winter season are healthy, with nearly 42% of August revenues being for winter holidays. This generated a 5.9% rise in winter holiday sales compared to the same period last year. Early bookings for summer 2013 are down by 11%, although it is still very early in the bookings season since the tour operator summer 2013 brochures have not yet been released.

Flight sales also grew more slowly in August, according to travel agency sales figures from IT services company TATS, which measures data of agencies using its back-office system IBIZA. Flight ticket sales were only 7.2% higher last month in revenue terms compared to regular double-digit growth rates earlier this year. The volume of tickets even dropped by 0.8%, implying the travel agencies either sold more expensive tickets or a higher proportion of long-haul flights.

Tourism sales were only 1.6% higher in revenue terms in July, while sales including advance bookings until October were 2.1% higher, according to TATS.

### Air Berlin Keeps Hub at Tegel Longer

Air Berlin will have to operate its main hub at Berlin's overcrowded Tegel airport for another year due to the latest delay in opening the city's new airport. Tegel airport will stay open for longer than planned due to the renewed delay for the new Berlin Brandenburg International Airport (BER), now scheduled to open on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013 in conjunction with the commencement of the 2013/14 winter schedule, instead of on March 17<sup>th</sup> for the summer 2013 season. BER airport authority's latest plans call for completing the building work in May 2013 followed by several months of "a phased introduction into service, including test operations".

“It is unfortunate that we will have to spend another summer season at Tegel after this year,” said CEO Hartmut Mehdorn. “Tegel is already at its capacity limits today and can hardly cope with more growth. We cannot always offer our passengers the quality there that they are used to from us.”

With the original BER opening date of June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012, the airline had originally planned to turn its Berlin flights into hub operations with connecting flights. Although this opening date was postponed to March initially (and now October 2013), the airline went ahead with the hub move at Tegel. One of the main reasons for the hub strategy was to enable its new Oneworld Alliance partners to benefit from the airline’s dense network of connecting flights to and from the German capital.

In August, the number of passengers at Tegel increased by 12.7% to a new record of nearly 1.7 million, while the older and smaller Schönefeld airport stagnated at about 650,000. July passenger volumes were similar to August with an increase of 8.5% to 1.7 million.

### **Kuoni: Exit from Loss-Making European Markets**

Swiss-based Kuoni is to pull out of smaller loss-making tour operating markets in Europe to improve its financial results and rebalance its portfolio. Businesses affected are Kuoni’s tour operating activities in Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium and Russia, as well as the B2C online hotel platform Octopustravel. Its large tour operating activities in the home Swiss market, in Scandinavia, the UK and France will not be affected by the move.

The company announced that these smaller loss-making tour operating businesses “are no longer of strategic relevance to the group”. Kuoni said it will explore exit options depending on circumstances for each of the various businesses, which may include complete or partial sale, management buyout, or even termination of activities if no sustainable solutions can be found.

Explaining the strategic decision, Kuoni said these tour operating activities had been loss-making for several years. The businesses generate total annual turnover of approximately CHF 300 million (\$318 million) and employ around 500 people. Kuoni said it would commence consultations with employee representatives in accordance with local statutory requirements, but could not yet say what the financial impact of the disposals might be, although there might be direct cash-relevant costs amounting to CHF 35 million as well as other costs and impairments on the company values.

The company’s operating profits and net profits are expected to be reduced by approximately CHF 80 million, which is likely to happen in the current financial year, but the measures being taken should eliminate annual operating losses of around CHF 17 million in the future. Further details are due to be announced with the Q3 results on November 8, 2012.

## **Thomas Cook Tackles Continental European Challenges**

Thomas Cook aims to increase synergies between its businesses in Continental Europe, remains committed to the Russian market and has high hopes for its new hotel concept Smartline, regional CEO Peter Fankhauser told FVW in an interview.

Fankhauser, the former head of Central & Eastern Europe division, was recently promoted to CEO of an enlarged Continental Europe region, covering all markets apart from the UK, the Nordics and France. This gives him direct responsibility for markets stretching from Belgium and the Netherlands, through German-speaking countries and across Eastern Europe to Russia. Addressing the group's overall situation, Fankhauser stressed that after "a critical phase" last winter, the Thomas Cook Group was in a better position thanks to support from its banks and the disposal of aircraft, hotels and Thomas Cook India. "We are now standing on financially stable legs and can tackle the challenges in the UK, France and Russia," he declared. Fankhauser reiterated that it made sense to group Belgium, the Netherlands, German-speaking markets and Eastern Europe in one single Continental Europe division since customer needs and hotel requirements were similar. Key areas such as IT, finances and procurement were now bundled into single areas of responsibility.

On Russia, Fankhauser stressed that Intourist had undergone a "massive restructuring" and new managers appointed. "Unfortunately the slump in Egypt tourism has impacted us heavily. But I'm convinced you can earn good money in Russia," he said.

In Germany, Fankhauser said the focus of the new management under Michael Tenzer would be to ensure that the business continued to grow profitably and maintain profit margins. The group was satisfied with annual revenue growth of 2-4%. "The profit margin must be right and we want to stay in the lead there," he stressed.

Thomas Cook will launch its new Smartline hotel franchise concept next summer with 20 partner hotels that will be exclusively bookable through Neckermann, Fankhauser said. "There are many hoteliers who supported the concept of a lifestyle hotel with good value-for-money straight away. Smartline will take off like a rocket," he predicted. The new product would be strongly promoted through travel agents and with the up-market Sentido hotels, he added.

## **Egypt: Gradual Recovery on German Market**

Demand in Germany for holidays in Egypt is gradually recovering according to statements made by tourism authorities during a recent FVW workshop in Egypt.

German airlines have diverse views on the Egyptian market at present, however. This summer capacity was 29% higher than summer 2011, but the outlook for the coming winter is mixed. Air Berlin, for example, is scaling back flights slightly this winter; TUIfly will maintain its flights and Condor will increase capacity.

Some 14.3 million international tourists visited the country in 2010, but this figure dropped to 9.8 million people in the revolution year of 2011. This year the comeback has started, with a 27% year-on-year rise to 5.2 million visitors between January and June. Egypt is hoping for 12-13 million tourists this year as a whole. Russia remains the country's largest market with 2.2 million visitors last year. But Germany, with 1.1 million tourists last year, has surpassed the UK as the second-largest market.

The new tourism minister Hisham Zaazou told FVW in an interview that Egypt will continue to offer financial support to charter airlines with a €120 subsidiary per empty seat. “The tour operator has to fill at least 65% of the seats. The difference up to a seat load factor of 90% will be subsidized,” he said. The government is also considering subsidizing occupied seats in response to German tour operator wishes, he added. Last year the country spent about €20 million subsidizing flights to Sharm El Sheikh and Hurghada. Going forward, support for flights to airports such as Luxor, Assuan and Marsa Alam is due to follow.

This demonstrates Egypt’s strong commitment to the German market and the measures it is willing to take to re-attract customers from this lucrative market.

## **SALES ACTIVITIES**

### **Hotelplan Suisse Fam (September 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012):**

Ten handpicked, top travel agents affiliated with Hotelplan Suisse toured our area this month conducting several site inspections and visiting a number of our attractions. A Hotelplan and an airline representative escorted the group.

This month we liaised closely with our Leisure Sales Dept. on the final program arrangements and are most grateful for the energetic assistance. We also received very positive feedback from Hotelplan Suisse: “Our group of travel agents returned to Switzerland with rave reviews on St. Petersburg/Clearwater! The warm welcome and gracious hospitality by each and every host was very much appreciated – as was the detailed information provided at every turn. For many, it was their first time to Florida and the impressions they gathered will certainly serve to constructively promote your area to their customers. We would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support and organization of this Fam tour – it’s always a pleasure working with you!”

### **Winter Destinations Road Show (September 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012):**

We joined forces with Edelweiss Air and Tampa Bay & Company on this Swiss road show to Geneva, Lausanne, Basel and Zurich. The programs in each city comprised a table top marketplace sales sessions, media presentations and prize raffles. All told, we reached 355 travel agency front liners during the course of the week. Attendance in Lausanne and Basel was less than expected due to other events taking place simultaneously, which the organizer was unaware of beforehand. Zurich was by far the most productive for the Edelweiss/VSPC/TBC constellation with agents showing strong interest in our products. In addition, several agents who participated in the Edelweiss Air inaugural Fam trip to our area in May were in attendance and reported excellent bookings for our area thus far.

The prize raffles in each city were among the highlights and with Edelweiss Air’s support, we were proud to be the only destination to award comprehensive travel package prizes, which generated particular exposure for our area.

### **American Vacations VSPC Site Visit (September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012):**

Dutch tour operator American Vacations announced their intent to visit our area during this year’s Pow Wow. Having liaised closely with our Leisure Travel Dept. to set up an itinerary of site inspections and attraction visits for Rob and Sylvia Zegveld last month, we received words of gratitude and appreciation from the tour operator this month for the excellent organization of their visit.

**VSPC Sales Visit (October 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012):**

Planning for our upcoming visit to the county continued this month. Correspondence with several industry partners regarding appointment requests and confirmations was conducted and appointments were also scheduled with a number of CVB staff members. This month we were invited to attend VSPC's 2013 Sales and Marketing Kickoff and Rsvp'd promptly.

**Willy Scharnow Foundation Fam (October 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012):**

Preparations continue for our 19<sup>th</sup> annual Willy Scharnow Foundation Fam to be conducted next fiscal year. Similar to ASTA in the U.S., the German institute for travel education known as "The Willy Scharnow Foundation" was founded in 1953 to grant better professional opportunities in tourism to German travel agents. They do this through several means, one of which is educational Fam trips and seminars.

Our destination partner will be Naples with United Airlines being our cosponsoring carrier. UA will sponsor 13 seats (12 agents + 1 WSF escort).

The FAM group will be comprised of handpicked agents from travel agencies affiliated with the following tour operators specifically: Dertour, Explorer Fernreisen, FTI, Meier's Weltreisen, Neckermann Reisen, Thomas Cook Reisen and TUI – all of which feature our area's accommodations products.

Itinerary development is in the process as is the coordination of ground transportation with our destination partner, Naples.

**Visit USA Germany Halloween Event 2012 (October 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012):**

For the third consecutive year, we will participate in the annual Visit USA Germany Halloween Event. After two very successful events in Seeheim and Düsseldorf/Neuss the last two years, the third seminar weekend will take place at the Hilton Hotel Frankfurt Airport with an anticipated attendance of over 100 travel agents.

VSPC will be sharing a seminar training session with Visit Orlando and SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment. This month Thomas Cook, one of Germany's important tour operators, announced its participation in the event and has been assigned to join our seminar training session, which is of great benefit to our area. Together we will conduct 10 comprehensive training sessions throughout the course of the day. We conferred further with our training session partners this month to fine-tune a strategically relevant joint presentation to include interactive elements. Having provided the Visit USA Committee with our latest news and images last month, we proofed all print elements to be included in a comprehensive informational binder for the participants this month. Collateral shipping and travel arrangements were completed as well.

**German Sales Mission (October 29<sup>th</sup> – November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012):**

Visit St. Pete/Clearwater, Visit Orlando, Disney Destinations, SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment and Universal Orlando Resort are joining forces in conducting a German Sales Mission to three German cities (Düsseldorf, Stuttgart and Frankfurt). The program comprises three evening events, each in cooperation with a major tour operator partner (Dertour, Meier's Weltreisen and Thomas Cook), as well as product management meetings and in-house reservations agent training.

Three VSPC accommodations partners will join us for this sales mission. Our partners have been sent a program outline and memo of general information including details on airfares, hotel accommodations and presentation formats. This was followed up this month with further updates and applicable shipping instructions. Relevant elements needed for development of our evening presentations and the in-house travel agent training have been requested and collected from our partners.

We continued development of a refreshingly new presentation format for the evening events, i.e. a 'news cast' show entitled "CFN" or "Central Florida News" and conducted a 'trial run' this month with all German-based participants. Participants will present in rotation by topic such as location, weather, culture, nature, attractions, etc.

Our close liaison with our tour operator partners continued this month to tie down various program details, selection of travel agents, etc. Invitations approved by all parties last month were distributed to top travel agencies this month.

**America Tage (November 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012):**

The J. Latka Verlag, publisher of the German language destination magazine America Journal, has organized the first-ever "America Tage" (America Days) travel fair in Hamburg. America Journal, Germany's quality magazine for travel, lifestyle and business in the USA, Canada and the Caribbean invites its readers, the regional travel trade and related industries to participate in this upscale product and services show, which will include lectures, presentations and a variety of networking opportunities with both industry partners and upmarket consumers. The city of Hamburg and its greater urban area is home to a large concentration of opinion leaders with high levels of disposable income and strong interest in North America, in high-quality travel and exclusive products and services.

Starting with one day dedicated exclusively to the travel trade and media, the event continues with a two-day exhibition for prequalified consumers (frequent travelers to North America), enhanced by speeches, presentations, food and entertainment.

We will participate as a silver partner, which includes a table at the exhibition as well as a consumer presentation during the public days.

**Wereldcontact Reizen Travel Market (November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012):**

ITG/Wereldcontact will again organize the Wereldcontact Travel Market. During this one-day event, past travelers, commercial partners (suppliers and tourism boards) and Wereldcontact staff share their travel experiences with other Wereldcontact travelers. Last year over 3,500 potential travelers visited the event. This annual travel market has proven to be one of the most important tools for this important Dutch tour operator to promote itself and their exciting destination and product offers. We registered to participate in this unique opportunity in cooperation with Visit Orlando and Visit Florida.

This month we made shipping arrangements for the appropriate collateral and received confirmation of receipt from the tour operator.

**See America Workshop Netherlands (November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012):**

Preparation is underway for this important Dutch travel trade event, which is the 5<sup>th</sup> edition this year. The workshop will be held in Den Bosch at the Orangerie, a beautiful historical building and popular business venue. Included are a table top marketplace followed by intensive agent training sessions, culminating in an exciting travel prize raffle. 100 retail travel agents are expected to attend.

This month all necessary travel arrangements were made to attend this event.

**DRV Annual Convention (November 14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012):**

Registration has been completed for this year's convention of the German Association of Tour Operators and Travel Agents. It is a platform during which highly reputable speakers and panel participants address market barometers and trendsetting topics moving the German travel industry. German industry executives present the latest information and current challenges during various plenary sessions and panel discussions. Our participation in the convention presents a valuable networking opportunity, giving us one-on-one face time with industry decision makers.

**Dertour Academy (December 10<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012):**

The Dertour Academy is a training and incentive event for the tour operator's top travel agents. It provides a training platform for 576 agents and serves as the framework for presentation of the new Dertour summer programs including its new products. The Dertour Academy is very well known within the industry and is considered an invaluable training event for travel agency staff.

With a view toward imparting product knowledge and generating a subsequent increase in sales by providing an opportunity for those attending to familiarize themselves with the destinations and tourism partners, workshops and roundtable sessions provide the agents with in-depth product insight and the skills they need to operate effectively at the counter.

This month we provided the third phase of several elements requested by Dertour including our interactive training presentation concept and destination information for the travel agents' on-site workbook. as well as as well as a sweepstakes question and input for the travel agents workbook. A sweepstakes will also be included in this mega event for which we are eligible to present two accommodations prizes. Our industry has graciously donated stay certificates (which is most appreciated!) and have sent us their visuals for inclusion in our training presentation. The Dertour Academy will be held in Dubai this year.

**Brussels Travel Expo (December 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012):**

As the first Visit USA Workshop at BTEXpo was such a success in 2011, the Visit USA Committee BeLux (Belgium & Luxembourg) has decided to pursue its cooperation with BTEXpo for this year's travel agent training workshop. Special conditions were again negotiated exclusively for Visit USA members for greater exposure and a wider range of services in an innovative travel platform. BTEXpo is known as one of Belgium's most successful travel trade fairs attracting some 3,950 travel trade professionals, meeting planners and media. Updates to be forthcoming.

**CMT Stuttgart Super Sweepstakes (January 12<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013):**

Known as one of Germany's largest and most important consumer shows, CMT Stuttgart attracted over 225,000 visitors this year. In addition to our joining forces with the Visit USA Committee Germany in promoting our product via brochure distribution to consumers, we will again co-sponsor the popular CMT Super Sweepstakes.

The sweepstakes will be published in a 12-page, 4-color visitor brochure (circulation 350,000) which will be distributed at 1,800 outlets throughout the State of Baden Württemberg prior to the show and among consumers visiting the fair. The sweepstakes will also be advertised in the fair catalog (circulation 10,000) and promoted to the media. Active promotion of the CMT Super Sweepstakes will start in November 2012 when the official sweepstakes website goes live.

More good news ...

- With Delta Air Lines sponsoring flights to our area for four (STR-TPA-STR), Holiday Autos sponsoring a rental car and two 7-night stays plus a dinner cruise in St. Pete/Clearwater, our sweepstakes prize package will be positioned as #2 of 124 behind the featured destination Australia. Our industry sponsors have also agreed to extend their donations to four pax. The organizer has been sent all relevant materials (VSPC logo, destination description, sweepstakes questions, hotel sponsor logos) for inclusion in printed materials.
- In order maximize the publicity for our industry, 1,000 flyers will be created by Karawane Reisen, the tour operator involved with the sweepstakes, promoting a travel package containing elements similar to the sweepstakes travel prize. The package will be bookable via Karawane Reisen. We contacted our industry asking they contact the tour operator directly with their net rates.

**Visit USA Seminar Switzerland (January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013):**

Registration was completed for this event this month. Next year, we will join forces with Edelweiss Air in sharing our exhibit space at Switzerland's premier travel agent training seminar to be held in Zurich. The seminar's main goal is to provide the local trade with more insider knowledge as well as the needed contacts and sources of information. An estimated 400 travel agents are expected to attend this important Swiss event. Over the course of an entire day, we will participate in the seminar workshop distributing material and engaging in sales discussions with top tour operators, airlines and travel agency decision makers.

**Visit USA Seminar Austria (January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013):**

We submitted our 'early-bird' registration for this event this month, thereby securing a discounted participation fee. Known as Austria's premier travel trade event, the Visit USA Seminar Austria will be held in Vienna and is expected to attract up to 150 agents. The format comprises an afternoon seminar with an ensuing evening event. The seminar program will include a table top marketplace and an on-stage "interview" session with each exhibitor. The Visit USA Committee Austria will again organize a post-seminar "evaluation breakfast" the following morning during which we will have the opportunity to provide feedback and discuss future planning.

Additional consumer show registrations completed this month:

**Reisen Hamburg** (Feb. 6-10, 2013)

**f.re.e Munich** (Feb 20-24, 2013)

We provided **Kuoni Switzerland** with support in preparation for their annual "Kuoni Know-It-All" destination training seminar. Scheduled to be held on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 35-40 experienced travel agents are expected to attend. Florida will be the focus of the training this year. Beyond a supply of our collateral material, we provided an overview of destination highlights and insider tips along with small giveaways for distribution during the seminar.

We assisted Sandy Maerten, Sales Manager of **CRD International GmbH** in Hamburg, with her own trip to our area providing comprehensive destination information and insider tips as well as our brochure material. She will be in Treasure Island next month.

We assisted **CRD International GmbH**, Hamburg with the provision of our latest news and an ample stock of our brochure material to send to their customers.

Meetings were set up this month in preparation for Russ Kimball's visit to Frankfurt in November.

**2014: DERTOUR Country Special Mega Fam**

After several months of negotiation, we are very pleased to report that we have firmly secured another DERTOUR Country Special Mega Fam for our area in combination with Orlando for May of 2014! Last hosted in 2008, we will again have the opportunity to showcase our area to 100 of DERTOUR's top travel agents, which promises to generate additional visitation increases to St. Petersburg/Clearwater in the future.

## MARKETING INITIATIVES

Our efforts continued again this month in developing and completing marketing promotions and advertising programs, which included:

### *Tour Operators:*

- CANUSA (Germany)
  - **Online “Insider Community” Campaign** – July thru December 2012  
VSPC will be a participant in the tour operator’s innovative “Insider Community” initiative together with a number of Florida partners. Focused on attracting the attention of repeat customers and new travelers to a destination, this platform offers a modern and versatile stage for travelers and potential customers to communicate actively about a destination, whereby emotional experiences motivate the desire to visit the destination.  
An introductory sequence explains contents of the platform. This includes map orientation and the selection of various topics, e.g. accommodations, attractions, activities dining and shopping. “Insider Tips” are a key tool and are marked on the map. By mouse-over, a superscription provides information on the tip which can be clicked to view details (in text, images or videos). Insider Tips are rated by the community. Ratings are the key to winning a raffle at the conclusion of the 6-month campaign (a two-week stay in Florida). Call-to-action offers developed by Canusa will be included in the platform.  
At the beginning of the campaign, a special eNewsletter will be distributed to Canusa’s database of 520,000 customers with follow-up newsletters during the course of the 6-month campaign in an effort to reinforce the promotional message. Website marketing (homepage and subpage banners), social media, affiliate and search engine marketing will round out the communication tools. The tour operator estimates 20,000 site visits per month. We have requested a status update and are awaiting response.
  
- DERTOUR (Germany)
  - **2012 Summer Catalog Value-Added Promotion** – July thru October 2012  
Spring of this year, we negotiated another value-added offer for the summer 2012 catalog (circ. 1 million) to serve as a booking incentive. One gasoline gift card with a face value of \$25 will be given to each booking for travel to VSPC from July thru the end of October 2012 (five-night minimum stay). The offer is prominently teased on the summer catalog’s *Florida’s West Coast* introductory page with a special VSPC description (top of the column) and key visual. VSPC was selected as the exclusive west coast partner for this value-added element!
  
- FTI (Germany)
  - **“Highlight of the Year 2012” Campaign** – November 2011 - October 2012  
St. Petersburg/Clearwater and Orlando have been selected as the featured destinations for this coveted program. The “Highlight of the Year” is an extensive campaign targeting FTI’s present and potential customers via several B2C and B2B platforms such as catalog cover page placement, extended destination features and specially designed, prominent product placement (circ. 500,000). Online marketing, eNews blasts to both consumers and the trade, storefront window displays, point-of-sale flyers, consumer press advertorials, travel agent training and two fam trips (1 media, 1 agents) round out the program.  
Various campaign elements have been launched as follows:

- HotY catalog cover page (circ. 500,000)
- HotY travel agent storefront window display element (to 1,000 agencies)
- HotY B2B eNews to 10,000 agencies (1<sup>st</sup> launch)
- HotY B2C online marketing on fti.de (3.5 million PIs)
- HotY B2C advertorial in a consumer travel pub Urlaub Perfekt (circ. 107k)
- HotY B2B eNews to 10,000 agencies (2<sup>nd</sup> launch)

In addition, two FAM trips were conducted: one for 19 travel agents and one for 7 journalists (both in May 2012).

As per the end of August month, the campaign has produced the following results:

**+70% Pax / +55% Room Nights / +53% Turnover**

Final campaign results are expected in December.

- NECKERMANN REISEN (Germany)
  - **Consumer Mailing** – September 2012
 

A multifold, postcard sized mailing piece containing VSPC destination information, logo, imagery and travel teaser was mailed to 15,000 top customers. The piece also includes a sweepstakes element for which – thanks to our generous industry – a one-week VSPC stay is included. We pooled resources with Visit Orlando and SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment for this initiative.
- THOMAS COOK REISEN (Germany)
  - **America Journal Advertorial** – September 2012 (Florida Special Issue)
 

½ page advertorial including 2 VSPC travel offers and Thomas Cook Reisen USP's. With a readership of 140,000, this German high-gloss consumer publication is dedicated exclusively to the USA providing in-depth coverage on American travel, culture and customs as well as insider tips and helpful hints. We pooled resources with Visit Orlando for this initiative.

Pub frequency: 6x/yr

#### *Travel Trade/Consumer Publications:*

- FVW's "Fit for USA" eLearning Program (Germany)– circ. 30,860 *Trade*
  - **Online travel agent training campaign** from October 2012 – September 2013
 

"Fit for USA" is an eLearning course developed by the FVW Mediengruppe (publishers of travel trade magazines) and is endorsed by the Visit USA Committee Germany and Brand USA.

The 2012 program produced excellent results: 3,003 registered users, over 19,000 unique visitors and close to 1.2 million page impressions.

Now in its second year, "Fit for USA" is an independent, online training program designed to increase tourism arrivals to the USA and includes individual course units covering 6 to 8 pages of subject matter for travel agents to read at their leisure. Each course unit ends with a knowledge test. Agents who successfully complete all course units and tests receive a "Fit for USA Specialist" diploma.

The program will again be promoted frequently through advertisements in the travel trade magazines FVW (circ. 32,000 biweekly) and Travel Talk (circ. 31,000 biweekly) as well as on the respective websites: fvw.de (150,000 PIs/mth) and traveltalk.de (200,000 PIs/mth). The eLearning program will be online for 12 months with sweepstakes included at regular intervals. Special prizes such as hotel stays or flight tickets will be promoted additionally with images, logos and descriptive content.

This month, we supplied the editor with comprehensive information in preparation for the development of our VSPC training course including texts, imagery and logo.

*Online Aggregators:*

- Travelzoo Europe – 1.3 million German subscribers *Consumer*
  - **eNews Blast** – November/December 2012  
Mid-November we will launch an eNews blast to 1.3 million German Travelzoo subscribers. The eNews will contain our imagery and logo along with several travel teasers to our area. In addition, special buttons for topics such as arts & culture, beaches & nature will be included and linked to applicable comprehensive content which will remain online for four weeks. Layouts were received and approved this month.  
Due to Travelzoo Germany’s special agreement with Brand USA, we will be able to leverage Brand USA monies for this campaign – long before Germany is officially phased into Brand USA funding.

A Central European market advertising plan update was forwarded to BVK this month. We are currently negotiating final elements in preparation for submission of our FY 2012/13 advertising plan.

*Public Relations:*

**Kaus Media Services - VSPC’s German PR Agency**

This month saw us assisting the agency with the following projects:

- **Press release September:** Provided content ideas, proofread and corrected.
- **Newsletter September:** Proofread. Learned the newsletter was launched prior to our final approval, however.
- Supported the new PR project for the current “**Mr. Switzerland**”, Sandro Cavegn with Edelweiss Air – October 19-26,2012.
- Facilitated communication between KMS and Edelweiss Air regarding **Edelweiss Air German press Fam** – November 30-December 7, 2012.
- Coordinated Edelweiss Air flight arrangements for the upcoming **press trip** of journalist Peggy Bien (**Senses Magazine**) – December 7-14, 2012.
- Liaised regarding status of German Facebook activity including posting plans and input for increasing Likes.

All activities, projects and programs described herein have been duly completed as described.