

UK OFFICE
November 2015 REPORT
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UK Director

Tour Operators

WTM - London

The following meetings were held during WTM;

Platinum Travel, Ireland

We met with Ciara Foley to discuss the destination performance. She advised that bookings were positive and with a strong lead time, Easter and Summer 16 especially were looking very healthy. Ciara also advised that their customers were spending more on average, over £10k for a family of four. Platinum Travel have been developing their website with a focus on high-end product and multi-centres and since meeting with them, we have provided copy and images for their website updates.

Visit USA, Ireland

We met with Ciara Foley, Chairperson for Visit USA Ireland who advised that bookings were +7.4% for Irish travellers in 2014, however -4.6% for Q1 of 2015. She also advised that they are currently in the process of re-electing a new chairperson and this is likely to be Dee Burdock from American Holidays.

Trailfinders

Charlotte Forrester, USA Contractor, reported good growth for Florida, +10% overall and +9% for St Pete/Clearwater, however advised that there had been a decline into St Pete/Clearwater due to low production for a couple of their key properties; Tradewinds Island Grand and Guy Harvey Outpost. She advised that this was because of higher rates and limited availability than previous years, but also that some Clearwater hotels were providing stronger offers, and thus taking some of the share. Trailfinders will not be featuring the Tradewinds Island Grand and Guy Harvey Outpost or the Hilton Clearwater Beach in their 2016 programme. Overall, 2016 has started strong and is currently +55% versus last year. Since meeting, we have provided new copy and images, contact details for Diane Dove and are in the process of arranging training sessions for their reservations agents next year.

Expedia

We met with Tom Roche, new Group Account Manager, who advised room nights for St Pete/Clearwater were +4% versus last year. Overall Florida is +16% compared with 2015 with the majority of the customers staying in Orlando. Tom will follow up with a marketing proposal for 2016 with suggested dates to be in market to target September 2016 travel.

Norwegian Cruise Line

Mark Godden, Business Development Manager, advised that they were working on a new Tampa and Caribbean itinerary for 2016 and would like to include St Pete/Clearwater and focus on the older market to promote the downtown area/culture. Mark will follow up once he has met with Jetline and Virgin Holidays.

Virgin Holidays

We had a meeting with Scott Edwards, Product Manager, who reported overall growth for St Pete/Clearwater. 2015 Clearwater room nights +4% versus last year driven by Marriott Suites Sand Key, Sheraton Sand Key and Hilton Clearwater Beach. St Pete is performing -5% versus last year due to Tradewinds Resorts and The Postcard Inn blackout dates and a new resort fee at the latter property. 2016 has started fairly slowly, Clearwater room nights are currently -12% and St Pete -5% compared with 2015, however they do not feel that this is a concern and that this will improve in January. Since the meeting we have provided training to their call centre agents and Virgin Holidays will be following up with a proposal for marketing opportunities for 2016.

Gold Medal

We met with Harriet Moon, Partnerships Manager and Ross Sinclair, Americas Senior Product Manager, who advised they were seeing very strong growth into the destination. Florida overall for 2015 travel was tracking at +18%, and for 2016 +30% versus last year. St Pete has seen good growth for 2015, +50% compared with last year and Clearwater -2% versus last year. For 2016, St Pete is showing +42% growth versus last year, and Clearwater +8%. Ross will follow up with retail training opportunities and a marketing proposal for next year.

Travel Republic

A meeting was held with Elinor Steiner, Attraction Product Manager, and Poonam Lolay, Global CRM Manager, who reported bookings tracking at -1% vly for St Pete/Clearwater. Poonam presented new initiatives to target specific customers at different stages of their booking, through dynamic emails, homepage carousel messages, social media etc and she will be following up with a bespoke co-op marketing proposal.

Thomas Cook

Met with Charlotte Aldridge, Senior Media and Partnerships Manager, who advised that Florida was performing well and that Thomas Cook were adding 50% extra capacity into Orlando for 2016 (50k seats). They will be working with Visit Florida on their January campaign. Jill will follow up with room night stats as well as training opportunities for their retail team.

Tour America

Veronica Flood, Marketing Manager, advised that they have been developing their website which has seen an increase in visitors, and they have been working on various campaigns including TV and radio as well as with bloggers to drive customers to their site. They are looking to launch a campaign in February which would coincide with our St Pete/Clearwater brand campaign. We are waiting on a proposal for joint partnership opportunities for next year.

Barrhead Travel

Arlene McJury, USA Product Development Manager, who has just joined Barrhead Travel from Virgin Holidays, and Jade Semple Product Development Executive, advised that there will be a focus on Florida for next year with various marketing initiatives as well as a dedicated brochure. They are also looking to open 20 stores in London. Arlene will follow up with how we may be able to support their retail team and any joint partnership opportunities.

TUI Specialist

We met with Nicola Hollihead, their new USA Destination Manager and Isla King, Destination Executive, who reported that Florida was doing well overall, but there would be a focus on beach destinations next year. They revealed details of their TravelMood brand, and discussed opportunities to support this team with training and a potential fam trip next year. Since our meeting, we have sent them copy, images and recommendations for amends to their website pages, and we are now waiting for room night stats, a co-op marketing proposal which will be in partnership with Visit Tampa, proposed training dates in March and their brochure page for sign off in December.

American Sky

We had a meeting with Kathryn Glover, Head of Product, who advised bookings were good to St Pete/Clearwater, however not as strong as Orlando. They are looking to develop their website with a focus to promote a multi-centre with Orlando. Since our meeting, we have sent recommendations for their website copy and contact details for the new hotels opening in 2016.

Magic Holidays

We met with Ian Moore, General Manager, who discussed their recent activity including e-blasts, and partnership with Cheapflights and Travelzoo. Ian will follow up with room night stats and training opportunities.

THG Holidays

We had a meeting with John Bowden, USA Product Manager, and Leanne Williams, North America Product and Trading Executive, who advised that bookings to Florida were static, but they were updating their website and will possibly look at adding additional hotels. Since meeting with them we have provided up to date area copy and imagery and we are currently waiting on training opportunities and possible joint co-op marketing in the form of local press advertisements in Welsh newspapers.

Ocean Florida

Lisa Barrington, Head of Commercial, advised there were reporting good growth to the destination, +5% vly for St Pete/Clearwater and overall Florida is tracking at +30% vly. We discussed our recent trip to the area, having seen a selection of homes they have been able to source, to see how we can exploit this opportunity through marketing initiatives. Lisa will follow up with a proposal, along with training opportunities and an update of how work is progressing for getting these homes on sale.

British Airways/British Airways Holidays

We met with Mark Tanner, Destination Manager, Kerianne Mulqueen, Destination Executive and Marc James, Partnership Manager, who advised that Florida bookings were +28% vly, with St Pete/Clearwater room nights +4% vly for 2015 travel. Other beach areas are also seeing similar % growth but on a smaller scale. They advised that The Sirata Beach Resort and the Don CeSar Resort have seen good growth this year due to their focus on the UK market, whereas The Postcard Inn has struggled due to rate increases. We will follow up with them on our February brand campaign with a proposal for a contra deal.

Best at Travel

Tom Dale, North America Product Manager, advised that their Florida business is fairly small with just 60 room nights booked for St Pete/Clearwater for 2015 travel. They have

recently added The Hyatt Regency Clearwater and The Sandpearl Resort to their programme and will be looking to add a few extra fly-drive itineraries next year. Since our meeting, we have sent copy and images, and we are waiting to confirm some training sessions for their in-house reservations staff.

Kenwood Travel

We had a meeting with Casey Hurford, Product Manager, who reported that St Pete/Clearwater was tracking at -11% vly, whereas Florida overall was approx. +17% vly. Orlando is where they are seeing the majority of their increase in the business. They will be working on a new website in 2016, and will want to develop Florida beaches. Since our meeting, we have sent copy, images and recommendations for amendments to their website, and we are waiting to receive dates for training next year.

Selling Travel, BMI Publishing

Sally Parker, Publisher, gave an overview of various activity we could participate in, including weekly emails, online articles, and brochure banners. We will follow up if we wish to partner with them.

USAirtours

We had a meeting with Linda Dixey, Product Manager, and Jamie Mehmet, Marketing Executive, who advised they were seeing strong growth into St Pete/Clearwater for 2015 travel at +23% vly. The Hilton Clearwater Beach and The Sirata Beach Resort remains their top performing hotels. We finalised the details of our brand partnership with Sainsbury for February 2016. Since our meeting, we have sent video details, and are now waiting on proposed dates for training in 2016.

Funway Holidays

Nick Talbot, Head of Marketing and Rebecca Evans, Marketing Executive, reported strong bookings for 2015, which is showing at +12% versus last year. We discussed the joint co-op marketing campaign activity, which has already begun, and opportunities for training. Since our meeting we have sent them links to our videos and we are waiting on room night stats, dates for training and further marketing proofs for sign off.

Meetings/Training/Events

- **Scandinavian Sales Mission** – We arranged for some beach towels and bags to be given as additional smaller prizes during the evening events which will be hosting up to 100 agents at each venue. Visit Orlando finalised the itinerary and we provided our training presentation. During the trip we had meetings/training sessions with key partners including, Norwegian Air (Norway, Sweden and Denmark), Nordmanns Reiser, USA Specialisten, Ving/Thomas Cook, Swanson's Travel, USATours, Spies, Risskov Travel Partner, Icelandair, FDM Travel, and Profil Rejser. We also attended the Discover America Sweden members meeting, and meet with key contacts at Discover America Denmark.
- **BA/BA Holidays and Visit Florida Appreciation Dinner** - We attended the Visit Florida and BA/BA Holidays appreciation dinner, along with other destination partners and attractions. We were joined by 8 members of their team including the Commercial and Marketing teams, as well as members from the airline. BA Holidays announced that overall their business was seeing really positive results, with bookings +30% vly for 2015

and 2016 has had a strong start at +55% vly. They were excited about the launch of the A380 into Miami which began operating on 25th October.

- **Virgin Holidays Training** – We attended a dedicated St Pete/Clearwater training day, presenting to their Head Office call centre staff. This included 7 training sessions with a total 22 Florida sales agents attending, most of which were new reservations staff for Virgin Holidays.
- **Flight Centre/Infinity Holidays** – We have confirmed training for December with their Round the World Experts, who are their top selling destination specific agents, based in London.

TRADE LIAISON

- **UK Consumer campaign** – Finalised all elements of the campaign to include TV, digital, and mobile search as well as increased activity on each Wednesday in February called Get Warm Wednesdays. The activity will include taking different digital space each Wednesday, PR stunts and promo activity including a fully wrapped London taxi which will have its interior made in to a beach each Wednesday. Solicited and confirmed BA as the call to action on the campaign who will provide us with 4 sets of holidays as sweepstakes giveaways, 10 fam seats and digital upweigh of the campaign. Extensive liaison with Rooster PR regarding PR and social back up of the campaign. The microsite will be designed by Miles Media with a front page consisting of the holiday giveaway information.
- **Florida's Beaches** – Finalised booth displays and shipping
- **Visit USA Ireland** – We provided copy and an image for the new restaurants opening in downtown St Petersburg for inclusion in their monthly trade and consumer e-newsletter.
- **Visit USA Ireland** – Dee Burdock has been announced as the new Chair of Visit USA Association in Ireland.
- **Bookabed** – In continuation with the work we did last month, we have now signed off the banner advert which is now live, and also approved their dedicated St Pete/Clearwater newsletter which will be sent out to their agent database this month.
- **Ocean Florida** – We finalised and signed off their homepage banner and dedicated St Pete/Clearwater landing page which will go live this month as part of their campaign and brochure launch.
- **Funway Holidays/My America Holiday** – We received some initial feedback from Ruth Charlton, Marketing Manager, regarding the Florida Beaches campaign, which is currently in market, to advise that it is going well and that they are seeing great visitation to the microsite, as well as excellent engagement on their social media channels.
- **Tour America** – We finalised the fam trip itinerary for the 12 agents visiting St Pete/Clearwater, which includes site inspections of key hotels they feature in their

programme, as well as some time experiencing the beaches and visits to the Dali museum and the Chihuly Collection. Transfers and welcome bags have been arranged for the group. This fam trip is in partnership with Tampa Bay and Fort Myers and Sanibel.

- **Sainsbury/TravelPlanners** - Work has started on providing national grocery brand Sainsbury's with all assets needed to start working on the forthcoming joint brand awareness campaign in partnership with TravelPlanners. Provided imagery, copy, logos and prize details.
- **Visit USA UK** – The new Funway 2016 Florida Beaches' Programme that we are participating and partnering in featured in the November VUSA UK e-newsletter that is sent to over 30,000 trade personnel and consumers on their database.
- **Florida's Beaches** – Coordinated reproduction of Florida's Beaches carrier bags. The new bags will be ready for the first of Florida's Beaches trade shows next year.

ENQUIRIES:

Telephone/website enquiries for information and/or literature

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MARKET INTELLIGENCE:

3 November 2015, Source TTG Media

US to extend Global Entry to UK travellers

Global Entry is coming to the UK from December 3 onwards, meaning British citizens can enrol to skip the passport and customs queues at US airports. The announcement was made by Matthew Barzun, US ambassador to the UK, at WTM London this morning. The facility, aimed at frequent business and leisure travellers, should benefit more than 125,000 UK citizens who travel to the US at least four times a year, including children and families who will be considered eligible for the programme. Global Entry is a US Customs and Border Protection programme that allows expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travellers upon arrival in the US. Members enter the US through automatic kiosks at select airports. Travellers must be pre-approved for Global Entry, with applicants undergoing a rigorous background check and in-person interview before enrolment. The average processing time for Global Entry members in a US airport is one minute. Gil Kerlikowske, commissioner, US Customs and Border Protection, said it was intended to speed up lawful travel, while improving security. "It allows us to push 'vetted' people through the system much more quickly. People we trust – but not without verification and monitoring." "It allows our finite resources to concentrate on the people we should be spending more time on," he added. He acknowledged the pressures on US Customs and Border Protection and said technology was playing a big role in finding solutions: "We will never have enough people to speed arrivals through to reduce the queues... but the technology is a game-changer." Sir Charles Montgomery, director-general, UK Border Force, hailed the arrival of Global Entry as evidence of the powerful partnership between the UK and the US. "This expansion is testament to the extraordinary collaboration over the years between our two countries. Almost four million Brits travel to the US every year [KL checking] and this service will make that journey easier for a great number of them." Jonathan Sloan, chair, Visit USA Association in the UK welcomed the move: "You do need to be a regular traveller [to take

advantage of Global Entry] so the bigger benefit is to business travel, but it's also great for leisure too, and we embrace any developments that make the US arrivals process a smoother one for British visitors." The next development could affect a number of markets once the US concludes ongoing negotiations to expand air preclearance operations to 10 new foreign airports, located in nine separate countries. These are Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom [Heathrow and Manchester].

6 November 2015, Source TravelMole

Lufthansa faces week of strike disruption

Lufthansa cancelled 290 flights today due to cabin crew strikes, around 10% of its total flights. The cancelled services include 15 intercontinental flights to and from Frankfurt and Dusseldorf. But the airline said there would be no cancellations to intercontinental services tomorrow (Saturday). Flights to and from Munich are not affected, nor are flights operated by Lufthansa CityLine, Germanwings, Eurowings, Air Dolomiti, Austrian Airlines, SWISS and Brussels Airlines. "Lufthansa will do its utmost to keep the effects of a strike to a minimum and to inform passengers as soon as possible," it said on its website. "For that reason, Lufthansa requests all passengers early on to stay up-to-date by checking the flight status on LH.com." Lufthansa is drawing up contingency plans for the rest of the week, as the industrial action is expected to continue.

7 November 2015, Source Travel Weekly

Ryanair in talks to connect short-haul passengers onto transatlantic services

Ryanair is reportedly in talks with Virgin Atlantic, Norwegian and TAP Air Portugal about connecting its short-haul passengers onto transatlantic services to North America. Chief executive Michael O'Leary confirmed that Ryanair was talking to long-haul carriers in an attempt to expand the airline's reach. This came days after the Times revealed that the airline was in talks paving the way for its passengers flying into Dublin to be flown to the US on Aer Lingus's network. It would be the first time Europe's largest short-haul budget carrier would feed short haul passengers into another airline's long-haul flights. O'Leary said that he wanted to keep arrangements simple, stating that long haul airlines would buy short haul flights from Ryanair and offer the packaged price to travellers. "I don't want to get involved with complicated code-sharing or pro rata profit-sharing," he said. "If something goes wrong, it is their [the long haul airlines'] responsibility." He indicated potential co-operation with Virgin Atlantic and Norwegian at Gatwick and TAP at Lisbon in addition to International Airlines Group-owned Aer Lingus at Dublin. But O'Leary ruled out industry speculation that he might buy Norwegian's interests to achieve a long-term aim of launching a budget transatlantic airline. He also indicated the potential for growth in Germany as Ryanair upped its growth forecasts by 20 million to 180 million in 2024 – double last year's passenger carryings.

11 November 2015, Source TravelMole

Striking Lufthansa crew reject cash offer

Lufthansa's cabin crew have rejected an increased one-time payment of €3000 to call off a week-long strike, which is costing the airline at least €10 million a day. The flight attendants' union turned down the deal, claiming the airline has failed to tackle its concerns regarding retirement and pensions provision. As a result, Lufthansa has been forced to cancel a further 930 flights today, affecting 100,000 passengers. It is also seeking a temporary court injunction to halt the strike, which is due to run at least until Friday. It claimed that the company already offers its 19,000 cabin crew remuneration and employment benefits 'far

above industry averages'. "The strike is being carried out at the expense of millions of passengers and more than 100,000 Lufthansa Group employees. However, the airline said that as a result of the improved offer, which increases the one-time payment by 50%, the airline would be forced to re-evaluate its capacity and routes. "Improving our offer again is a difficult step for us" said CEO Karl Ulrich Garnadt. "It is clear to us, that with this new concession, the urgent and necessary improvements in our cost and competitive position cannot be reached, and the gap between us and our relevant competitors will get larger."

16 November 2015, Source Travel Weekly

Marriott acquires Starwood to create world's largest hotel group

Marriott International today confirmed the \$12.2 billion takeover of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide. The deal will create the world's largest hotel company with more than 5,500 hotels and 1.1 million rooms worldwide across 30 brands, creating annual revenue of \$2.7 billion, eclipsing the likes of InterContinental Hotels Group. Marriott said: "The transaction combines Starwood's leading lifestyle brands and international footprint with Marriott's strong presence in the luxury and select-service tiers, as well as the convention and resort segment, creating a more comprehensive portfolio. "The merged company will offer broader choice for guests, greater opportunities for associates and should unlock additional value for Marriott and Starwood shareholders." Marriott expects to make annual cost savings of \$200 million through operating efficiencies in the second year of the deal being completed. Marriott president and chief executive, Arne Sorenson, said: "The driving force behind this transaction is growth. "Marriott and Starwood have one major thing in common - in the past year, both companies have had a strong focus on using technology to improve its brand offering and respond to changing consumer demands. "Marriott has introduced a content studio which is churning out content-driven marketing materials on social media platforms like Twitter and YouTube. "The content is proving very popular with millennial audiences, and is helping the company to stop brand commoditisation through the increasing power of online travel agencies. "Starwood, on the other hand, is focusing on the implementation of technological innovations in its hotels, with high-profile introductions of its keyless entry app, smartwatch app, and the robot butler Botlr."

16 November 2015, Source Travel Weekly

Sterling's strength boosts UK travellers' Christmas markets spending power

The increased purchasing power of the pound against the euro and other European currencies is giving British travellers up to 13% more spending power this winter over last year. The calculation comes from the latest analysis by Post Office Travel Money which identified Budapest as the best value for a Christmas markets break. At £405 for a weekend break for two – comprising return flights, B&B accommodation, airport-city centre transfers, two evening meals for two with wine, coffee, festive drinks and snacks at the Christmas Markets – Budapest has overtaken its eastern European rivals to become this year's bargain choice. This makes the Hungarian capital over a third cheaper than Vienna (£653), the highest-priced city surveyed. The good value available to UK visitors has been boosted by sterling starting to rise in value against European currencies in the past two weeks. The strong pound means visitors to all 12 of the cities surveyed will have greater spending power than last year - almost 12% more in eurozone destinations, rising to 13.7% extra in Budapest.

18 November 2015, Source Travelbiz

Dollar climbs against euro as US inflation rate increases

The dollar climbed to a seven-month high against the euro as the rate of US inflation increased in October, fuelling speculation the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates from

near zero as soon as next month. It strengthened for a third day against the euro as a separate report showed factory output increased in October for the first time in three months. The euro dropped versus most of its major peers as ECB executive board member Peter Praet said policymakers see a risk that investors and consumers will lose faith in officials' projections for reviving inflation. "The environment is more dollar-positive," said Georgette Boele, a currency strategist at ABN Amro Bank in Amsterdam. "The momentum was already optimistic and the CPI data has not taken that away," said Ms Boele, whose bank expects the dollar to strengthen to \$1.05 against the euro by the end of the year. Hedge funds and other large speculators boosted bets on dollar gains versus eight major currencies in the last three weeks, in the biggest jump since March 2013.

23 November 2015, Source TTG

Peaks market faces problems from terrorism

The industry faces an uncertain peaks period as it waits to see what the impact of recent terror attacks is on consumer buying patterns. Speaking at the Hays Travel Independence Group conference in Vilamoura, Hays Travel managing director John Hays said the economic perspective, with 75% employment in the UK and wage growth outstripping inflation, is rosey. However, he warned the impact of recent terror attacks, including the Paris shootings, the Sharm el Sheikh aircraft bombing and the summer attack on the beaches of Tunisia, may yet impact the key selling period starting in January. Hays said: "That extra money (earned by) the record number of people who are working in the UK is there to spend on holidays. "There's a but coming and the big but at the moment is terrorism and the disruption terrorism is causing our industry. "Who knows what's going to happen tomorrow or the day after and the resilience of the UK holiday maker? "How scared are they going to be and how committed are they going to be to commit in January to go on holiday in August? "It is a concern for everyone in this room." Hays said following the increased disruption, customers are increasingly reverting to buying packages, not just for the financial protection but for the peace of mind generated in resort thanks to a safety net being in place should problems occur.

24 November 2015, Source Travelbiz

Do YOU use all of your annual leave? Britons take full advantage of their holiday entitlement... but they don't enjoy as much time off as the rest of Europe

- Expedia study analysed holiday habits of employees in 26 countries
- Workers in Brazil, France, Germany and Spain enjoy the most paid leave
- Britons receive an average of 25 days and use every single one of them
- US workers receive 15 days every year but only use 11, Expedia found

Weary workers who aren't satisfied with their holiday entitlement should head to Europe, where employees enjoy the most paid leave in the world. A study has found that Europeans are spoiled when it comes to holiday entitlement and are taking full advantage of their time off, unlike their counterparts in the US and parts of Asia. Full-time employees in the US receive 15 days of annual leave every year but the average worker only uses 11 of them, while those in countries such as the UK take all of the days available to them, research has revealed. In the UK, most employees who work a five-day week must receive 28 days' paid annual leave per year, the Government says. Expedia put the average at 25 days, and found that Britons are taking all of them. With American workers leaving four days on the table, that amounts to just under 500 million unused days every year. Mexican use 12 of the 15 days afforded to them, while Canadians take the full 15 available to them. According to the study, South Koreans are the world's most holiday deprived workers. They are offered 15 but only take six within a given year. But when they were surveyed, just 57 per cent said they feel

‘very or somewhat vacation deprived’. The Japanese report that 20 days are available to them but they only take 12, and Australians take 18 of 20 days, said Expedia. The annual study examined the holiday habits of 9,273 employed adults from 26 countries. Half of the world’s workers typically take holidays in smaller, more regular chunks (several short breaks and long weekends) versus one long holiday. John Morrey, vice president and general manager of Expedia.com, said: ‘We continue to find that Europe’s attitudes towards vacation are overall much different than North American and Asian attitudes. ‘For some workers, vacation is a right, and for others, it’s a guilty pleasure. Some workers also fear that their bosses will disapprove. ‘A healthy work-life balance is critical, not only to give workers a chance to enjoy their lives outside of the office, but also to recharge, making you more productive when you get back to work.’

24 November 2015, Source TTG

Online bookings to plateau at 50%

The amount of bookings made online in the UK could soon plateau at about 50% of the total proportion. Speaking at the Hays Independence Group Conference in Vilamoura, Travelport managing director UK, Ireland and Nordic countries Simon Ferguson said the proportion of people making bookings online in the UK and Europe is slowing down and reached 47% this year. Predicting there was only about 3% further potential growth available for online bookings, he added the channel is likely to go no further. Ferguson said: “Most things you can book online are being booked online; anything with any complexity is done offline and a lot of that is agents and other intermediaries.” He cited the example of Amazon, where its entire strategy to date has been selling online as a company of the internet era. However, with delivery costs of £6.6 billion a year, which is “growing out of control and not sustainable” Ferguson said, the company announced last week that it would open a bricks and mortar book shop. He added: “The future of retail is a mix between online and offline. “If you think about it traditional retailers can absolutely be digital retailers and you have some natural advantages playing in this space.”

25 November 2015, Source Travelbiz

The USA market from Ireland increases again

The year saw Visit USA gain more members again and report an increase in visitation by end of 2014 of 7.4%. The capacity from Ireland has increased year on year and with the introduction of new routes from Dublin, Cork & Shannon, this number looks set to grow. Over the past 4 years Visit USA Ireland has gone from strength to strength growing its membership to over 80 members representing all areas and products of the US.

25 November 2015, Source TravelMole

Lufthansa strikes called off - for now

Cabin crew have agreed to call off the strikes previously announced for tomorrow, Friday and next Monday following talks with management. The German airline said progress had been made during yesterday's discussions, leading the Independent Flight Attendant's Organisation (UFO) to call off industrial action. It said the UFO had agreed not to stage any further strikes at least until December 2, when an employment summit will take place. The news will come as a relief to passengers, 550,000 of whom were disrupted earlier this month when Lufthansa crew staged a week-long strike. The problems stem from the airline's cost-cutting plans as it tries to compete with other carriers.